Gardeners of Eden: Rediscovering Our Importance to Nature

Dan Dagget

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Dagget's ideas fly in the face of our culture's ancient assumption that humans are separate from nature and of current notions that the best way for us to protect the land is to leave it alone. He demonstrates case after case of positive human engagement in the environment and of managed ecosystems and restored areas that are richer, more diverse, and healthier than unmanaged ones. Much of pre-Columbian America, he contends, was not a pristine wilderness but an ancient garden managed over millennia by native peoples who shaped the plant and animal communities around them to the mutual benefit of all. What Dagget is proposing is a radical change in the way we define land health and the ways this health can be achieved. Rather than leaving the land alone, he recommends a new kind of environmentalism based on management, science, evolution, and holism, and served by humans who enrich the environment even as they benefit from it. In this way, we humans can resume our ancient role as gardeners and stewards of our world, reviving damaged land, facilitating the return of native species, restoring the land's ability to absorb and store water and carbon. ecological crisis and a new purpose for our human energies and ideals. This book is essential reading for anyone involved with the earth and anyone seeking a viable way for our burgeoning human population to continue to live upon it.

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