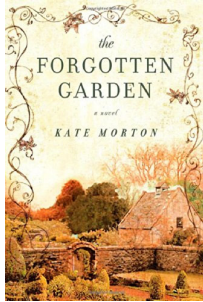


Brainerd Library's "Nature's Inspiration" Book List

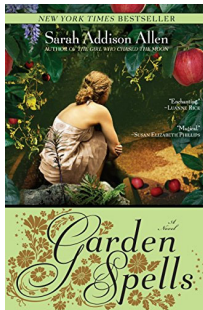
The theme of this list is "the natural world" and includes topics like: backyard habitats & gardening, climate change, outdoor adventures, rainforests, coral reefs, trees, survival, sustainability and wildlife. Represented in these fiction and non-fiction books [selected by Brainerd staff and Friends] are novels, poetry, children's, illustrated, scientific, and graphic novels. They provide entertainment and insight as well as information and education. We hope you'll enjoy the beautiful illustrations, the lyrical prose, and exciting plots – and be inspired by them! A short list of resources is included.

Fiction



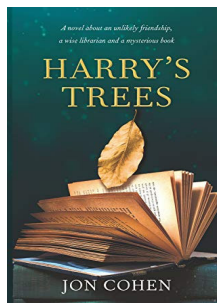
The Forgotten Garden: by Kate Morton

Nell [abandoned on a ship bound for Australia and adopted by the dockmaster] sets out to England to trace her story; to find her real identity. Her quest leads her to Blackhurst Manor on the Cornish coast and the secrets of the doomed Mountrachet family. It is not until her granddaughter, Cassandra, takes up the search after Nell's death that all the pieces of the puzzle are assembled. At Cliff Cottage, on the grounds of Blackhurst Manor, Cassandra discovers the forgotten garden and is able to unlock the secrets of the beautiful book of fairy tales.



Garden Spells: by Sarah Addison Allen

In a garden surrounded by a tall fence, tucked away behind a small, quiet house in an even smaller town, is an apple tree rumoured to bear a very special sort of fruit. In this luminous novel, Sarah Addison Allen tells the story of that enchanted tree, and the extraordinary people who tend it....



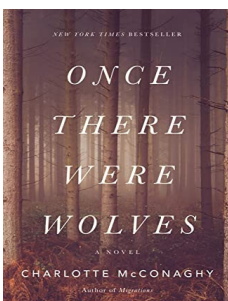
Harry's Trees: by Jon Cohen

A grieving widower, a determined girl, a courageous librarian and a mysterious book come together in an uplifting tale of love, loss, friendship and redemption.



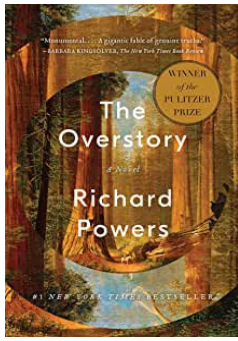
The Last Garden in England: by Julia Kelly

A compelling read, filled with lovable characters and an alluring twist of fates about 5 women living across 3 different times whose lives are all connected by one very special garden designed in 1907 by a famous designer and restored in the present time.



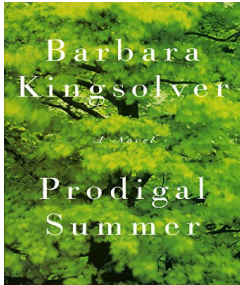
Once There Were Wolves: by Charlotte McConaghy

Inti Flynn arrives in Scotland with her twin sister, Aggie, to lead a team of biologists tasked with reintroducing 14 gray wolves into the remote Highlands. She hopes to heal not only the dying landscape, but Aggie, too, unmade by the terrible secrets that drove the sisters out of Alaska.



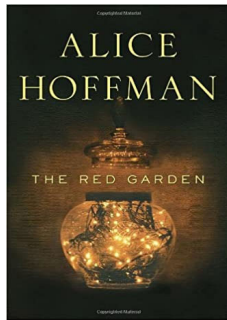
The Overstory: by Richard Powers

The Overstory, winner of the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, is a sweeping, impassioned work of activism and resistance that is also a stunning evocation of—and paean to—the natural world. From the roots to the crown and back to the seeds, Richard Powers’s twelfth novel unfolds in concentric rings of interlocking fables that range from antebellum New York to the late 20th-century Timber Wars of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.



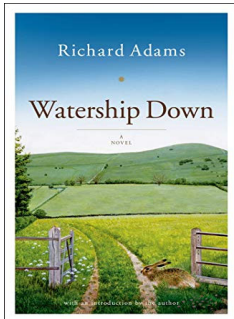
Prodigal Summer: by Barbara Kingsolver

The book weaves together 3 stories of human love within a larger tapestry of lives inhabiting the forested mountains and struggling small farms of southern Appalachia. At the heart of these intertwined narratives is a den of coyotes that have recently migrated into the region.



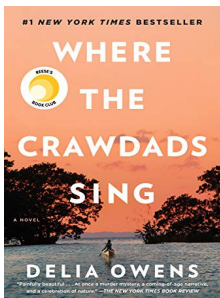
The Red Garden: by Alice Hoffman

This book introduces us to the luminous and haunting world of Blackwell, Massachusetts, capturing the unexpected turns in its history and in our own lives. In exquisite prose, Hoffman offers a transforming glimpse of small-town America, presenting three hundred years of passion, dark secrets, loyalty, and redemption in a web of tales where characters’ lives are intertwined by fate and by their own actions.



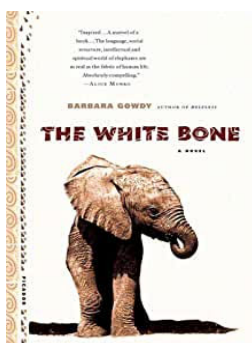
Watership Down: by Richard Adams

An adventure novel by English author Richard Adams. Set in southern England, around Berkshire, the story features a small group of rabbits. Although they live in their natural wild environment, with burrows, they are anthropomorphised, possessing their own culture, language, proverbs, poetry, and mythology. Evoking epic themes, the novel follows the rabbits as they escape the destruction of their warren and seek a place to establish a new home (the hill of Watership Down), encountering perils and temptations along the way.



Where the Crawdads Sing: by Delia Owens

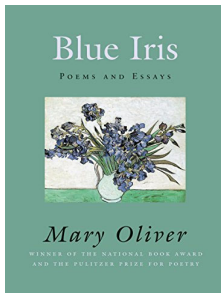
For years, rumours of the “Marsh Girl” haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. When handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. An exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.



The White Bone: by Barbara Gowdy

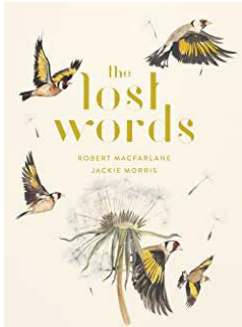
A thrilling journey into the minds of African elephants as they struggle to survive. If, as many recent nonfiction bestsellers have revealed, animals possess emotions and awareness, they must also have stories. In *The White Bone*, a novel imagined entirely from the perspective of African elephants, Gowdy creates a whole and separate world that yet illuminates our own.

