

2024 VanDusen Book Club Reading List

Monday, February 12

Theme: A Bug's Life and Why It Matters

The Insect Crisis: The Fall of the Tiny Empires That Run the World (2022) by

Oliver Milman

Silent Earth: Averting the Insect Apocalypse (2021) by David Goulson

What Rachel Carson's groundbreaking book, *Silent Spring*, did for exposing the often negative effects of human activity on the natural world, these two books, in spite of their pessimistic titles, reveal that much can be done to prevent the worldwide collapse of insect populations, thus ensuring human survival.

Monday, April 8

Theme: For Peat's Sake, Don't Drain That Swamp

Swamplands: Tundra Beavers, Quaking Bogs and the Improbable World of Peat (2021) by

Edward Struzik

Fen, Bog and Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and Its Role in the Climate Crisis (2022) by Annie Proulx

In vivid and lucid writing, these two authors explore how human actions are turning climate-friendly peatlands into liabilities, with potentially devastating consequences for the planet and humanity.

Monday, June 10

Theme: Planting Roses and Politics

Orwell's Roses (2021) by Rebecca Solnit

Using George Orwell's 1938 rose planting task as a starting point, Solnit delves into the intertwined politics of nature and power, offering a reconsideration of Orwell as a gardener, writer and anti-fascist. You might not read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the same way again.

Monday, September 9

Theme: Ahead of Their Time

Brave the Wild River: The Untold Story of Two Women Who Mapped the Botany of the Colorado River (2023) by Melissa Sevigny

In this beautiful tribute to a modern day Lewis and Clark duo, two trailblazing female botanists undertake a historic boat trip down the mighty and treacherous Colorado River and through the Grand Canyon, recording the plant life along its banks.

Monday, November 11

Theme: How Not to Save the Planet

Birnam Wood (2023) by Eleanor Catton

In this often-hilarious political eco-thriller, the collision between the environmental idealism of a group of guerrilla gardeners, the staggering wealth of a psychopathic billionaire benefactor and

the flexible morality of a recently knighted New Zealand landowner shows the consequences of the power gap.