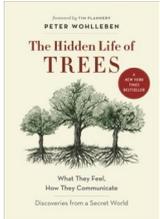


The Hidden Life of Trees: what they feel, how they communicate: discoveries from a secret world



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I have always felt a strong connection to trees; I love them in all seasons and am fascinated by their intricacies, their shapes, varieties of bark, leaves and shapes, the patterns they make interplaying with light.

This biography of a forest, so to speak, fills you in on a forester's own passion for trees. He uses the language of a nature lover and also that of a scientist to describe the myriad connections trees have to each other in a healthy forest.

A connection that made him refuse to bring huge modern machinery into a forest and only use horses and saws when a tree needed cutting, an amazing evolution for a trained forester.

Did you know that the trees in a diverse forest are connected to each other by their roots? That trees communicate with each other via the same roots? That trees respond to sounds and even scents? That there are mother trees? That these mothers have favorite offspring?

I read a section of this book out loud to my husband. One about how the mother trees take care of their young, and my husband responded by saying "that sounds very anthropomorphic to me."

Anthropomorphic it might be, but also based on facts.

But Wohlleben backs his statements up with science. But the writing is less hard science than nature writing. He reports research in Germany's old-growth forests and in our own Northwest ones with trees over two thousand years old of a network of fungi called mycelium that spreads under the forest and allows trees to communicate with each other. Think of it as the wood-wide web.

Through this internet of fungi, trees warn each other of insect infestations, and even provide food for old and sick trees that can't produce enough for themselves. Imagine that. Caretaking trees.

Wohlleben even found a four hundred year old stump in a western German forest that when he dug into it, was green underneath. The stump was still living but not producing its own chlorophyll, so being fed by nearby trees.

The author shares with us an important lesson for humans, the trees live longer and better lives in communities with each other. They need light, protection from burning heat, and humidity that they create together.

This book will fascinate and inspire you. You will never enter a forest again without thinking about how amazing trees are.

Posted by Dory L. on January 10, 2017

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