Nonfiction: Poetry



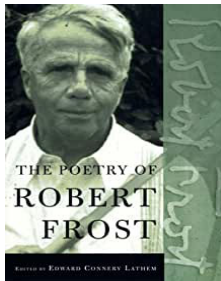
Blue Iris: Poems and Essays: by Mary Oliver

For poet Mary Oliver, nature is full of mystery and miracle. From the excitement of birds in the sky to the flowers and plants that are "the simple garments" of the earth, the natural world is her text of both the earth's changes and its permanence. In *Blue Iris*, Mary Oliver collects: 10 new poems, 2 dozen written over the last 2 decades, and 2 unpublished essays on the beauty and wonder of plants.



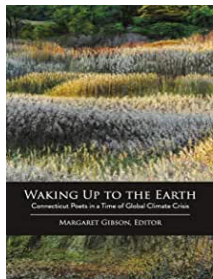
The Lost Words: Illustrated: by Robert Macfarlane & Artist Jackie Morris

A collection of poems and beautiful illustrations to help readers rediscover the magic of the natural world. In 2007, a new edition of the Oxford Junior Dictionary — used in schools around the world — was published. A reader noticed that 40 common words concerning nature had been dropped. The news of these substitutions — the outdoor and natural being displaced by the indoor and virtual — became a powerful sign of the growing gulf between childhood and the natural world. The authors created a "spell book" that conjures back 20 of the lost words, from acorn to wren.



The Poetry of Robert Frost: by Robert Frost

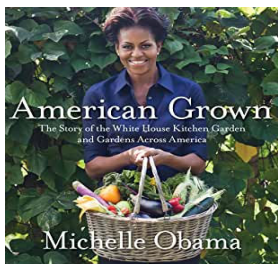
A feast for lovers of American literature—the work of our greatest poet, redesigned and relaunched for a new generation of readers. No poet is more emblematically American than Robert Frost. From "The Road Not Taken" to "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," he refined and even defined our sense of what poetry is and what it can do. T. S. Eliot judged him "the most eminent, the most distinguished Anglo-American poet now living," and he is the only writer in history to have been awarded 4 Pulitzer Prizes.



Waking up to the Earth: Connecticut Poets in a Time of Global Climate Crisis

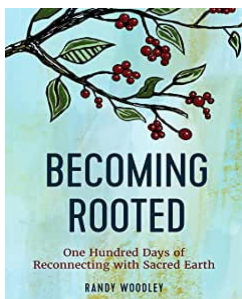
Edited by Connecticut's Poet Laureate Margaret Gibson. The scope of the poems goes far beyond Connecticut to the whole ecosystem humans share. With praise and wonder, and sometimes grief or anger, the poems reflect: our planet and its inhabitants, forests and oceans, creatures: turtles and dung beetles, bats and bobcats, oak trees, orchards, and rivers. In a time of climate crisis, the poems ask everyone to wake up to the earth, and to cherish it.

Nonfiction



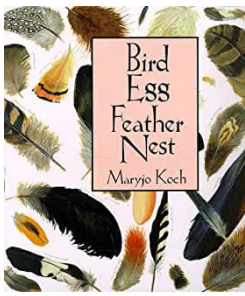
American Grown: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America: by Michelle Obama

In her tenure as First Lady, despite being a novice gardener, Michelle Obama planted a kitchen garden on the White House's South Lawn. To her delight, she watched as fresh vegetables, fruit, and herbs sprouted from the ground. Soon the White House Kitchen Garden inspired a new conversation across the country about the food we feed our families and the impact it has on the nutrition and well-being of our children.



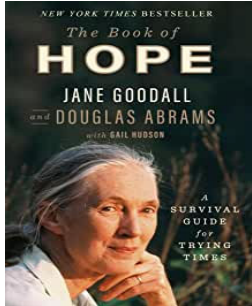
Becoming rooted: one hundred days of reconnecting with sacred earth: by Randy Woodley

What does it mean to become rooted in the land? How can we become better relatives to our greatest teacher, the Earth? *Becoming Rooted* invites us to live out a deeply spiritual relationship with the whole community of creation. Through meditations and ideas for reflection and action, Woodley, an activist, author, scholar, and Cherokee descendant, of the Keetoowah Band, guides us on a 100-day journey to reconnect with the Earth.



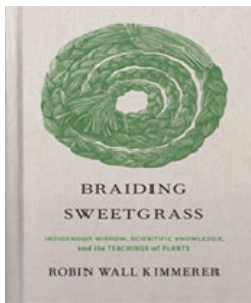
Bird Egg Feather Nest (Maryjo Koch Series)

Bird watchers, naturalists, and art lovers will marvel at the exquisite watercolors and accurate information contained in this fascinating book. Drawing from her own field observations as well as from literature, scientific writings and mythology, Koch covers such topics as migration, courtship patterns, and evolutionary adaptations. 100 illustrations.



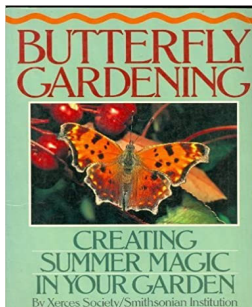
The Book of Hope: a survival guide for trying times: Jane Goodall, Douglas Abrams, et al.

Looking at the headlines—the worsening climate crisis, a global pandemic, loss of biodiversity, political upheaval—it can be hard to feel optimistic. Yet hope has never been more needed. Jane Goodall, world famous naturalist, and Douglas Abrams, co-author of The Book of Joy, explore one of the most sought after and least understood elements of human nature: hope. Jane focuses on her "Four Reasons for Hope": The Amazing Human Intellect, The Resilience of Nature, The Power of Young People, and The Indomitable Human Spirit.



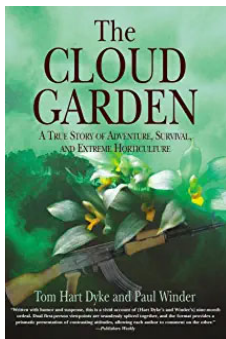
Braiding Sweetgrass: by Robin Wall Kimmerer

As a botanist, trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science and as a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, and a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons. She illustrates that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.



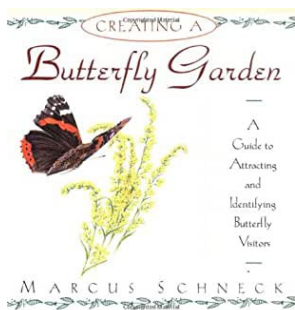
Butterfly Gardening: Creating Summer Magic in Your Garden: by Sierra Club

More than 100 exquisite, full-color photographs highlight this handbook on creating handsome, imaginative gardens to attract butterflies, help conserve them, and acknowledge their importance as indicators of environmental health.



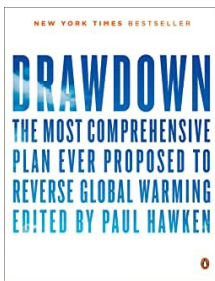
The Cloud Garden: A True Story of Adventure, Survival, and Extreme Horticulture: by Tom Hart Dyke & Paul Winder

Kidnapped by terrorists, 2 flower-hunting Britons live to tell their amazing tale. The 16,000-mile Pan-American Highway runs from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, interrupted only by the 54-mile Darién Gap, a dense jungle along the Panama/ Colombia border. Few cross this lawless wilderness, where drug traffickers & guerrillas hide. British botanist Dyke & London banker Winder met in Mexico, and teamed up to tour the Gap, despite the danger. Dyke hoped to find rare orchids, while world traveler Winder sought a new challenge. They were ambushed by a guerrilla group near Colombia, encountered flesh-eating worms, considered escape possibilities, & amused themselves entertaining the guerrilla camp with a performance of Eric Idle's "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life."



