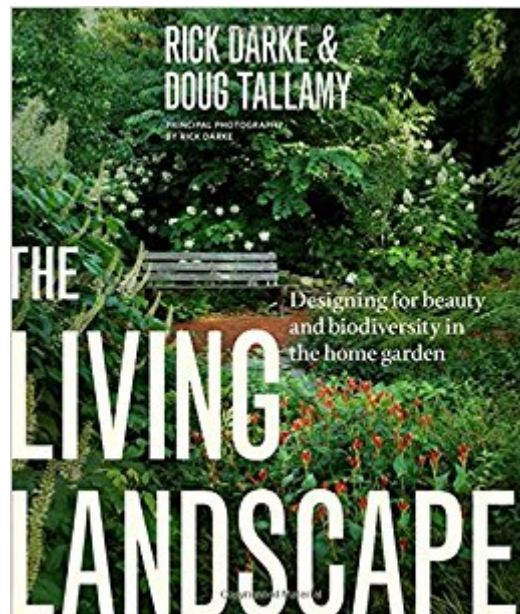




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# The Living Landscape: Designing For Beauty And Biodiversity In The Home Garden



## Synopsis

Many gardeners today want a home landscape that nourishes and fosters wildlife. But they also want beauty, a space for the kids to play, privacy, and maybe even a vegetable patch. Sure, it's a tall order, but *The Living Landscape* shows how to do it. By combining the insights of two outstanding authors, it offers a model that anyone can follow. Inspired by its examples, you'll learn the strategies for making and maintaining a diverse, layered landscape—one that offers beauty on many levels, provides outdoor rooms and turf areas for children and pets, incorporates fragrance and edible plants, and provides cover, shelter, and sustenance for wildlife. Richly illustrated with superb photographs and informed by both a keen eye for design and an understanding of how healthy ecologies work, *The Living Landscape* will enable you to create a garden that is full of life and that fulfills both human needs and the needs of wildlife communities.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Interest in the native plant movement is slowly growing, but this guide will interest all gardeners as Darke and Tallamy go beyond simple gardening tips to describe how native plants can play "essential roles in gardens designed for multiple purposes, with a focus on proven functionality." Beauty ranks high as a value and function, and the authors also note such equally important garden purposes as screening and cooling. They cover the various botanical, cultural, and temporal layers in wild landscapes, the interrelationships of living organisms, what

landscapes do ecologically, the cultivation of appreciation for the wonder of nature's processes, and diverse home garden applications. Abundant color photographs of herons, egrets, turtles, and other animals enhance images of biodiverse landscapes and instructions for using native plant cuttings to create interior decor. The authors also provide useful grids showing selected plants' landscape and ecological functions organized by North American regions. Essential for gardeners and nature lovers interested in sustainability. --Whitney Scott

"This thoughtful, intelligent book is all about connectivity, addressing a natural world in which we are the primary influence." • The New York Times Books Review "Two giants of the natural gardening world, Rick Darke and Doug Tallamy, have collaborated on their best work yet." • The New York Times "Gives meaningful definition to the idea of biodiversity . . . the book offers guidance for creating beautiful landscapes that will be durable and "support life without sacrificing aesthetics." • Publishers Weekly "Essential for gardeners and nature lovers interested in sustainability." • Booklist "A fascinating and beautiful book on creating gardens for wildlife." • Library Journal "With beautiful photos and many examples, they argue eloquently that gardens can be civilized, lovely and even elegant while incorporating local plants and creating habitat for birds and the entire ecosystem in which they live." • Chicago Tribune "A rich guide on creating sustainable landscapes." • Sunset "Will become the most popular book of the decade." • Real Dirt "Here's the book of the season, worth contemplating all winter long for the heartfelt and elegant practicality of its environmentalism. . . Darke's beautiful photos stress the interconnectedness of nature, while illustrating how to create healthy ecosystems that serve humans, plants, animals, insects and birds." • Pacific Northwest Magazine "The Living Landscape will enable you to create a garden that is full of life and fulfills both human needs and the needs of wildlife communities." • The Detroit News "The Living Landscape by Rick Darke and Doug Tallamy is a beautiful guide to creating and maintaining a landscape that is not only beautiful and functional for its human inhabitants but also offers food and shelter for wildlife." • Daily Herald "Both a primer on how landscapes develop in the wild and a manual for learning how to observe wild areas and then apply nature's principles to your own garden, the book has breathtaking photographs by the authors of wildlife including birds, butterflies, moths, turtles, and bees luxuriating in habitats provided by gardens

designed with their needs in mind. • Gardenista

I heard Douglas Tallamy speak at the Native Plants Conference this Spring, and I've been eagerly awaiting his new book since. As a professional gardener at a top US Japanese garden, as well the writer of a garden blog focused on creating your garden sanctuary, I don't grow only native plants. In fact long ago, I was one of those turned off by the whole native plant movement. I have gradually over the years been turned into a convert. I now fully recognize the value of native plants in the landscape. It was Doug's monumentally important book *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants, Updated and Expanded* that solidified my evolving views of how and why I should be pursuing my career and calling. His new book lives up to his last. "The Living Landscape" is more of a continuation of "Bringing Nature Home" than a replacement for it. If his first book made the case for using native plants in the landscape, this book shows you how in a general sense. This is not a "paint by number book" for creating a native landscape, but it is a broad and detailed covering of how and why it can be done. This also is not a dumb down book for the beginning gardener. By the same token, I can't imagine a better first book for someone looking to begin landscaping their home to read. I recommend it without reservation. Doug's coauthor, Rick Darke (author of "The American Woodland Garden: Capturing the Spirit of the Deciduous Forest") brings not only his writing voice but also his excellent photography. Don't get me wrong this is a heady book with some pretty in depth concepts, but it also features an abundance of beautiful pictures. So much in fact, it almost qualifies as a Coffee table book.

