



Nature All Around Us: A Guide to Urban Ecology

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It's easy to stand in awe of a city's impressive skyline, marveling at its buildings reaching for the clouds and its vast network of roadways and train lines crisscrossing in every direction. It can often seem like everything in a city is man-made, all concrete, steel, and glass. But even the asphalt jungle is not all asphalt—a sidewalk's cracks are filled with nature, if we know where and how to look. To aid us in this quest is *Nature All Around Us*, which will help us to recognize (and look after) the natural world we traipse through in our daily lives.

Nature All Around Us uses the familiar—such as summer Sundays humming with lawn mowers, gray squirrels foraging in planters, and flocks of pigeons—in order to introduce basic ecological concepts. In twenty-five short chapters organized by scale, from the home to the neighborhood to the city at large, it offers a subtle and entertaining education in ecology sure to inspire appreciation and ultimately stewardship of the environment. Various ecological concepts that any urban dweller might encounter are approachably examined, from understanding why a squirrel might act aggressively towards its neighbor to how nutrients and energy contained within a discarded apple core are recycled back into the food chain. Streaming through the work is an introduction to basic ecology, including the dangers of invasive species and the crucial role played by plants and trees in maintaining air quality.

Taken as a whole, *Nature All Around Us* is an unprecedented field guide to the ecology of the urban environment that invites us to look at our towns, cities, and even our backyards through the eyes of an ecologist. It is an entertaining, educational, and inspiring glimpse into nature in seemingly unnatural settings, a reminder that we don't have to trek into the wild to see nature—we just have to open our eyes.



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