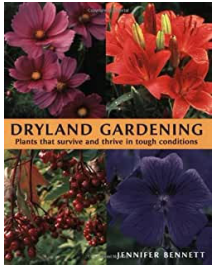
Creating a Butterfly Garden [Mini Guide]: by Marcus Schneck

This lovely and practical guide offers a variety of garden plans designed to attract butterflies, and helps you select plants for different stages in their lives, from food plants for caterpillars to nectar plants for adults.



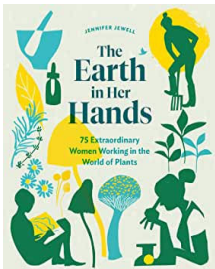
Drawdown – The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming: by Paul Hawken

In the face of widespread fear and apathy, an international coalition of researchers and scientists have come together to offer a set of realistic and bold solutions to climate change. 100 techniques are described —some are well known; some you may have never heard of. They range from clean energy to educating girls in lower-income countries to land use practices that pull carbon out of the air. The solutions exist, are economically viable, and communities throughout the world are enacting them with skill and determination.



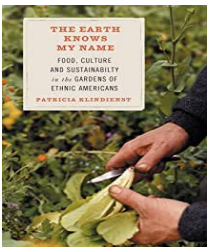
Dryland Gardening: Plants that Survive and Thrive in Tough Conditions: by Jennifer Bennett

An essential reference to gardening in hot and cold dry climates. Gardening where summers are hot and prone to periods of drought, or where winters are snowy one week and freezing rain the next, is best managed by xeriscaping -- dryland gardening techniques that favor not only water conservation but also the conservation of time, energy and other resources.



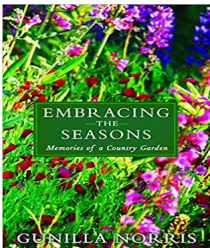
The Earth in Her Hand: 75 Extraordinary Women Working in the World of Plants: by Jennifer Jewell

In this beautiful and empowering book, Jennifer Jewell introduces 75 inspiring women. Working in wide-reaching fields that include botany, floral design, landscape architecture, farming, herbalism, and food justice, these influencers are creating change from the ground up.



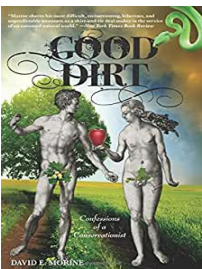
The Earth Knows My Name: Food, Culture, and Sustainability in the Gardens of Ethnic Americans: by Patricia Klindienst

With eloquence and passion, blending oral history and vivid description, Klindienst has created a book that offers a fresh and original way to understand food, gardening, and ethnic culture in America. In this book, each garden becomes an island of hope and offers us a model, on a sustainable scale, of a truly restorative ecology.



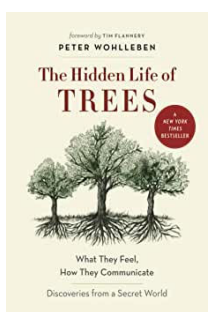
Embracing the Seasons: Memories of a Country Garden: by Gunilla Norris

A soulful journey through the seasons of a year in a country garden. Gunilla Norris shares her observations of this garden and the surrounding land with its trees and shrubs, its flowers and vegetables, its various living beings, its brook and pond and stone walls—and she reflects on the abundance and meaning of nature and its cycles of renewal.



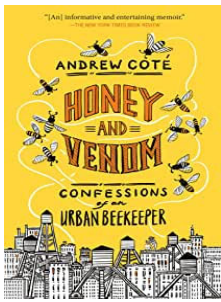
Good Dirt: Confessions of a Conservationist by David Morine

David Morine was a briefcase conservationist specializing in human nature. During his 15 years in charge of land acquisition for The Nature Conservancy, Morine helped protect more than three million acres of wilderness, finding plenty to laugh about and learn from along the way. Here are the stories behind the deals and the people who made them—an enlightening, entertaining, occasionally unsettling look at the dirty job of keeping America clean.



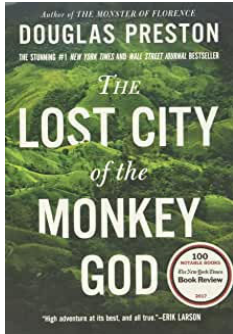
The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate—Discoveries from A Secret World: by Peter Wohlleben

Wohlleben shares his deep love of forests and explains the amazing processes of life, death and regeneration in the woodland. Much like human families, tree parents live together with their children, communicate and support them as they grow, sharing nutrients with those who are sick or struggling and creating an ecosystem that mitigates the impact of extremes of heat and cold for the whole group. As a result of such interactions, trees in a community are protected and can live to be very old. In contrast, solitary trees, have a tough time of it and in most cases die much earlier.



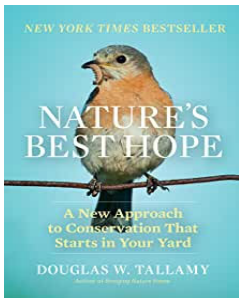
Honey and Venom: Confessions of an Urban Beekeeper: by Andrew Cote

A year in the life of New York City's premier, and 4th generation beekeeper, who chronicles his adventures and the quirky personalities he encounters while spreading his infinite knowledge of and passion for the remarkable honey bee. In Manhattan, he is called to capture swarms that have clustered on fire hydrants, A/C units, or street-vendor umbrellas. He travels the world with his organization, Bees Without Borders, where he teaches beekeepers how to increase their honey yield and income.



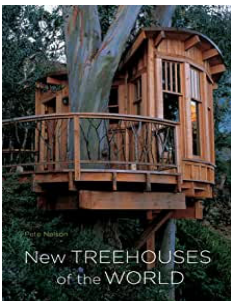
The Lost City of the Monkey God: by Douglas Preston

Bestseller Doug Preston joined scientists on a ground breaking quest. In 2012, a single-engine plane carried a highly advanced technology: lidar, that could map the terrain under the densest rainforest canopy. In an unexplored valley ringed by steep mountains, it revealed the image of a sprawling metropolis, tantalizing evidence of an undiscovered city and enigmatic, lost civilization. Venturing into this raw, treacherous, but breathtakingly beautiful wilderness, the team battled torrential rains, quickmud, disease-carrying insects, jaguars, and deadly snakes. Suspenseful and shocking, filled with colorful history, hair-raising adventure, and dramatic twists of fortune, The Lost City is the true, eyewitness account of one of the great discoveries of the 21st century.



Nature's Best Hope: a new approach to conservation that starts in your yard: by Douglas Tallamy

Shows how homeowners everywhere can turn their yards into conservation corridors that provide wildlife habitats. Because this approach relies on the initiatives of private individuals, it is immune from government policy. Even more important, it's practical, effective, and easy—with specific suggestions you can incorporate into your own yard. If you're concerned about doing something good for the environment, Nature's Best Hope is the blueprint you need. By acting now, you can help preserve our precious wildlife—and the planet—for future generations.



