



Companions in Wonder: Children and Adults Exploring Nature Together

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Rachel Carson's classic 1956 essay "Help Your Child to Wonder" urged adults to help children experience the "sense of wonder" that comes only from a relationship with nature. It's clear we haven't succeeded in following her advice: eight-year-olds surveyed in the United Kingdom could identify more Pokémon characters than common wildlife species; and Richard Louv's recent best-selling book *Last Child in the Woods* identifies a "nature deficit disorder" in children around the world. But today a growing number of environmentally minded parents, teachers, and other adults are seeking to restore nature to its rightful place in children's lives. This anthology gathers personal essays recounting adventures great and small with children in the natural world. The authors--writing as parents, teachers, mentors, and former children--describe experiences that range from bird watching to an encounter with an apple butter-loving grizzly bear. Rick Bass captures fireflies with his children and reflects on fatherhood; Michael Branch observes wryly that both gardening and parenting are "disciplines of sustainability"; Lauret Savoy wonders how African American children can connect to the the land after generations of estrangement; and Sandra Steingraber has "the big talk" with her children, not about sex but about global warming. By turns lyrical, comic, and earnest, these writings guide us to closer connections with nature and with the children in our lives, for the good of the planet and our own spiritual and physical well-being.

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