

Devine, Robert. *Alien Invasion: America's Battle with Non-Native Animals and Plants*. Washington D.C., National Geographic Society: 1998. (Reviewed by Aria DalMolin)

This book illustrates the importance of being informed on what they call “biological wildfire or biological pollution,” more commonly known as invasive species. The book not only tells about the harm of biodiversity, but also the economic harm that is caused by introducing non-native species to an area. The book chronicles the stories of the introduction of pigs to certain parts of America, along with cheatgrass, yellow star thistle, leafy spurge, whitefly in California, and the purple loosestrife. The end of the book then offers ways that we can defend against invasive species and also ways to control the spread of them further.

An interesting quote from this book states the difference and importance of the invasive species problem:

"The ability of invasive species to spread and persist sets them apart from most other environmental problems. If a developer drains a wetland to build a shopping mall, it is a significant loss. But that shopping mall won't, of its own accord, expand and cover other wetlands. Nor will birds carry mall seeds 100 miles and sprout new malls. Invasive species are alive, they reproduce so they will be around indefinitely."

Critique

This book seems to be a very good starting-off point for looking at the invasive species problem from a broad, overall perspective. The book does touch on a few issues pertaining to the Northwest and the Willamette River area including fish-stocking the river, purple loosestrife, yellow star thistle, and European starling. The book is well-written and interesting. The stories were very entertaining, yet sad, explaining how some of the invasives had originally been introduced to the U.S.

The book assessed the danger and threat that most invasive species pose on the area, listing in detail the most harmful and pertinent ones as of today. In order to assess and be able to describe the invasive species problem from a broad perspective and as a whole, this book was very helpful and informative. The writer lives in Oregon City, so he seems very knowledgeable especially on the Willamette River Basin area.

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