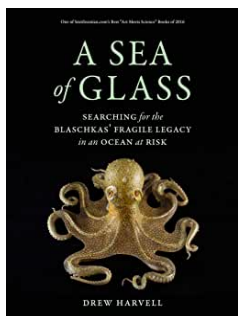
New Treehouses of the World: by Pete Nelson

Since the publication of Treehouses of the World, the community of treehouse builders has grown tremendously, and many more innovative treehouses have been built around the world. World-renowned treehouse designer and builder Pete Nelson takes readers on an exciting, international tour of more than 35 new treehouses that reveal how treehouses are designed, constructed, and appreciated in a wide array of cultures and settings.



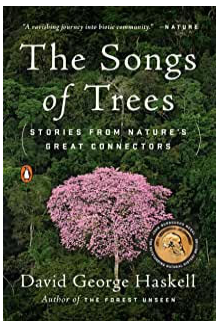
The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession: by Susan Orlean

Wickedly funny, elegant, and captivating tale of an amazing obsession. Determined to clone an endangered flower—the rare ghost orchid *Polyrrhiza lindenii*—a deeply eccentric man named John Laroche leads Orlean on an unforgettable tour of America's strange flower-selling subculture, through Florida's swamps and beyond, along with the Seminoles who help him and the forces of justice who fight him. In the end, the reader will have more respect for underdog determination and a powerful new definition of passion.



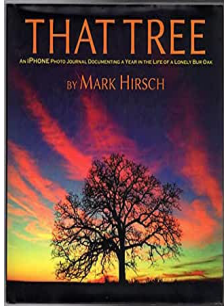
A Sea of Glass: Searching for the Blaschkas' Fragile Legacy in an Ocean at Risk: by Drew Harvell & Harry W. Green

Over 150 years earlier, the Blaschkas were captivated by marine invertebrates and spun their likenesses into glass, documenting the life of oceans untouched by climate change and human impacts. Inspired by the uncanny replicas, Harvell set out in search of their living counterparts. She recounts this journey, as she dives beneath the ocean's surface to a rarely seen world, revealing the surprising and unusual biology of some of the most ancient animals. On the way, we glimpse a century of change in our ocean ecosystems and learn which of the living matches for the Blaschkas' creations are, indeed, as fragile as glass.



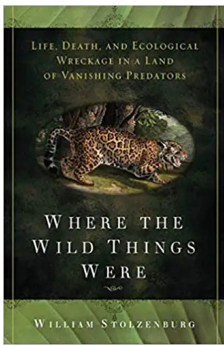
The Songs of Trees: stories from nature's great connectors: by David George Haskell

Haskell brings his powers of observation to the biological networks that surround all species by repeatedly visiting 12 trees; exploring connections with people, microbes, fungi, and other plants & animals. He takes us to trees in cities (from Manhattan to Jerusalem), forests (Amazonian, North American, and boreal) and the front lines of environmental change (eroding coastlines, burned mountainsides, & war zones.) In each place he shows how human history, ecology, and well-being are intimately intertwined with the lives of trees. In a world of barriers, he reminds us that life's substance and beauty emerge from relationship and interdependence.



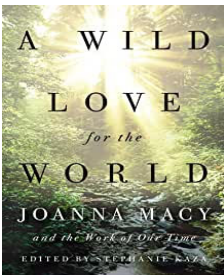
That Tree: An iPhone Photo Journal Documenting a Year in the Life of a Lonely Bur Oak: by Mark Hirsch

Trees resonate deeply in the soul. That Tree spoke to photographer Mark Hirsch of patience & dedication, hidden beauty & personal healing. After college, he got his dream job photographing life along the Mississippi River. But after 19 years, was let go. In 2011, he was hit by a truck. After the crash and unable to work he bought an iPhone. One day, in a snow storm, Hirsch took his first picture with the phone and was hooked! He'd passed That Tree for 19 years but never really saw it. Hirsch photographed it every day for a year. It taught him to slow down, look around and appreciate the beauty that abounds in our world. Sometimes in your own backyard.



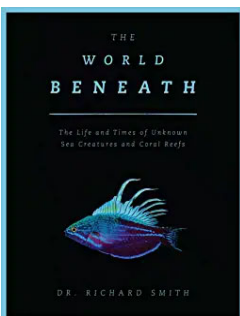
Where the Wild Things Were: by William Stolzenburg

A provocative look at how the disappearance of the world's great predators has upset the delicate balance of the environment, and what it portends. It wasn't so long ago that wolves & great cats, monstrous fish & flying raptors ruled the peak of nature's food pyramid. Wildlife journalist Stolzenburg follows in the wake of nature's top carnivores, and finds chaos in their absence. From brazen mobs of deer and marauding raccoons of backyard America to streamsides of Yellowstone crushed by massive herds of elk; from urchin-scoured reefs in the North Pacific to ant-devoured islands in Venezuela, Stolzenburg leads a startling tour through bizarre, impoverished landscapes of pest and plague.



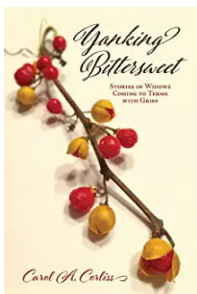
A Wild Love for the World: by Joanna Macy

Joanna Macy is a scholar of Buddhism, systems thinking, and deep ecology whose decades of writing, teaching, and activism have inspired people around the world. In this collection of writings, leading spiritual teachers, deep ecologists, and diverse writers and activists explore the major facets of Macy's lifework. Combined with 11 pieces from Macy herself, the result is a rich chorus of wisdom and compassion to support the work of our time.



The World Beneath: The Life and Times of Unknown Sea Creatures & Coral Reefs: by Dr. Richard Smith

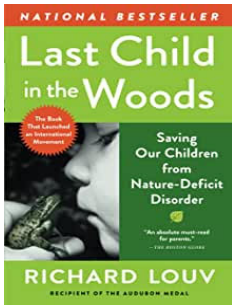
Richly informative: New discoveries. 300 colorful images of jaw-dropping fish and coral reefs. Swim in the Atlantic, Pacific, & Indian Oceans; be dazzled in the Coral Triangle & amazed in Triton Bay. Meet the florescent yellow Cenderawasih fairy wrasse, polka-dot longnose filefish, & multicolored seadragon. See scarlet-colored corals, baby-blue sponges, daffodil crinoids, mystifying creatures that change color, the larger than life whale shark and pygmy seahorse. What they eat, how they play, care for one another, live on one another, and mimic. Insight into which sea creatures are facing extinction, and how we can help before it's too late.



Yanking Bittersweet: Stories of Widows Coming to Terms with Grief: by Carol A Corliss

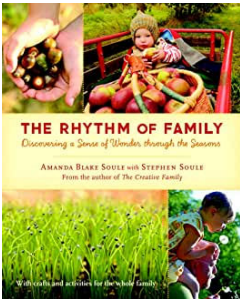
A chance to spend some time with 21 women who share their unique stories of bereavement and their efforts in finding a new path in life. Widowed readers will see aspects of their own experience reflected in these stories. Moreover, they will find in the stories some seeds of hope, an example of the healing powers of nature, and that a bright, satisfying future is still possible after the loss of a spouse.

