

The Deeply Green Book Guide

The following bibliography is about the deteriorating state of the world, the causes of its many interlocking problems, and possible solutions to them. That crisis is primarily an ecological crisis, though diverse social, economic and political troubles both reflect and exacerbate it. The seriousness of this ecocrisis aggravated by the very fact that so many people are unwilling or unable to face it. The Guide concentrate on books which really do look at the big picture or put their particular subject into the ecological context. It is a guide to a literature not just about but also for ecosystems and all the life they sustain, not just humans. Diversity, sufficiency and stability, not homogenisation, unlimited expectations and expansion, are the critical yardsticks in this worldview. Concepts such as interdependence, reciprocity, balance and especially that little word 'limits' would shape the way we think about, value and do things. That troublesome word 'sustainability' must be seen in holistic terms - spiritually, psychologically, culturally, economically and, of course, environmentally - and must embrace all the Earth's 'stakeholders', both its humans and non-human dependents.

Some readers may find this Guide partial, one-sided, emotive, even prejudiced. At one level, we plead guilty. We do takes sides: we are decidedly for the future well-being of the planet and against values, lifestyles and institutions that threaten it. Upon the integrity and health of the Earth's life-support systems, all worthwhile goals and expectations depend. So we are indeed biased in favour of ideas and activities that are ecologically sustainable.

The coming ecological crunch is the big issue of our times, Set against it, the threat from terrorism is quite tiny. It is not unreasonable now to compare the dark clouds looming over the human prospect and that of myriad other species to the 'phoney war' of 1939-40. Things then didn't look too bad but that illusion was soon to be shattered. The impacts are likely to be much more harmful, pervasive and long lasting than those of World War 2.

Publishers' blight

In the two World Wars, most people might have expected the media to be dominated by coverage of what was going on. True, there might be escapist fayre on offer at, say, the local cinema but it would have been odd if stories from both the frontlines and the effects of war on the home front had not been major staples in the news media. By contrast, the battle for planet Earth is receiving not just sporadic but downright misleading coverage, not least by publishers. Of course, 'doom and gloom' are not staple bestsellers, though some publishing houses have made a tidy sum from rubbish about the bizarre prophecies of, say, a Nostradamus or equally silly conspiracy theories such as the *Da Vinci Code*. But the all too genuine dangers in the real world have not received due attention.

This assessment applies to 'alternative' publishers as much as their mainstream cousins. Indeed some of the best books have come from the latter camp. Non-mainstream sources such as Zed and Pluto in Britain may have a good record in publishing tracts that effectively denounce the evils of, war, poverty, prejudice, the global 'casino economy' and the like. But a survey of their lists demonstrates the fundamental ecological dimension is ill-served. Instead a social justice agenda prevails. The environment becomes at best one issue amongst many and usually ends up on the back burner whenever the grievances of any disadvantaged group are raised. Most serious of all, there is widespread failure to take on board the threat from overpopulation, including the unsustainability of present migration patterns.

All kinds of ideological baggage crowd onto these trolleys: Post-modernism, Deconstructionism, Feminism, Marxism. Conspicuously absent midst all these wonders of wordplay is the ecological dimension, 'EcoCentrism', one which locate specific issues and debates in something wider and deeper than the over-trodden turf of class and gender. Some publishers like Earthscan tend to focus on the 'undergraduate'

market. Much of their output merely describes what is wrong and then in that peculiarly stodgy way characteristic in a lot of academic tomes. Punches are pulled, the Earth's ills described in such broad-brushed ways that little light is shone on actual causes. Equally light insight is given into the values, structures and policies needed to cure those ailments.

When ecological issues are addressed, poor arguments tend to prevail. Thus excessive claims are made for renewable energy sources, nonsense is talked about zero waste, every problem is naively and one-sidedly blamed on Big Business and Big Government while there is parallel naiveté about empowerment and popular participation. In recent years there has also been an increasing tendency to whitewash assorted thugocracies and theocracies around the world as well as keep quiet about the menace posed by religious fundamentalism. Instead, a myopic cultural relativism has replaced serious exploration of the many threats to long-term sustainability.

To be fair there are some really first class publications on specific issues such as genetic engineering, computerisation and the tightening corporate control of more and more aspects of economy and society. However such work is often not securely based on the ecological worldview. Moreover a focus on specific issues can lead to a less holistic analysis and inadequate consideration of the linkages between 'external' environmental despoliation and 'internal' social degradation. There is a basic need to address what, in essence, is a deep crisis in human culture and character.

