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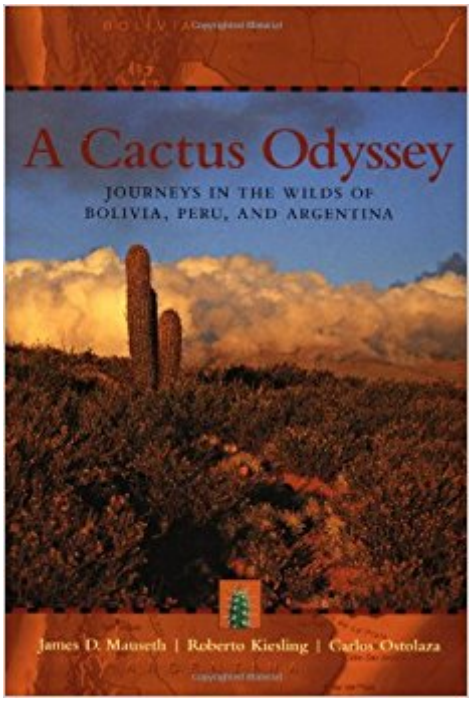
A Cactus Odyssey: Journeys In The Wilds Of Bolivia, Peru, And Argentina



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Synopsis

This book presents the stories of three avid field biologists who over the course of 15 years frequently traveled together in search of cacti in Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina. The conversational style of this travelogue allows us to share in the authors' excitement as they encounter plants that have rarely, if ever, been written about. Nearly 195 remarkable color photographs accompany the vivid descriptions of unusual cacti growing alongside non-succulent plants, at altitudes of 8000 feet or more-and even in rainforests! A Cactus Odyssey will interest gardeners, travelers, and conservationists from around the world who wish to learn more about these irresistible plants, and it is the hope of the authors that this book will inspire others to undertake their own cactus odyssey.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The authors two plant biologists and a retired doctor share a passion for cacti, which they eloquently describe in this fascinating and handsomely illustrated book. Often traveling together to study and collect cactus species, these enthusiastic field biologists here share their experiences. Their passion has taken them on a series of field trips to remote areas of South America, where the motels were better seen at night, drinking water came only from bottles, and torrential rains washed out roadbeds. However, the rewards of seeing new species more than made up for all the discomforts. Cacti are unique to the Americas and grow in wide range of climates, including hot and cold deserts, rainforests, grasslands, and rocky mountain peaks. Well over 1000 species exist, varying in size from 1' to 30" tall. All have spines and many produce exotic flowers in luscious

colors, as can be seen in the many exquisite photographs that have been selected to enhance the lively text. All terms from plant biology are well explained. A welcome addition to any library collection, this book will capture the interest of travelers, amateur botanists, students, and researchers. Linda M. Kaufmann, Massachusetts Coll. of Liberal Arts Lib., North AdamsCopyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

A fascinating account of travels in search of South American cacti. -- Dr. Brent Elliot, Bookseller, February 2002Here is a cactus book that you can read like an novel from cover to cover. -- Graham Charles, Cactus and Succulent Journal, 74 no.2 2002I have read this book with extreme pleasure. It is relaxing, sometimes thrilling...and very well written. -- Lucio Russo, BotanyBooks, March 17, 2002The book is immensely readable and I found it difficult to put down, reading it from cover to cover. -- www.cactus-mall.com, March 5, 2002This book is a delight and makes great, pleasurable and easy reading...giving more knowledge to the experienced grower. -- supplement to the CSSA Journal, March/April 2002

I cannot remember when I have had so much enjoyment in reading a book about plants. This is not a simple "how to identify" work, but rather a story by and of three very knowledgeable men, scientists, traveling through the countries of Bolivia, Peru and Argentina, not as tourists, but rather than scientist. For a book which is primarily about plants, i.e. cactus, it is so much more. We get a wonderful and insightful travel story/book thrown in. As another reviewer pointed out, this could quite well have been a very boring read. This it was not! I have actually given this one three reads simply because it is fun! But, most importantly, this volume is simply packed with wonderful information about cacti, their history, their origins and environment. This work in not simply a field guide or a bunch of pretty, sterile pictures of cactus setting on a shelf photographed with a bunch of high tech gear, it actually gives information about these wonderful plants as they grow in their home environment, their natural state, the wild. The photographs are all field photographs and for field photos, quite well done. The text is very precise and easy to follow, not being over the head of the amature (such as my self) yet providing so much information to the advanced student. Discriptions are great. I did have trouble at first with the Latin names of course, but this forced be to pull out my old high school Latin books and do a bit of brushing up...this was good. All of the photographs are in color and well captioned. As an added note, Timber Press did a wonderful job on this book (I wonder if all their books are of this caliber). I wish all books were of this physical quality. Of even more importance than anything else, my knowledge of this particular plant family took a 100 percent

jump in depth. For that I am grateful. I very much suggest you add this one to your library. Recommend highly.

Since I started growing my first cacti nearly 30 years ago, certain books have been of great importance for my knowledge and development, when it comes to growing and understanding cacti. But never has one single book put so many pieces together as this one! The book is just packed with knowledge and I really became overwhelmingly inspired!The authors travel through several South American countries and habitats, diverse as they are because of the andean influence. You just want to go there and travel yourself!After reading this book twice in a short time, I view the whole consept of cacti and environment differently. How the tectonic plates moved and forced plants and animals to evolve and adapt to the new niches and habitats, from the ancestors in Gondwana, to the first cacti in south America, later spreading into the adjoining north American continent. How the cactusgenera are related. How a cactus works.In fact I learned too many tings to mention everything; just read the book! It could seem very technical and boring, but believe me; its not! At least if you have a relation to growing cacti. Its all in there! Highly recommended!

Loved this book. So well written and packed with informative culture/environmental history of a variety of cacti.

Think being a botanist is dull and without trepidation. Look at this and read what people do to get information and only really has scientific value for a small audience.

Two professors and a retired medical doctor set out for Peru, Bolivia and Argentina to study and record members of the cactus family. These explorations take place from the mid-1990ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s through the year 2000...not only a pleasurable read but most informative and insightful of this unique plant family.Being somewhat familiar with the cacti from Arizona, New Mexico, etc., I had no idea of the vast number of species in South America...and they occur from the jungles and rainforests to altitudes over 12,000 feet...some even at 15,000 feet!How about the subterranean cacti of Argentina? Or some parasitic plants which live on certain cacti? Is the growth of Armatocereus related to the El Nino years? And what about the cephaliums of certain cacti? A species of Weberbauerocereus which grows in moist habitats with lichens and bromeliads attached to them...and another of the same genus in a very barren environment also with lichens? The co-mingling of cacti with other plants, both of which benefit. The list goes on and on.With this

said, it does make one ponder the origins and evolution of plant adaptations...a fascinating subject in itself.A wonderful good-natured quest of modern day plant explorers.

At long last we have a captivating and illuminating book that shares the incredible and diverse lives of cacti.The title is a perfectly apt description of what is bound between the covers.After I finished the last page I turned to the front and started again.If a friend wants to know about cacti, I lend them this book. Inevitably then they buy one for themselves. It's just that good.It has me wishing the authors (Mauseth, Kiesling, and Ostolaza) would conspire once again to write of their adventures.

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