Children's Department



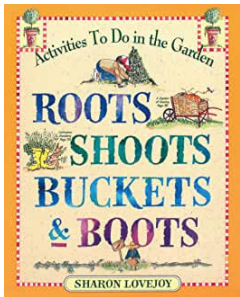
Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder: by Richard Louv

As children's connections to nature diminish and social, psychological, and spiritual implications become apparent, new research shows nature offers powerful therapy for: depression, obesity, & attention deficit disorder. Environment-based education: dramatically improves standardized test scores & grade-point averages, develops problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making. Evidence suggests childhood nature experiences stimulate creativity. How parents can help kids experience the natural world more deeply—and find the joy of family connectedness.



The Rhythm of Family: Discovering a Sense of Wonder through the Seasons: by Amanda Blake Soule & Stephen Soule

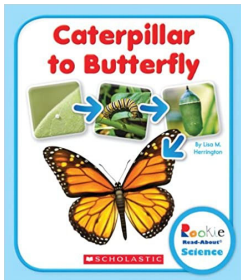
The Rhythm of Family explores what we learn and can gain as parents and families by encouraging and experiencing creativity and nature exploration with our children, the seasons can provide us with a rhythm that brings us close to the earth, and closer to our children.



Roots, Shoots, Buckets & Boots: Gardening Together with Children: by Sharon Lovejoy

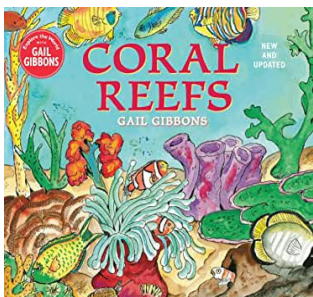
Here are 12 spirited, easy-to-implement ideas for theme gardens that parents and kids can grow together, connecting children to nature through gardening. Each project includes a plan and the planting recipe--as well as a "Discovery Walk," activities and crafts to make with what you grow. And each is illustrated with author Sharon Lovejoy's lyrical watercolors.

Children's Non-Fiction



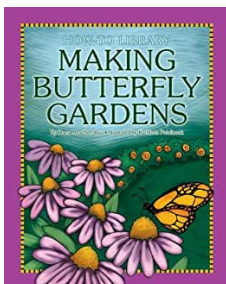
Caterpillar to Butterfly: by Lisa M. Herrington : Easy Reader

Explores the life cycle of butterflies, using photographs and step-by-step text to follow a monarch butterfly's growth process from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis to mature insect.



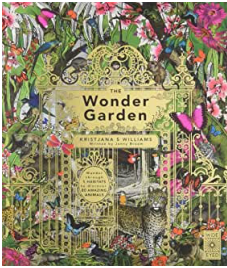
Coral Reefs : by Gail Gibbons

Learn about some of the most beautiful locations in the natural world. Marine biologists believe coral reefs existed 400 million years ago, when dinosaurs roamed. Today this active environment is home to 20,000 kinds of brilliantly colored corals, plants, and animals--more sea creatures than anywhere else in the world. The Great Barrier Reef in Australia is so large, it can be seen from space! Children in elementary grades will enjoy Gibbon's informative text and clear, detailed illustrations on this journey into the unique lives of coral reefs.



Making Butterfly Gardens: by Dana Meachen Rau

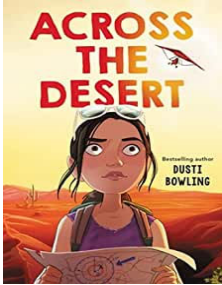
Learn how to make butterfly gardens with these fun activities.



The Wonder Garden: by Jenny Broom and Kristjana S. Williams

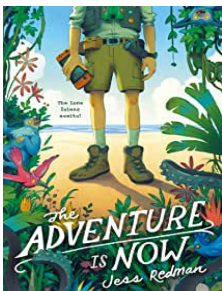
Open the gates of the Wonder Garden to explore 5 of Earth's most extraordinary habitats, filled with incredible creatures and epic scenery. Trek through the Amazon Rainforest, travel to the Chihuahuan Desert, dive in the Great Barrier Reef, delve deep into the Black Forest and stand on the roof of the world - the Himalayan Mountains - to see nature at its wildest. Breathtaking, engraved illustrations bring to life Earth's spectacular Wonder Garden.

Children's Fiction



Across the Desert: by Dusti Bowling

12 year-old Jolene spends time at the library watching her favorite livestream: The Desert Aviator, where 12-year-old "Addie Earhart" flies an ultralight plane over the desert. When Addie's engine abruptly stops, and the ultralight plummets to the ground, Jolene knows that Addie won't survive long in the extreme desert heat. Armed with only a hand-drawn map and cell phone, it's up to Jolene to save the Desert Aviator. Packed with adventure and heart, Across the Desert speaks to the resilience, hope, and strength within each of us.



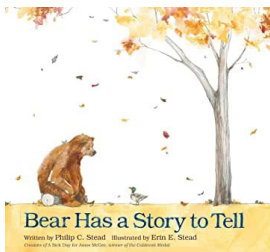
The Adventure is Now: by Jess Redman

Milton's parents ship him off to the remote Lone Island for the summer, where his uncle is an environmentalist researcher. The island is full of spectacular species, and Milton realizes a chance to become the brave and brilliant naturalist he's always wanted to be—and meet some fellow explorers! The future of Lone Island is in serious peril. The only thing that can save it is a field guide full of cryptic clues. To protect the island, Milton and his new friends will have to trust each other, discover new truths, and embark on a wild and wondrous adventure.



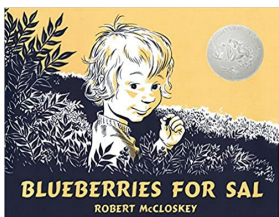
And Then it's Spring: by Julie Fogliano and Erin E. Stead

Following a snow-filled winter, a young boy and his dog decide that they've had enough of all that brown and resolve to plant a garden. They dig, they plant, they play, they wait . . . and wait . . . until at last, the brown becomes a more hopeful shade, a sign that spring may finally be on its way. This tender story of anticipation is brought to life by the distinctive illustrations of the recipient of the 2011 Caldecott Medal.



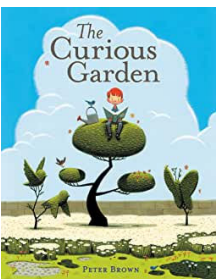
Bear Has a Story to Tell: by Phillip C. Stead and Erin E. Stead

It was almost winter and Bear was getting sleepy. But first, Bear had a story to tell... Bear found his friend Mouse, but Mouse was busy gathering seeds and didn't have time to listen. Then Bear saw his friend Duck, but Duck was getting ready to fly south. What about his friend Toad? He was busy looking for a warm place to sleep. By the time Bear was through helping his friends get ready for winter, would anyone still be awake to hear his story?