If one were to spotlight publications that manage to blend many of the above failings, it would be *The Gaia Atlas of Planet Management* (note the humanistic hubris in its very title), not overlooking its sister for younger readers, *The Atlas of Earth Care* (there is also a cousin from Dorling Kindersley called *Save The Earth*). Sometimes there are quite naïve claims for new technologies. In *Save the Earth*, Peter Raven, a member of the US National Science Board, claims that "genetic engineering will widen the reach of our great-grandchildren, enabling them to put together altered kinds of organisms that will be productive indefinitely under the conditions in which they are grown". The book also hails the fusion of communications and computing technologies as "tools for sustainability".

The only thing wrong, according to such works, is lack of expertise, inadequate information, or insufficient incentives and rewards. Unfortunately the problem goes much deeper. Usually the real issue is actually not one of 'technique' but of values, goals and priorities, including the deadweight of vested interests and often the willing and indeed sometimes wilful wasteful and destructive behaviour of large sections of the public. It is naïve to suggest, as much of the 'good news' soft green literature does, that "genuine working partnerships" and "positive spirit" are all that is needed. In reality, as the anti-green 'brown backlash' demonstrates, businesses and other part of the 'Establishment' will resist measures needed to create sustainability when their power and profits are put on the line. This includes vicious character assassination as illustrated by the veritable witch-hunt of Rachel Carson after she wrote the prescient *Silent Spring*. Particularly misleading are those 'green lifestyle' and 'ethical living' books which suggest only comparatively minor and indeed congenial changes are necessary in the way we live.

The Internet might seem to offer an alternative but the 'information highway' is now clogged up with garbage. It is all too easy for good websites to go totally unnoticed. The same is true of blogging. Indeed the latter suffers from worse failings, given that it thrives on knee-jerk responses which in turn tends to come at the expense of proper reflection and study. In any case, lengthy reading from a screen is most undesirable on health and safety grounds. 'Old-fashioned' print still retains certain advantages both in terms of getting attention and communicating with its readers.

Shifting wheat from chaff

A checklist to identify really good literature on the ecocrisis includes features such as:

- the integration of an ecological ethic in its moral thinking, including a recognition of the intrinsic value of all species.

- the grounding of its analysis and policies in the biogeophysical actualities of finite resources, entropic loss and ecological checks and balances.
- the reordering of social concerns and targets within a framework which puts ecosystem 'health' and long-term carrying capacity as general priority number one.
- the explicit adoption of the goal of a steady-state economy.
- opposition to all technologies and institutions incompatible with the above aims, including due appreciation that 'technofixes' often create more problems than they solve and that many problems are not even technological but problems of values and goals.
- specific prioritisation of the goal of population stabilisation.
- adoption of a deeper critique of popular lifestyles and mass culture.
- greater realism about the limits to policies of popular empowerment, in the absence of deep cultural changes across society
- adoption of appropriate geographical frameworks, avoiding the false dichotomy of top-down versus 'bottom-up' as well as any cult of localism.

Deep Green Choice

The Guide lists a top twenty, concentrating on the core literature, material that really does address the key issues of the day. Each one is followed by a 'follow-up four' which may further help with a deeper exploration of the nature of an ecologically sustainable society and the values, institutions and lifestyles appropriate to it. Of course, new books continue to flood onto the market so the Guide focuses on those likely to stand the test of time, unlikely to be rendered redundant by more recent works. Readers should be able to get a picture in many cases of the best writers on particular topics and check for anything new from them.

Unlike the 'top' this or that programme on TV or feature in the press, the books listed here are not in any order of merit. Rather the Guide tries to cover a range of themes, from general perspectives to studies of particular issues. Thus space has been made for what we think is the best literature about, for example, architecture and urbanism, picking one core book plus four others so that, together, a good taste of the ecological view of the built environment and related issues is provided. As far as possible, on each of the more specific topics covered, we have tried to create a mix of the 'negative' (i.e. more emphasis on problems, causes and consequences) and the positive (possible solutions), though, of course, many works listed cover both sides of the coin.

This bibliography is primarily aimed at individuals already active on green issues. We assumed some basic familiarity with green thinking. However, we hope it will also be useful for people new to the movement or who studying it perhaps for academic or journalistic reasons. We would recommend in such cases that it might be better to start with general book like *It's a Matter of Survival* or *Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run*, followed by *Green History of the World* then a more 'positive' book such as *The Conserver Society*.

