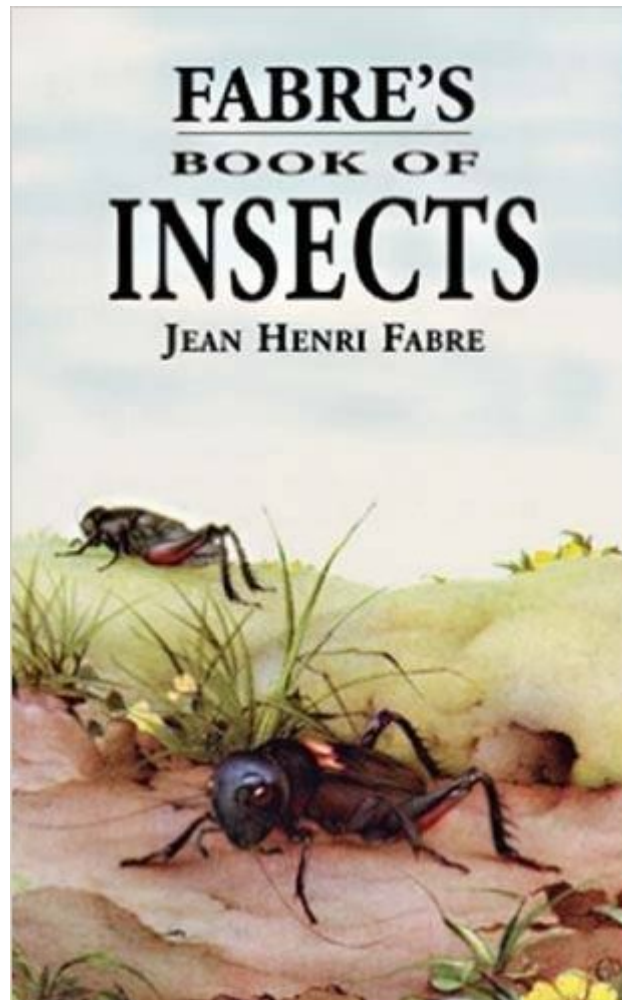


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Fabre's Book Of Insects



Synopsis

Hailed by Darwin as "The Homer of Insects," famed French entomologist Jean Henri Fabre (1823-1915) devoted hours of rapt attention to insects while they hunted, built nests, and fed their families. Working in Provence, in barren, sun-scorched fields inhabited by countless wasps and bees, he observed their intricate and fascinating world, recounting their activities in simple, beautifully written essays. This volume, based on translations of Fabre's *Souvenirs Entomologiques*, blends folklore and mythology with factual explanation. Fabre's absorbing account of the scarab beetle's existence, for example, begins with the ancient Egyptians' symbolic view of this busy creature, eventually leading to a careful discussion of its characteristic method of rolling a carefully sculpted ball of food to its den. Elsewhere, he discusses with infectious enthusiasm the physiologic secrets behind the luminosity of fireflies, the musical talents of the locust, the comfortable home of the field cricket, and the cannibalism of the pious-looking praying mantis, among other topics. These charmingly related stories of insect life are a rare combination of scientific study and literary classic that will delight entomologists, naturalists, and nature lovers alike.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It seems unfair to give this book such a low rating due to a lack of illustrations. If you have any curiosity toward insects, I highly recommend this book. While some insect books come from more of an anatomical point of view (and yes, with many illustrations), this book takes you through an intimate and fascinating account of the lives of these amazing creatures, such as: the sacred beetle,

praying mantis, psyches, locusts and more. The author will open up a whole other world to you with a gentle view toward insects and with vivid and illustrative language.

Since I was a student in the late 1940s Henri Fabre has been one of my heroes. I have had his book of collected observations on the intimate lives of insects since that time. The book was so over used that it badly needed replacing, and I was very pleased to see that it is still in print. It was my pleasure, in 1983, to visit Fabre's House and property in Provence, now a small museum. The museum retains atmosphere of a private place - I and my wife were the only visitors at the time; his desk, microscope and the big black hat remain in the room where he did many of his observations; as do, in a large glass case, the very large collection of natural objects (unrelated to insects) that he amassed in the course of his long life. In a lower floor are exhibited the many letters he received from admiring scientists, including Darwin.

How could anybody dislike such a charming old book? It has no need for illustrations, the intimate portraits of wonderful and industrious insects are rendered in delightful 19th century prose, by a naturalist who clearly knew his subject very well indeed. Very readable and very likeable.

No one can read this book without being absolutely enchanted! If only this little gem accompanied all modern science textbooks - or even replaced them. I highly recommend this book.

Having borrowed this book from the library for my daughter's homeschool science class, I already knew what a great book it was. I purchased it for my son because I had to go through an inter-library loan to get it for my daughter, and the constraints of that process compelled me to go the purchase route this time. I was also pleased with the quick, trouble-free delivery.

Fabre's easy narrative makes it easy for children and adults to understand and enjoy the life and behavior of different insects. His insight and approach (by careful observation and fact-report only) makes it a scientific book. Fabre was an amazing teacher and scientist. His writing skills as well as detailed observations make this book really interesting and enjoyable. After reading it I read other books by Fabre as well as other insect-related books. The book makes you want to learn more about insects.

Warning, there is not one picture in this book save a crappy watercolored cricket on the cover.

There was an earlier edition with exquisite illustrations, so I thought I'd take a chance with this one. *sound of gameshow buzzer* I'm sorry, no pictures. Anyway it is a good book, I enjoyed it. It's not a scientific description of insects and their habits, it's a regular guy's observations of and adventures with the insect world throughout his life and it's pretty interesting. It was Surrealist director Luis Bunuel's favorite book, although his copy had illustrations!!!

A charming book, which I read as a child, seventy years ago. I enjoyed it this time too.

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