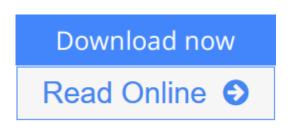


Urban Place: Reconnecting with the Natural World (Urban and Industrial Environments)

From The MIT Press



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Amidst city concrete and suburban sprawl, Americans are discovering new ways to reconnect with the natural world. From community gardens in New York's Lower East Side to homeless shelters in California, the search for a more sustainable future has led grassroots groups to a profound reconnection to place and to the natural world.Studies of the health consequences of renewing a connection with nature support the urgency of providing green surroundings as cities expand and the majority of the earth's population lives in urban areas. Medical research results, from groups as diverse as healthy volunteers, surgery patients, and heart attack survivors, suggest that contact with nature may improve health and well-being. Engagement with nearby natural places also provides restoration from mental fatigue and support for more resilient and cooperative behavior. Aspects of stronger community life are fostered by access to nature, suggesting that there are significant social as well as physical and psychological benefits from connection with the natural world. This volume brings together research from anthropology, sociology, public health, psychology, and landscape architecture to highlight how awareness of locale and a meaningful renewal of attachment with the earth are connected to delight in learning about nature as well as to civic action and new forms of community. Community garden coalitions, organic market advocates, and greenspace preservationists resist the power of global forces, enacting visions of a different future. Their creative efforts tell a story of a constructive and dynamic middle ground between private plots and public action, between human health and ecosystem health, between individual attachment and urban sustainability.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Essential reading for anyone interested in creating healthier human habitats in the concrete jungles of our cities and asphalt barrens of suburbia, *Urban Place* deserves a spot on the shelf next to *Biophilia*. This optimistic compendium of new thinking in a wide range of academic disciplines argues the necessity of building more place attachment, ecological restoration, local food awareness, and green space into our increasingly displaced, indoor digital culture."--Francesca Lyman, environmental journalist and author of *The Greenhouse Trap* and *Inside the Dzanga-Sangha Rain Forest*

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(Francesca Lyman, environmental journalist and author of *The Greenhouse Trap* and *Inside the Dzanga-Sangha Rain Forest*)

"This is a hopeful and inspiring contribution to the understanding of global conservation. With careful and detailed analysis, Steinberg demonstrates that concern for the natural environment can take root in poor countries as easily as in the rich, and for the same economic and psychological reasons."--Edward O. Wilson, University Research Professor Emeritus, Harvard University

"It's all about connections, and Mitchell Thomashow shows us how to connect the global and local, both intellectually and practically. Bringing the Biosphere Home is must reading for people wanting to build a coherent world that honors place and planet."--David W. Orr, Environmental Studies Program, Oberlin College

"A rich and complex reflection regarding the subtle dependence of human subjectivity on the more-thanhuman natural world, and the strange ease with which we turn away from that world in its devastation. Drawing upon diverse materials--including human ecology, psychoanalysis, poetry, aesthetics--Shierry Nicholsen has fashioned a warm meditation on our chilling capacity for oblivion."--David Abram, author of *The Spell of the Sensuous* "The issue of excessive, careless, and ignorant consumption has been conspicuously absent in all the talk about sustainability. No longer! These essays break new conceptual ground and clarify the dynamics of consumption with intellectual honesty and political boldness. The authors aim to transform consumption from mindless and destructive to mindful and regenerative. This is a vitally important book!"--David W. Orr, Environmental Studies Program, Oberlin College

"For far too long we've understood the city as the very antithesis of animate nature. If humankind is to survive the calamitous century now upon us, it will be in large part because of a new rapprochement between our urban centers and the elemental earth. This fine book illuminates some of the necessary steps toward such a vital reconciliation. David Abram, author of *The Spell of the Sensuous*

" *Urban Place* is the story of an exciting revolution in the way we design, build, and live in urban settings, driven by the recognition that human health and that of nature are one and indivisible. Peggy Barlett and her colleagues are describing nothing less than the renaissance of a humane and decent civilization and the outlines of a sustainable urban world." David W. Orr, Environmental Studies Program, Oberlin College

"Sound philosophy requires a solid understanding of the nature and origin of mind, which in turn depends on the best neuroscience available. Patricia Churchland, with verve and exactitude, has taken a large step toward establishing that link."--Edward O. Wilson, University Research Professor Emeritus, Harvard University

"*Nature by Design* is a wonderful book -- an eloquent, wise, and useful guide to the potentials and ambiguities of ecological restoration. By connecting nature, community, memory, and intention so artfully, Eric Higgs has redefined the field."--David W. Orr, Environmental Studies Program, Oberlin College

"For far too long we have understood the urban world as the very antithesis of animate nature. If humankind is to survive the calamitous century now upon us, we'll need to rediscover our cities not as merely human constructs but as earthly places informed and permeated by the more-than-human terrains that really sustain them. This fine book illustrates some key steps toward such a vital renewal."--David Abram, author of *The Spell of the Sensuous*

"Peggy Bartlett has assembled and led an impressive team of researchers to reexamine how our urban selves are finding new ways to connect with nature, how we are both reclaiming and recreating meanings in these connections, and the personal and social benefits of such reconnection."--Jac Smit, President, Urban "*Urban Place* is the story of an exciting revolution in the way we design, build, and live in urban settings, driven by the recognition that human health and that of nature are one and indivisible. Peggy Barlett and her colleagues are describing nothing less than the renaissance of a humane and decent civilization and the outlines of a sustainable urban world."--David W. Orr, Environmental Studies Program, Oberlin College

About the Author

Peter D. Turney is Senior Research Officer in the Institute for Information Technology of the National Research Council of Canada.

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