The Top Twenty

1. *State of the World*

by Lester Brown et al (Earthscan, annual)

This is a comprehensive and authoritative survey of many of the world's key trends, published each year. The press releases regularly put out by the Worldwatch Institute also provide a quick way of keeping on top of the mountain of data about the Earth's festering ills. Look them up on the Internet (www.worldwatch.org). The Institute also publishes a series of A5 booklets on specific issues in a series called the Worldwatch

Papers, with topics ranging from the disastrous depletion of underground water aquifers to the pestilential dangers of new (and old) diseases.

For other key reference works, see:

Callenbach, E. (1998). *Ecology: A Pocket Guide*. Univ. California Pr. A short little guide but big on ideas.

Diamond, J. (2004). *Ecocide*. Allen Lane.

Harrison, P. & F. Pearce (2001). *AAAS Atlas of Population and Environment*. Univ. California Pr.

Miller, G. Tyler (2003). *Living in the Environment*. Brooks Cole. A great single volume overview that has seen many editions, amazingly each one has been better than the last.

The **Living Planet** reports from the World Wide Fund for Nature @

http://www.panda.org/news_facts/publications/general/livingplanet/index.cfm

2. It's Matter of Survival

by Anita Gordon & David Suzuki (Harper Collins, 1991).

It is difficult to pick out one book that captures the breadth and depth of today's environmental, economic and social crises, not least the way they interact. This one does convey the urgency of the situation and the dangers we face, even if global overwarming were to turn out to be an illusion cooked up by a few overheated imaginations. The book draws upon a more conventional humanist perspective rather than a deeper ecological sensibility. It is also a bit dated by now. That said, it remains a firm rebuttal of the phoney 'good news' environmentalism being peddled by the likes of Gregg Easterbrook and organisations such as the British grouping Forum for the Future, let alone latter day Panglosses like Julian Simons and Wilfred Beckerman.

Other first class studies of coming ecological crunch include:

Diamond, J. (2004). *Ecocide*. Allen Lane.

Heinberg, R. (2007). *Peak Everything: Waking Up to the Century of Declines*. New Society

Kunstler, J. (2005). *The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the 21st Century*. Atlantic Books

Rogers, P. et al (2007). *Beyond Terror: The Truth About the Real Threats to Our World*. Rider & Co.

3. A Green History of the World

by Clive Ponting (Penguin, 1991).

This is a popular presentation of the ecological view of history, taking the people-environment interaction as the crucial characteristic of any society and the most decisive determinant of its future. In passing, it provides a healthy corrective to 'radical nostalgia' which paints a romantic picture of indigenous societies and 'vernacular cultures'. Sadly, environmental destruction and social oppression have long dogged human footsteps.

The historical roots of the present crisis are also explored well in:

Diamond, J. (2006). *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive*. Penguin.

Livingston, J. (1994) *Rogue Primate: an Exploration of Human Domestication*. Key Porter Books.

McNeil, J. (2000) *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century*. Allen Lane

Wright, R. (2005) *A Short History of Progress*. Canongate

4. *Betrayal of Science and Reason*

by Paul & Anne Ehrlich (Island Press, 1998)

A first-class response to the 'brown backlash'. The latter argues that fears about global warming and other environmental problems are just empty hot air. However, the book also provides a solid guide to the scientific side to green thinking, not least on issues like overpopulation and biodiversity. The key issue is life-support systems, not specific resources nor pretty scenery.

Other key works that sort ecological fact from technological, economic and other fantasies:

Bunyard, P. ed. (1996). *Gaia in Action: The Science of the Living Earth*. Floris Books.

Daily, G. C., ed. (1997). *Nature's Services: Societal Dependence on Natural Ecosystems*, Island Pr.

Odum, E (1989). *Ecology and Our Endangered Life-Support Systems* Sinauer.

Wilson, E. (1992) *The Diversity of Life* Penguin.

5. *Elephant in the Volkswagen: Facing the Tough Questions About Our Crowded Country* by Lindsey Grant et al (Freeman, 1992).

Too many people ignorantly believe that human numbers do not count. This collection of essays, focusing not on countries with exploding populations such as India but on the USA, demonstrates that human population growth is the biggest single source of the Earth's woes and one which multiplies the effects of other malign pressures, not least those from overconsumption and inappropriate technology. In passing, it outlines the ecological approach to specific issues such as immigration and the rising percentage of elderly people.

The overriding importance of human numbers is also spotlighted in:

Catton, W. (1980). *Overshoot: The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change*. Univ. of Illinois Pr.

Ehrlich, P. & A. Ehrlich (1980). *The Population Explosion*. Hutchinson.

McKibben, B. (1998). *Maybe One: A Personal and Environmental Argument for Single-Child Families* Simon

& Shuster Parsons, J. (1971). *Population Versus Liberty*. Pemberton Books.

