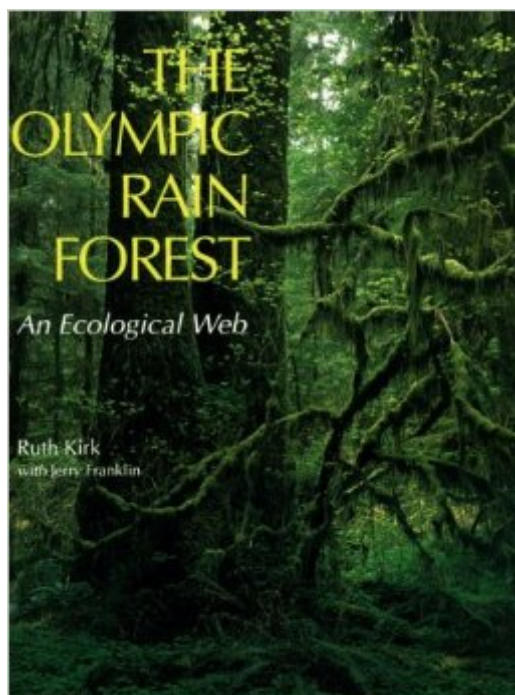


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The Olympic Rain Forest: An Ecological Web



Synopsis

The forest of the northwest coast of North America accounts for two thirds of the world's temperate-zone rain forest, which is a fraction of the size of the more publicized tropical rain forest but is currently being lost at a comparable rate. Coming at a time of public concern and controversy regarding the future of the forest, this book provides a fresh examination of the natural dynamics that have produced the remarkably lush growth characterizing roughly two thousand miles of coast from Coos Bay, Oregon, to the gulf of Alaska—a stretch of greater north-south ecological sameness than exists anywhere else on earth. The rain forest valleys of Washington's Olympic Peninsula stand out as the showpiece of this region. Because the forest's productivity and sheer biomass per square mile are among the world's greatest, it is recognized as a National Park, a World Biosphere Reserve, and a World Heritage Site. Pointing out that ecology and economics share the same root (oikos, meaning "home"), this book evokes the forest's beauty and intricacy while summarizing scientific understanding of components and interactions. We learn that moldering logs produce their own moisture as a by-product of decay, and are virtual reservoirs as well as storehouses of nutrients—qualities that contribute to their role as the rain forest's famed nurse logs, which act as seedbeds for oncoming generations of spruce and hemlock. We also learn that fallen trees affect stream flow and crucially influence the well-being of aquatic organisms (including fish) and that, washed downriver, they modify both beach character and life in the ocean near river mouths. The unique ecological web of this ancient forest—which has existed for at least five thousand years—includes the peculiar above-ground rooting of maple trees, which actually feed from the mossy "upholstery" covering their trunks and branches; the role of elk as "landscape gardeners" preventing the understory from becoming a thicket; and a newly discovered life community within the gravel zone of river bottoms and out under the forest floor. "Many of the spruce and hemlock trees we walk among today were alive when men like Sir Francis Bacon and Johannes Kepler first recognized the value of objective data over mystical portents," write authors Ruth Kirk and Jerry Franklin. "They have been pushing their roots through the soil and wafting seeds into the air throughout the entire existence of science." This book will be welcomed by resident Northwesterners and travelers as well as by all who are interested in nature. Its prose is both broadly readable and scientifically sound. More than 100 color photographs catch the variety and grandeur of this magnificent forest.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Olympic Rain Forest: An Ecological Web" is an excellent book. From the first time I had opened this book, I found out that I had made a good choice."The Olympic Rain Forest: An Ecological Web" tells us about the wonderful ecosystem of the temperate rain forest of the Olympic Peninsula. The very interesting text with many detail information is enriched with many quality color photographs of magnificent trees, nice flowers and wild animals that we can see in the Olympic Rain Forest. The book describes whole history of this unique forest and perfectly explains an ecological web of the temperate rain forest.I highly recommend this book for everyone who is interested in wildlife and nature conservation.

Wonderful book, the sort you can read cover to cover, and get a deeper understanding of the forest.

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