

## **Book Review: The Insatiable Bark Beetle**

Academics, eminent scientists and businessmen worldwide are endorsing and supporting, with insightful critiques on a truly broad scale, a tightly written treatise on rapacious bark beetles. Collectively these amazingly adaptable insects have marched into mountainsides of lodgepole pine, expanding enterprisingly now into other pine species, spruce even. And perhaps shortly too into the North's emerald crown, its boreal forests.

Author Dr Reese Halter is well known and respected as an academic and biologist. His first chapters explaining the correlation of beetles to climate change to the essential carbon sink effect of this planet's forests are, indeed, scholarly. Statistics and percentages stare out from the pages of 'The Insatiable Bark Beetle's' second chapter, 'Global Warming, A Climate Disrupter.' These pages take dedication to read, digest, absorb.

When, though, the reader slides into the forests themselves, Halter shape-shifts into the true craft of wordsmithing. Lodgepole pine forests can be sniffed, felt, mourned for their demise, and are followed by descriptions of hardier but still vulnerable spruce.

Halter draws us, still with immense articulate detail, into piñon, whitebark and limber pines and their elegant, tortuously interconnected ecosystems. His final elaboration on ancient mountaineers is so obviously close to his heart - the tough and resilient bristlecone pines - is perhaps one of his finest pieces of writing.

The closing chapter, 'Our Future' has depth. Easy to dismiss climate change (and an uneasy Biblical potential plague of mutating bark beetles) if company CEOs, governments, others, merely shuffle statistics. But if statistics fuse into

your own human life, affect it, what Halter writes now, with real hope, is of well-known industrialists taking action (a quote, for example...“what Bill Coors, the grandson of Adolph Coors of Coors Brewing Company realized in 1950: “All pollutions and waste are lost profit.”). He cites Direct Youth action, small children even aware and active in local projects.

Rocky Mountain Book’s publisher of this book, Don Gorman, has a gift for commissioning eco-writing with real bite. Here then, the canary sings as stark a warning as Marq de Villiers ‘Water’ or Rachel Carson’s ‘Silent Spring.’

## **The End**

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