6. *Questioning Technology*

edited by John Zerzan & Alice Carnes (Freedom Press, 1988).

There are two particularly bad ideas about technology. One is the almost religious faith that technology is the answer, believers thinking that social and environmental problems can be made to disappear simply by waving the magic wand of applied science. The second is the belief that technology is simply a neutral tool, its impacts dependent upon the identity and purposes of its controllers. This anthology is a great introduction to a more critical view, one which pulls no punches when it comes to such false dawns as biotechnology and computerisation. Sadly, that great technological pie-in-the-sky, the so-called 'green car', is overlooked. This and the following works demonstrate that 'alternative' isn't necessarily appropriate and that, if a technology is 'lean' and 'clean', it still might be far from green.

Further insight into the nature and impact of technological change and the foolishness of faith in technofixes can be found in:

Ellul, J. (1990) *The Technological Bluff*, Erdman

Postman, N. (1993). *Technopoly* Vintage Books, 1993)

Schwartz, E. (1971) *Overskill: The Decline of Technology in Modern Civilisation* Ballantine.

Mander, J. (1992) *In the Absence of the Sacred*. Sierra Club Books.

7. *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman (Methuen, 1986).

Human culture is suffering from a process of degradation, 'dumbing down', that parallels the ruination of environmental systems. Indeed the former is a growing hindrance to any sensitivity towards and understanding of the latter. Postman is a sure-footed guide, focusing in this work on the impact of modern mass media.

Other excellent explorations of the cultural decay within modern society include:

Hoggart, R. (1995). *The Way We Live Now*. Pimlico

Lasch, C. (1980). *The Culture of Narcissism*. Abacus.

Miller, J. (1997) *Egotopia: Narcissism and the New American Landscape*. Univ. Alabama Pr.

Ritzer, G. (2007). *Globalisation of Nothing*. Pine Forge Pr.

8. *Deep Ecology For The 21st Century: Readings On The Philosophy & Practice Of The New Environmentalism* edited by George Sessions (Shambhala, 1995).

This is a weighty collection of essays from a variety of writers, with especially valuable introductions to each section by the American philosopher George Sessions. These writings demonstrate that there is a deep crisis in human character and culture, which a crude politics of anti-capitalism or indeed any programme based on economics fails to address and therefore can provide no lasting answers. However, the volume is correspondingly weaker on practical problems, not least the role of market economics and vested interests, and too focused on personal transformation. Particularly important is its critique of 'resource managerialism', now often masquerading as environmentalism but, in actuality, but a front for a more sophisticated domination and manipulation of the Earth (as typified by the Brundtland Report, for example). The same applies to that new scam, 'sustainable development'.

Other works that outline the values and perceptions needed to build a sustainable society include:

Berman, M. (1981) *The Reenchantment of the World*. Cornell UP.

Butler, T., ed. (2002) *Wild Earth: Wild Ideas for a World Out of Balance*. Milkweed.

Drengson A. and Y. Inoue (1995). *The Deep Ecology Movement* North Atlantic Books.

9. *A Sand County Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River* by Aldo Leopold (Oxford University Press, 1987 edition).

Few writer's match Leopold's sensitivity to the meaning and importance of wilderness as well as his awareness of the need to go beyond a human-centred perspective of "resource management" (which has cloaked, indeed legitimised much environmental destruction). He was no armchair sentimentalist, having had extensive experience in forestry and game management. His basic ideas and metaphors, e.g. "thinking like a mountain", and "the Land Ethic", provide solid building blocks for a new worldview at one with the rest of Nature. He also had a way with words that captures the beauty and wonders of our world, though such sensibility can leave one even more in pain at its destruction.

Earth mindful thinking can be further explored in:

Goldsmith, E. (1992) *The Way*. Rider, 1992.

McHarg, I. L. (2006). *To Heal the Earth*. Island Pr.

Naess, A. (1991). *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline Of An Ecosophy*. Cambridge University Press.

Rowe, S (1990) *Home Place*. NeWest Pr.

10. *Naked Emperors: Essays of a Taboo-Stalker* by Garrett Hardin (Kaufmann, 1982).