Chapter 1 - Layers in the Wild Landscapes - This 74 page chapter covers looking at wild landscapes through the view of the different layers in the garden. Not only the vertical layers of the woodland but also horizontal layers where different landscape types meet and layers through time. It was a ironic that the day I posted a blog post on layers in the woodland, that I received this book in the mail that explained the concept I was trying to communicate in a more in depth way.

Chapter 2 - The Community of Living Organisms - This 15 page chapters basically sums up most of the important concepts of the 1st half of "Bringing Nature Home". It will be a worthwhile review for those who have read that book, while readers who have not should read it slowly and take in the important message it presents.

Chapter 3 - The Ecological functions of the Garden - 11 pages. Another short but important chapter. It helps to broaden our view of how our landscapes can provide benefits other than just looking pretty. It covers topics such as species conservation, carbon sequestration, moderating temperature, watershed protection, air filtration, etc.

Chapter 4 - The Art of Observation - This 10 page chapter could be better in my mind. I like the color examples given, but I feel more depth and breadth of this

topic could be covered. It is still worthwhile to most readers. Chapter 5 - Applying Layers to the Home Garden - This massive 156 page chapter is the meat of the book for people wanting examples on how the concepts in the book apply to their landscapes. There are lots of examples and beautiful pictures of applying the information in the 1st chapter on Layers especially to the author's landscapes. Again, it does NOT give Step by Step instructions so some people may be disappointed here. There is enough meat in the examples, that practical advice can be extracted and applied to your landscape. It may take a bit of study though. The last part of the book may be the most helpful for some people. It includes a listing of plants and their different benefits and uses by region in the US. The Regions are Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Southwest, Midwest and Mountain states, Pacific Northwest, and New England. These lists mostly cover natives, but some include exotic plants mainly to point out those that provide little value to our ecosystems. Overall the lists are good but I have a few comments about specific regions. Mid-Atlantic - This is the only one that is personally done by the authors. The other regions were written by other experts. This region gets the most detail and if I lived in this region I would be thrilled by the detail of this list. Midwest and Mountain states (hmm, Indiana and Colorado has same plant list?) - This list was written by an author of a book on Ohio birds. It looks pretty accurate and detailed for those of us in the Midwest. I am not quite so sure I would be happy with this information if I lived in the Mountain states. Overall this is a fantastic follow up to Bringing Nature home. It definitely stands on it's own. If it is viewed as an extension of that book, it is a lovely and worthwhile addition to any gardener or landscaper, or just anyone interested in preserving our living landscape.

I have been a fan of Doug Tallamy's book Bringing Nature Home since it was published. It changed the way I thought about the plants in my yard and has guided my choice of plants. I've been looking forward to this new book since I heard that it was being written. Finally a "how-to" book for creating the entire landscape, not just the individual plants within it! But as the introduction says, "It is not a how-to book." And after all, given the diversity of people's yards and personal preferences, a cookbook approach could hardly work. Instead, it "aims to provide readers with inspiration and strategies for making and maintaining truly living landscapes..." In this it has succeeded. It has given me many new ideas to think about, has provided many images of the natural world as well as home landscapes to serve as guides, and has strengthened my understanding of the importance of what we do with our own yards. I happen to live in the ecoregion pictured in the book, so it's especially useful for me, but plant lists are provided for each region in the country and indicate both the ecological and landscape functions of each plant. (Even so, it might not be as useful for someone in

the Southwest, since it's so different from the examples used throughout the book.) Like Bringing Nature Home, this book has further extended my thinking about my home landscaping, and I highly recommend it.

Living Landscape is an important addition to the works on native gardening. The collaboration between Darke, a knowledgeable plantsman and designer of natural landscapes and Tallamy, an entomologist with a terrific understanding of ecosystems, is an excellent pairing. I trained as a landscape architect and have been frustrated by the gap between conservation theory at the university level and practical applications that could be helpful to the homeowner who desires a healthy landscape. The book takes one past the concept of reducing one's lawn to real examples of space planning and the use of plants to support diversity. Tallamy's first book, "Bringing Nature Home", made the critical link between the survival of our native bird population and available insect protein for fledgling birds. Native insects have, of course, co-evolved with native plants and primarily, require our native plants to survive. So there is a very important link between the native plants and our native bird populations. He makes the equally important point that homeowners can help bring back diminishing bird populations. The book is thoughtfully structured around design principles and ecological function. Observations of "Layers" in the wild landscape, including topics like the canopy, understory, waters edge and so on, are discussed relative to layers within the home garden. "The Art of Observation" is educational too. Significantly, among other valuable observations, Tallamy points out the importance of interrelationships of organisms, ecological function and ecological benefits for humans as well as wildlife, and the critical role of biological corridors. Yes, the book primarily approaches the larger suburban property, but its principles are important to consider at any scale. Several properties are discussed. I found the authors' observations of their properties over time to be valuable. An important gift of The Living Landscape is to empower the important and even urgent work of the property owner with a framework. This book does not cover all of the details, but landscapes are complicated. There is a helpful list of the benefits of various plants in the book. Given the triple threat of habitat fragmentation, overpopulation of deer and invasive plants crowding out our natives, this is a well-timed publication, so thanks for your work, gentlemen. As I write this review, The Living Landscape is no. 1 of's Landscape Architecture titles. I will recommend and gift this book to landscape designers and home gardeners.

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