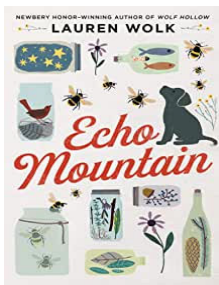
Blueberries for Sal: by Robert McCloskey: Caldecott Honor Book

What happens when Sal and her mother meet a mother bear and her cub? A beloved classic is born! Kuplink, kuplink, kuplunk! Sal and her mother are picking blueberries. But when Sal wanders to the other side of Blueberry Hill, she discovers a mama bear preparing for her own long winter. Meanwhile Sal's mother is being followed by a small bear with a big appetite for berries! Will each mother go home with the right little one?



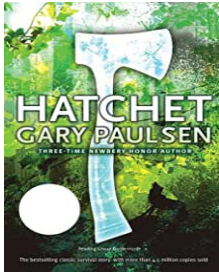
The Curious Garden: by Peter Brown

One boy's quest for a greener world... one garden at a time. While out exploring, a little boy named Liam discovers a struggling garden and decides to take care of it. As time passes, the garden spreads throughout the dark, gray city, transforming it into a lush, green world. An enchanting tale with environmental themes and wonderful illustrations that become more vibrant as the garden blooms. Red-headed Liam can be spotted on every page, adding seek-and-find to this captivating book.



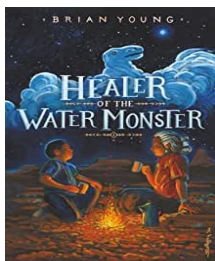
Echo Mountain: by Lauren Wolk

After losing almost everything in the Great Depression, Ellie's family is forced to leave their home in town and start over in the untamed wilderness of nearby Echo Mountain. Ellie has found a welcome freedom, and a love of the natural world, in her new life on the mountain... She takes matters into her own hands when her father has an accident. Determined to help him, she will make her way to the top of the mountain in search of the healing secrets of a woman known only as "the hag." But the hag and the mountain, still have many untold stories left to reveal.



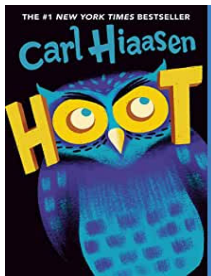
Hatchet: by Gary Paulsen

13-year-old Brian traveled by single-engine plane to visit his father. When the plane crashes, the sole survivor is Brian. He is alone in the Canadian wilderness with nothing but his clothing, windbreaker, and a hatchet. Amongst despair and self-pity, Brian slowly learns survival skills—how to make a shelter, hunt, fish, forage for food, make a fire—and finds the courage to start over when a tornado ravages his campsite. When Brian is finally rescued after 54 days in the wild, he emerges with new patience and maturity, and a greater understanding of himself and his parents.



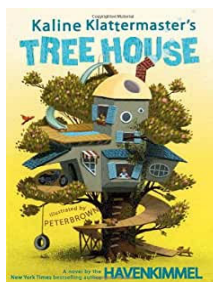
Healer of the Water Monster: by Brian Young

When Nathan goes to visit his grandma, Nali, at her mobile summer home on the Navajo reservation, he's in for an uneventful summer, with no electricity or cell service. Still, he loves spending time with Nali and his uncle Jet. One night, while lost in the nearby desert, Nathan finds someone extraordinary: a Holy Being from the Navajo Creation Story—a Water Monster—in need of help. Now Nathan must summon all his courage to save his new friend.



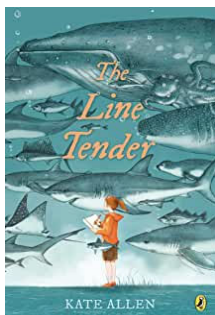
Hoot: by Carl Hiaasen

This is a beloved modern classic. Hoot features a new kid and his new bully, alligators, some burrowing owls, a renegade eco-avenger, and several extremely poisonous snakes. Everybody loves Mother Paula's pancakes. Everybody, except the colony of cute but endangered owls that live on the building site of the new restaurant. Can the awkward new kid and his feral friend prank the pancake people out of town? Or is the owls' fate cemented in pancake batter?



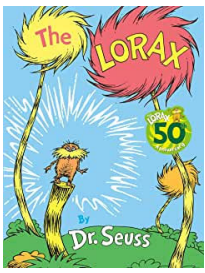
Kaline Klattermaster's Tree House: by Haven Kimmel and Peter Brown

3rd-grader Kaline Klattermaster's father has gone somewhere and his mother cannot seem to keep everything straight the way he did, but the 2 brothers and 100 dogs that live in his imaginary tree house--and his strange neighbor Mr. Osiris Putnaminski--help him cope with his father's absence, his mother's forgetfulness, and the bullies that torment him in school.



The Line Tender: by Kate Allen

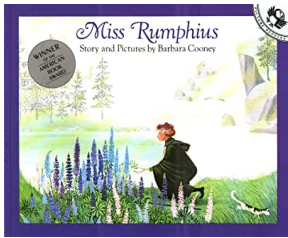
Wherever the sharks led, Lucy's marine-biologist mother followed. She was on a boat off the coast of Massachusetts, collecting shark data when she died. Lucy was 7. She and her father managed to hold on--thanks to friends and neighbors. Her 12th summer brings: a heat wave, a great white--and then another tragedy to sleepy Rockport. To survive the grief, Lucy must grab the line that connects her sad father, a stubborn fisherman, and a curious old widower to her mother's unfinished research on the Great White's return to Cape Cod. If Lucy can help them follow the sharks her mother loved, she'll be able to look beyond what she's lost and toward what's to be discovered.



The Lorax: by Dr. Seuss

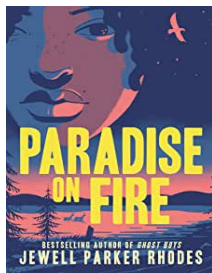
“I am the Lorax. I speak for the trees.”

Dr. Seuss’s beloved story teaches kids to treat the planet with kindness and stand up and speak up for others. Experience the beauty of the Truffula Trees and the danger of taking our earth for granted in a story that is timely, playful, and hopeful. The book’s final pages teach us that just one small seed, or one small child, can make a difference.



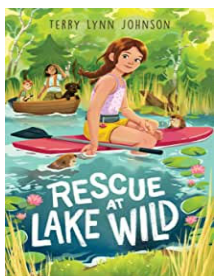
Miss Rumphius: by Barbara Cooney

The story of Alice Rumphius, who longed to travel the world, live in a house by the sea, and do something to make the world more beautiful, has a timeless quality that resonates with each generation. The countless lupines that bloom along the coast of Maine are the legacy of the real Miss Rumphius, the Lupine Lady, who scattered lupine seeds everywhere she went.



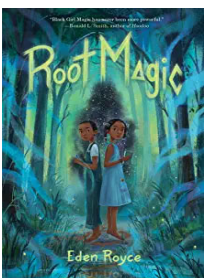
Paradise on Fire: by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Addy’s grandmother has enrolled her in a summer wilderness program. There, Addy joins 5 other Black city kids—each with their own troubles—to spend a summer out west. Deep in the forest the kids learn new skills: camping, hiking, rock climbing, and campfire safety. Most important, they learn to depend upon each other for companionship and survival. But then comes a devastating forest fire... Addy is face-to-face with her destiny and haunting past. Developing her courage and resiliency against the raging fire, it’s up to Addy to lead her friends to safety.



