



In a Desert Garden: Love and Death among the Insects

John Alcock

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When John Alcock replaced the Bermuda grass in his suburban Arizona lawn with gravel, cacti, and fairy dusters, he was doing more than creating desert landscaping. He seeded his property with flowers to entice certain insects and even added a few cowpies to attract termites, creating a personal laboratory for ecological studies. His observations of life in his own front yard provided him with the fieldnotes for this unusual book. *In a Desert Garden* draws readers into the strange and fascinating world of plants and animals native to Arizona's Sonoran Desert.

As Alcock studies the plants in his yard, he shares thoughts on planting, weeding, and pruning that any gardener will appreciate. And when commenting on the mating rituals of spiders and beetles or marveling at the camouflage of grasshoppers and caterpillars, he uses humor and insight to detail the lives of the insects that live in his patch of desert. Celebrating the virtues of even aphids and mosquitoes, Alcock draws the reader into the intricacies of desert life to reveal the complex interactions found in this unique ecosystem. *In a Desert Garden* combines meticulous science with contemplations of nature and reminds us that a world of wonder lies just outside our own doors.

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