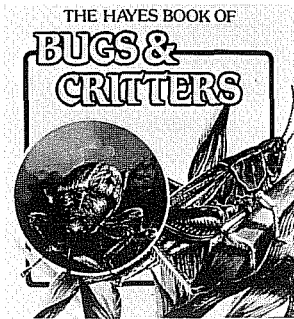
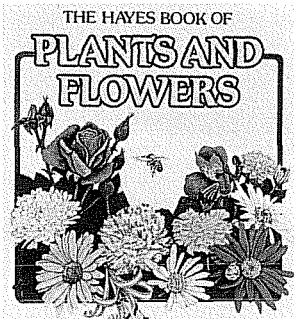


NATURE BOOKS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



The Hayes book of birds (of North America). Barbara A. McKean. Illus. Rick Rowden and Lauren Pashuk. Hayes Publishing, 1986. 32 pp. \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-88625-116-8. **The Hayes book of wild animals (land and sea mammals).** Barbara A. McKean. Illus. Rick Rowden. Hayes Publishing, 1986. 32 pp. \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-88625-117-6. **The Hayes book of plants and flowers.** Brian Holley. Illus. Martin Magee. Hayes Publishing, 1986. 32 pp. \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-88625-114-1. **The Hayes book of bugs & critters.** Brian Holley. Illus. Diane Gruettner, Diane Black and Denis Gagne. Hayes Publishing, 1986. 32 pp. \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-88625-118-4.

The author of the first two books in this series is a Naturalist-Teacher of the Royal Botanical Gardens of Ontario; that of the last two is the Supervisor of the Children's Garden of the Royal Botanical Gardens. All four books are based on clear and attractive colour illustrations, with accompanying text. The books emphasize a more general ecological approach. Thus, the one on wild animals relates the animals to their environments. Different sections include: What is a mammal? Specialization of mammals; Survival through adequate reproduction; Life in communities; The Arctic tundra; The northern forest. There are similar sections in the other books. Metamorphosis in insects is well, if briefly, described. Plants are considered first in terms of their different functional parts (roots, fruits, flowers) and habitats, including deserts and ponds. Several simple ways for the child to learn more about nature are illustrated: making plaster casts of tracks, watching insects and other nocturnal creatures; setting up bird feeders; making compost, and growing house plants, among others.

The approach is tough-minded, despite its simplicity: it is well recognized that one creature eats another and that survival is a difficult business. The only major fault I find in this series is that, in listing "bad insects" only those that eat crops and trees are mentioned, not the extremely important ones that carry diseases.

In general these books can be warmly recommended as introductions to biology for younger children (up to the age of ten).

Wildflowers. Gloria Kelleher. Illus. Sandra Buhrt. Hyperion Press, 1985. 40 pp. \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-920534-32-5. **Insects.** Barbara Batulla. Hyperion Press, 1985. 40 pp. \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-920534-21-X. **Large mammals.** (Volumes 1 & 11). Robert E. Wrigley. Illus. Dwayne Harty. Hyperion Press, 1985. 40 pp. \$3.95 each volume, paper. ISBN 0920534-20-1, 0-92053411-2.

The authors of the first two books are described as “botanist” and “entomologist” respectively. The author of the last two is Museum Director and Curator of Mammals and Birds, Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature. This series presents a species-by-species approach to different parts of the biological world. For each species there is a “story”, followed by a fairly technical description, including scientific or family name, size, distribution, reproduction, dispersal, food, habitat, and appropriate remarks. On facing page is a line illustration to be coloured by the reader in colours indicated in the text.

The nature stories vary in the different books. In the book on wildflowers and insects, a child often observes flowers or insects, often in the company of an adult. The children are different in each story, so that the reader cannot really become acquainted with any of them as people. More successful are the myths and legends which are retold about some of the flowers (e.g., violet, white water lily, Indian paint brush). Many of the insect stories tell about the insects themselves as they hunt for food or avoid being made into food. The stories in the two volumes on large mammals (including porcupines, seals, whales, mountain sheep, and many others, all native to Canada or its oceans) concern problems of finding food or mates, or of avoiding enemies.

Overall, this series provides a lively and informative picture of important parts of the biological world. They seem designed for children of approximately 8-14; it seems unlikely that children who would be interested in colouring the pictures would be able to handle the more technical descriptions, but the stories would usually give them a taste for further knowledge.

Looking at plants, David Suzuki with Barbara Hehner. Stoddart, 1985. 96 pp. \$8.95 paper. ISBN 0-7737-5039-8. **Looking at insects.** David Suzuki with Barbara Hehner. Stoddart, 1985. 96 pp. \$8.95 paper. ISBN 0-7737-5062-2.

The well-known scientist and exponent of science to the public, David Suzuki, has provided two books that use an experimental approach to introduce children to parts of the living world.

In the first book, he presents clearly written and well-illustrated accounts of the functional parts of plants, including roots, stems, leaves, fruits and

flowers and then describes several specialized plants such as the oldest and largest trees, insects-eating plants and others. Especially attractive sections called "something to do" tell how to do such things as make paper and plant dyes, test the strength of root growth, make plaster casts of leaves, and study the effects of sunlight on leaves.

The same format is used for the book on insects. Suzuki introduces the reader to different developmental forms of insects (metamorphosis), to the ways insects see and smell, and to their defence and attack mechanisms. "Something to do" sections explain how to capture insects without hurting them, how to study camouflage, how the sound of crickets is influenced by temperature, how to preserve spider webs, how to study ant colonies and spiders in the process of spinning webs.

Only occasionally do the books "talk down" to the readers. Parts of the experiments — e.g. the use of sharp knives or hot water — are marked as requiring the help of adults. I suspect that children able to carry out these experiments would not be willing to let adults do the "dangerous" bits for them. However, for families with younger children, these cautionary notes might well be a good way of introducing adults as well as children to the experimental method. The books should provide fun for both.

Donn Kushner is a Professor of Biology at the University of Ottawa. In addition to scientific papers on bacterial physiology he has published a book of short stories "The witnesses and other stories" (1980) and two books for children "The violin maker's gift" (1980) and "Uncle Jacob's ghost story" (1984) which have been translated into several languages.

QUAND UN OURS POLAIRE DÉRIVE VERS LE SUD

Bonjour l'arbre, Cécile Gagnon. Illus. Darcia Labrosse. Longueuil, Editions du Raton-Laveur, 1985, 24 pp. 5,95\$ broché. ISBN 2-920660-05-0; **J'ai chaud**, Cécile Gagnon. Illus. Darcia Labrosse. Longueuil, Editions du Raton-Laveur, 1986, 24 pp. 5,95\$ broché. ISBN 2-920660-06-3; **J'ai faim**, Cécile Gagnon. Illus. Darcia Labrosse. Longueuil, Editions du Raton-Laveur, 1986. 24 pp. 5,95\$ broché. ISBN 2-920660-07-1.

Un jeune ours blanc orphelin? Quel triste sort direz-vous! Ce serait mal connaître l'ours Léon...Consolé de la mort de sa mère par des oies sympathiques, notre jeune ours se retrouve à la dérive, sur une banquise, direc-