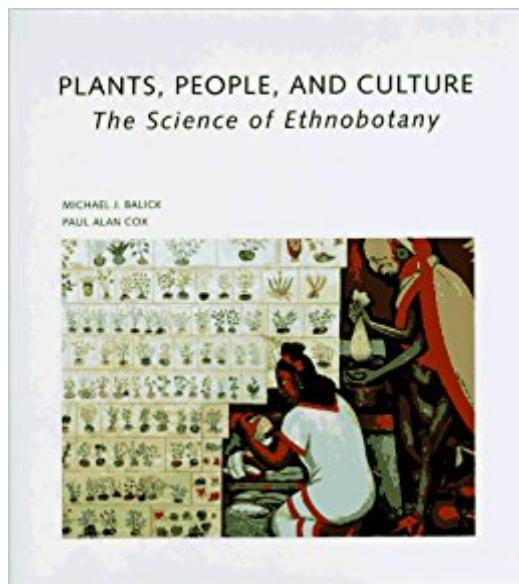


The book was found

Plants, People, And Culture: The Science Of Ethnobotany (Scientific American Library)



Synopsis

Discoveries of new drugs, organic pesticides, and other plant uses based on research in traditional cultures are increasingly common. The study of human/plant interactions which draws on the methods of anthropology, botany, pharmacology and other disciplines is reported here. The text highlights the discovery of new drugs and chemical compounds and insights into conservation in order to aid understanding of the relationship between humans and plants.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Balick and Cox have combined their own ethnobotanical expertise with documented accounts to produce a beautifully illustrated introduction to this increasingly popular topic. The final book is not only readable and fascinating, but also thought-provoking and ultimately moving. -- The Geographical Journal, 3/98

This is a fascinating integration of chemistry, botany, anthropology, history and ecology...This is an inspiring book that deserves to be read by anyone interested in conservation, ethnomedicine, and indigenous peoples. -- Kliatt, January, 1998

Two leading ethnobotanists argue that human cultural origins are woven with plants: examining the prehistoric use and gathering of plants by hunter-gatherers to modern times, this examines important connections between indigenous peoples' development and concurrent plant discoveries. -- Midwest Book Review

Interesting, we should not be so anxious to see that "primitive people" should enjoy the civilized

world with all its stress, obesity, conflicts, etc. We can learn a lot from "primitive cultures" and their association and appreciation of nature. Their understanding of plants and animals. We should not be so anxious to tear into their world with highways, towns, canals, etc.

This is the classic textbook on the emerging area of Ethnobotany. The importance of understanding our botanical heritage cannot be over-emphasized. To the extent this book promotes that awareness, it is a must read. You will have a greater appreciation of plant diversity and habitat preservation when you know the treasures that they contain.

Really enjoyed this book. I purchased it for an ethnobotany class I was taking abroad the past summer. The content is very thorough and interesting, although some of the information in it is getting to be a tad outdated. This edition has an index while some other editions my classmates had did not, the index was DEFINITELY helpful during the class so I highly suggest going for this edition. The illustrations/pictures are both interesting and informative.

Very well-written, informative. A strong introduction to ethnobotany with excellent suggested readings for those who wish to go further.

Good

I liked it.

The initial focus of the book lays out the basic principles of ethnobotany and gives three examples of plants that were discovered through the study of indigenous cultures. The authors then talk about how certain chemical constituents were extracted from these plants: Digitalis, Quinine, and Salicylic acid. This is done through a process of identifying, isolating, purifying and determining the structure of the bioactive molecule (36). Starting on page 40 we get a list of what skills, necessary learning, consent, approaches, and such an ethnobotanist needs to acquire permission to study with indigenous people. Out of the five ethnobotany books I have read so far this is the most objective, hands off one of them all. The authors give a basic introduction to ethnobotany: what it is, how an ethnobotanist goes about their work, how plants are studied, preserved, and chemicals identified, isolated, purified, determined, and so on. If you're looking for a basic, somewhat well-rounded introduction to ethnobotany, this is an okay book. Even after reading five other books

on the subject I still learned a few things of note, not what I was looking for, but still worth knowing. As the book's subtitle hints at, the main thrust of the book is to give the reader a behind the scenes picture of what the ethnobotanist does and how they go about it. While doing that the authors give us a taste of some of the different areas of study in this field: medicinal being the primary focus but also spices, crafts, art, tools, hunting, gathering, cooking, and spiritual uses are but a few of the areas the author discusses. In the end it was worth the few hours it took to read, but if you are looking for some more intimate and practical side of ethnobotany, this is not the book. I personally found Nancy's Ancient Pathways, Ancestral Knowledge: Ethnobotany and Ecological Wisdom of Indigenous Peoples of Northwestern North America to be the best introduction to ethnobotany even though she primarily focuses on Northwestern Tribes.

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