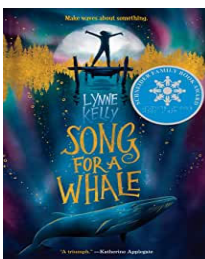
Rescue at Lake Wild: by Terry Lynn Johnson

12-year-old “Madi” and her best friends determine to rescue 2 orphaned beaver kits— and trying to solve a local environmental crisis. “Madi” is not allowed to bring home any more animals; she's saved mice, birds, a rabbit, and a stray cat that destroyed the front porch. But when Madi, Aaron and Jack, rescue beaver kits, they find themselves at the center of a local conspiracy that’s putting the beavers and their habitats in danger. As Madi and her friends race to uncover the threat, Madi must put her animal skills to the test raising beaver kits and staying out of trouble.



Root Magic by: Eden Royce

It’s 1963, and things are changing for Jezebel Turner: her grandmother passed away, the police deputy is harassing her family, and Jez and her twin brother, Jay, must begin school with new kids. But the biggest change is when their uncle, Doc, trains them in rootwork. Jez and Jay have always been fascinated by the African American folk magic that has been in their family for generations—especially the curious potions and powders Doc and Gran made for the people on their island. Jez soon finds out that her family’s true power goes far beyond small charms and elixirs. When evil, both natural and supernatural, shows itself, it’s takes every bit of the magic she has.



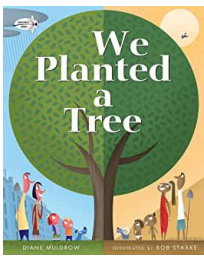
Song for a Whale: by Lynne Kelly

From fixing the class computer to repairing old radios, 12-year-old Iris is a tech genius. But she's the only deaf person in her school, so people treat her like she's not very smart. When she learns about Blue 55, a whale who is unable to speak to other whales, Iris understands how he must feel. She has an idea: she should invent a way to "sing" to him! But he's 3000 miles away. How will she play her song for him? Full of heart, this affecting story by sign language interpreter Lynne Kelly shows how a little determination can make big waves.



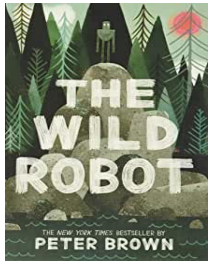
Strange Birds: A Field Guide to Ruffling Feathers: by Celia C. Perez

When 3 very different girls find a mysterious invitation to a lavish mansion, the promise of adventure and mischief is too intriguing to pass up. Ofelia (a budding journalist), Aster (a bookish foodie), and Cat (a rule-abiding birdwatcher) meet the kid behind the invite, Lane. They soon bond over a shared mission to get the Floras, their local Scouts, to ditch an outdated and disturbing tradition of using bird feathers. In their quest for justice, independence, and an unforgettable summer, the girls form their own troop and find something they didn't know they needed: sisterhood.



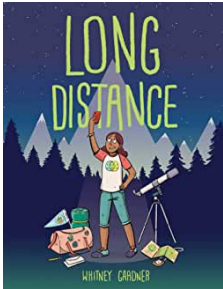
We Planted a Tree: by Diane Muldrow and Bob Staake

In this poetic picture book with environmental themes, illustrated by award-winning artist Bob Staake, 2 young families in 2 very different parts of the world each plant a tree. As the trees flourish, so do the families . . . while trees all over the world help clean the air, enrich the soil, and give fruit and shade. With a nod to Kenya’s successful Green Belt Movement, Muldrow’s elegant text celebrates the life and hope that every tree—from Paris to Brooklyn to Tokyo—brings to our planet.



The Wild Robot: by Peter Brown

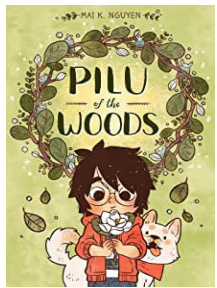
Can a robot survive in the wilderness? When robot Roz opens her eyes for the 1st time, she discovers she is all alone on a remote, wild island. She has no idea how she got there or her purpose—but that she needs to survive. After battling a violent storm and escaping a vicious bear, she realizes her only hope for survival is to adapt to surroundings and learn from the island's unwelcoming animals. As Roz slowly befriends them, the island starts to feel like home—until the robot's mysterious past comes back to haunt her. Heartwarming action-packed novel about when nature and technology collide.



Graphic Novels

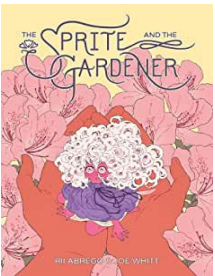
Long Distance: by Whitney Gardner

Vega’s summer vacation is not going well. When her parents decide to leave Portland, Oregon, for Seattle, Washington, Vega is miserable. Forced to leave her best friend, Vega is convinced she’ll never make another. To help her settle into Seattle, her parents send Vega to summer camp to make new friends. Vega wants to get her old life back. But her cellphone quits and things at camp get stranger and stranger. Vega has no choice but to team up with her bunkmates to figure out what’s going on!



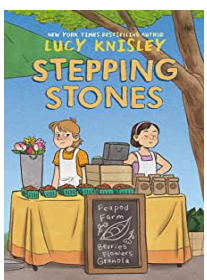
Pilu of the Woods: by Mai K. Nguyen

Willow loves the woods near her house. They’re calm & quiet. When her emotions best her, she runs away into the woods. There, she meets Pilu, a lost tree spirit who can’t find her way home, which is the magnolia grove Willow’s mom took her to. Willow tries to help Pilu. But the journey is long, and Pilu isn’t sure she’s ready to return. This infuriates Willow, who’s determined to make up for her mistakes by getting Pilu back safely. As a storm rages and Willow’s emotions surface, they take on a physical form, putting them in danger... and forcing Willow to confront her inner feelings.



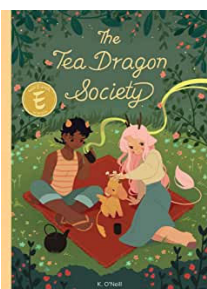
The Sprite and the Gardener: by Joe Whitt and Rii Abrego

Long ago, sprites were the caretakers of gardens. But when humans appeared and began growing their own gardens, the sprites’ magical talents became a thing of the past. When Wisteria, an ambitious, kind-hearted sprite, asks questions about the past, she unearths her long-lost talent of gardening. But her newly honed skills might not be the welcome surprise she intends. The debut graphic novel, is bursting with whimsical art and vibrant characters. Join our neighborhood of sprites in this beautiful, gentle fantasy where both gardens and friendships begin to blossom.



Stepping Stones (Peapod Farm) by: Lucy Kinsley

Jen did not want to leave the city and move to a farm with her mom and her mom's new boyfriend. She did not want to leave her friends and her dad. Most of all, Jen did not want new "sisters," Andy and Reese. As if learning new chores on Peapod Farm wasn't hard enough, having to deal with perfect Andy might be the last straw. Besides cleaning the chicken coop, keeping up with the customers at the farmers' market, and missing her old life, Jen has to deal with her own insecurities about this new family . . . and where she fits in.



The Tea Dragon Society series: by K. O'Neill

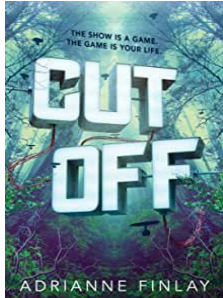
From an award-winning author comes THE TEA DRAGON SOCIETY, beloved and charming all-ages book that follows: Greta, a blacksmith apprentice, and people she meets as she becomes entwined in the enchanting world of tea dragons. After discovering a lost tea dragon in the marketplace, Greta learns about the dying art of tea dragon care from the kind tea shop owners. As she befriends them, Greta sees how the craft enriches their lives and her own.



Tom's Midnight Garden: by Phyllis Pearce and Edith

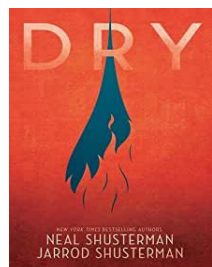
When Tom's brother gets sick, Tom's shipped off to spend a boring summer with his aunt and uncle in the country. But then Tom hears the old grandfather clock in the hall chime 13 times, and he's transported back to an old garden where he meets a mysterious girl named Hatty. Tom returns to the garden every night to have adventures with Hatty. As the summer comes to an end, Tom realizes he wants to stay in the midnight garden with Hatty forever.

Teen Fiction



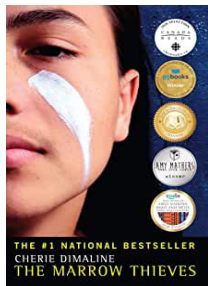
Cut Off: by Adrienne Finlay

Each contestant has their own reasons and secrets for joining the new virtual reality show CUT/OFF that places teenagers alone in the wilderness. Whoever lasts the longest without "tapping out" wins cash. New software creates an unprecedented TV experience, allowing viewers to touch, see, and live everything with the contestants. But what happens when "tapping out" doesn't work and no one comes to save you? What happens when the whole world disappears while you're stranded in the wild? 4 teenagers confront their greatest fears, deepest secrets, and one another when they are truly cut off from reality. Sci-fi, mystery, and romance converge in this fast-paced read.



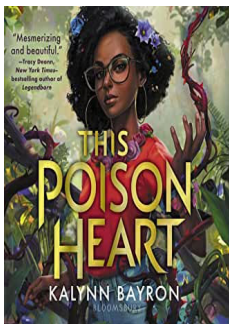
Dry: by Neal Shusterman and Jarrod Shusterman

The drought—or the Tap-Out, —has been going on for a while. Everyone's lives have become an endless list of don'ts: don't water the lawn, don't fill the pool, don't take long showers. Until the taps run dry. Suddenly, Alyssa's quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbors & families turn against each other on the hunt for water. And when her parents don't return and her life and her brother are threatened, Alyssa has to make impossible choices to survive.



The Marrow Thieves: by Cherie Dimaline

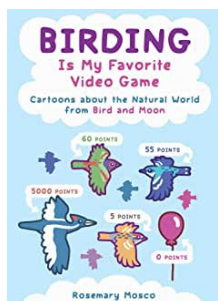
Humanity has nearly destroyed its world through global warming, but now an even greater evil lurks. The indigenous people of North America are being hunted and harvested for their bone marrow, which carries the key to recovering something the rest of the population has lost: the ability to dream. In this dark world, Frenchie and his companions struggle to survive as they make their way up north to the old lands. For now, survival means staying hidden - but what they don't know is that one of them holds the secret to defeating the marrow thieves.



This Poison Heart: by Kalynn Bayron, Jordan Cobb, et al.

Briseis has a gift: she can grow plants from seeds to blooms with a stouch. When her aunt dies and wills her a dilapidated estate, Bri and her parents leave Brooklyn for the summer. But their new home is sinister. It comes with instructions, an old apothecary and a walled garden filled with deadly botanicals, that can only be entered by Bri's family. When strangers begin to arrive, asking for elixirs, Bri learns she has a surprising talent. One of the visitors is Marie, a mysterious woman keeping dark secrets about the history of the estate and community. There is more to Bri's inheritance than she imagined. She is determined to uncover it...until a nefarious group comes in search of a rare and dangerous elixir. Up against a centuries-old curse and the deadliest plant on earth, Bri must harness her gift to protect herself and her family.

Graphic Novels: Teen



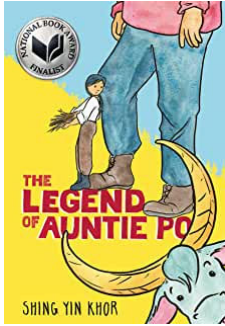
Birding is My Favorite Video Game: by Rosemary Mosco

Amusing science cartoons about the natural world including animal dating profiles, wildlife wine pairings, threat displays of completely non-threatening animals, why hammerhead sharks have hammer heads, and much more. A collection of fun, quasi-educational comics combining weird science, cute visuals, sweet wit, and a strong environmental message. Based on the popular webcomic Bird and Moon, this collection brings facts about birds, bees, and insects to life in the quirkiest, most wonderful way.



Laid-Back Camp manga series: by Afro

Setting up a tent, starting a fire, and eating noodles with Mt. Fuji in view...Rin and Nadeshiko absolutely love to camp! Enjoy their zest for travel and maybe even pick up a tip or two about roughing it in the great outdoors. You just might want to go camping yourself!



The Legend of Auntie Po: by Shing Yin Khor

Aware of the tumult in the years after the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Mei tries to remain focused on her job, her close friendship with the camp foreman's daughter, and telling stories about Paul Bunyan--reinvented as Po Pan Yin (Auntie Po), an elderly Chinese matriarch. Anchoring herself with stories of Auntie Po, Mei navigates the difficulty and politics of lumber camp work and her growing romantic feelings for her friend Bee. The Legend of Auntie Po is about who gets to own a myth, and immigrant families and communities holding on to rituals and traditions while staking out their own place in the United States.



Lumberjanes series: by Noelle Stevenson

5 best friends spending the summer at Lumberjane scout camp...defeating yetis, 3-eyed wolves, and giant falcons. Friendship to the max! Jo, April, Mal, Molly and Ripley are determined to have an amazing summer together...and not let any insane quest or supernatural critters get in their way! LUMBERJANES is one of those punk rock, love-everything-about-it stories that appeals to fans. It's Buffy the Vampire Slayer meets Gravity Falls and features 5 butt-kicking teenage girls opposing monsters and solving a mystery with the whole world at stake.

SOME RESOURCES

- Arbor Day Foundation
- Birds and Blooms Magazine
- Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District
- Connecticut River Conservancy
- Coursera.org Online Classes
- Earthjustice
- EdX.org Online Classes
- Environmental Action
- Environmental Working Group
- Greenpeace
- National Audubon Society
- The National Wildlife Federation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Ocean Conservancy
- One Tree Planted.org
- Prairie Moon Nursery [Native Plants]
- Prairie Nursery [Native Plants]
- Rainforest Alliance
- Sierra Club has a CT chapter
- WeForest.org
- Uconn Cooperative Extension Center
- Wild Ones [Native Plants, Natural Landscapes] CT Chapter
- Xerces Society [for Invertebrate Conservation]