The Earth's friends need both kind hearts and hard heads. The controversial American biologist Garrett Hardin cuts through a lot of the soft sentiment and piety about relationships between individuals and groups and between people and planet. His paper on the so-called 'tragedy of the commons' remains one of the most cited articles of all time. Few theses contain the potential to upset so many different brands of politics. The disastrous dynamic spotlighted by Hardin undermines the case for, on the one hand, laissez-faire 'market' economics, based on the individual consumer, and, on the other, anarchist and libertarian politics, based on individuals 'doing their own thing'. The 'tragedy' model can be used to show how the former, economic libertarianism, and the latter, social libertarianism, are but different sides of the same bad coin. No wonder the theory has so many enemies. Hardin's critique of the 'cornucopian' vision of ever-expanding entitlements is particularly forceful. Some of his historical comparisons can be questioned (some traditional commons were actually quite well managed) while his concept of 'lifeboat ethics' in relation to the problems of countries suffering from poverty and environmental decline is also flawed. Nevertheless, Hardin has been a crucial thinker on both environmental and social problems.

Other key critiques of the worldview of modern society are.

Abbey, E. (1992). *Desert Solitaire*. Touchstone Books.

Brower, D. (1995). *Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run*. Harper.

Ehrenfeld, D. (1981) *The Arrogance of Humanism*. OUP.

Shepard, P. & F. Shepard (2004). *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*. Island Pr.

11. *Blueprint for Survival* by Edward Goldsmith et al. (Penguin, 1972).

A true oldie but goldie. It still contains the best diagnosis of our mounting social and environmental ills and the best policy framework for curing them. It shows that a coherent green programme cannot be constructed on the basis of 'grievance politics', mixing together the demands from disaffected groups on the edges of society as some radicals have tried to do. Such recipes can only produce dogs' dinners. *The Blueprint* should be the starting point for all those seeking to flesh out the details of a manifesto for sustainability. Its main weakness was a naive faith in the willingness, indeed ability, of governments drawn from mainstream politics to listen to reason. They didn't and they won't. Its other main failing ironically was too much moderation. Things are slipping away faster than even this forthright statement anticipated.

Other 'oldies but goldies' include:

Carson, R. (1962). *Silent Spring*. Houghton Mifflin.

Meadows, D. et al. (1972). *Limits To Growth*. Earth Island. See also *The 30-Year Update* by the same team (Chelsea Green, 2004)

Osborn, F. (1948). *Our Plundered Planet*. Faber and Faber.

Vogt, W. (1948). *Road to Survival*. Sloane.

12. *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity* by William Ophuls (Freeman, 1992)

This contains the best single presentation of the green critique of expansionism. Ophuls also provides a superb explanation of the dynamic of the 'tragedy of the commons'. In particular, it demonstrates how

harmful consequences can flow from the cumulative effect of harmless and otherwise well-intentioned decisions. It knocks on the head the soft-headed sentiment that believes that, as one 'green' book put it, "if you care for people, you care for the planet". Sadly, life is a bit more complex. Ophuls should be read by all those who simply blame everything on 'them', be they crooked capitalists or bossy bureaucrats. He also shows how important it is to learn from conservative thinkers such as Edmund Burke, mindless written off as hopeless reactionaries by simple-minded radicals.

The more political dimensions of the crisis are also explored in:

Lasch, C. (1991) *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics*. Norton

McLaughlin, A. (1993). *Regarding nature: Industrialism and Deep Ecology*. SUNY Pr.

Miles, R. (1977). *Awakening from the American Dream: The Social & Political Limits to Growth*. Marion Boyars

Rifkin, J. (1992). *Biosphere Politics* Harper, 1992.

13. Eco-socialism or Eco-capitalism? A Critical Analysis of Humanity's Fundamental Choices

by Saral Sarkar (Zed Books, 1999).

Saral Sarkar was born in India in 1936 but since the early 80s has lived in Germany. This background helps him provide extra insights into the global nature of the modern crisis as well as avoid rose-tinted images of the so-called 'developing' world. The peoples of those lands are not helpless victims, as portrayed in much radical literature, but often active and willing participants in the process of 'maldevelopment'. Sarkar cuts through the nonsense of those who think western-style affluence could - or even should - be generalised around the world. He demonstrates that capitalism can never be made green, contrary to the 'market-based' solutions ('natural capitalism' etc.) being touted by people like Paul Hawken and Amory Lovins. However Sarkar has no illusions about the experiences of the various 'non-capitalist' (or, perhaps more aptly, 'state capitalist') regimes that emerged from the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. He makes a convincing case for a new kind of socialism, based on solidarity both between people and between people and planet. His vision goes not go beyond a somewhat restrictive utilitarian view of nature. Yet his arguments are vital to the development of a practical programme for an ecological economy.

Conventional economics are also well dissected in:

Ayres, R. (1998). *Turning Point: An End to the Growth Paradigm*. Earthscan.

Dieren, W. van & Hummelinck (1979). *Nature's Price: The Economics of Mother Earth*. Marion Boyars.

Douthwaite, R. (1992). *The Growth Illusion* Green Books.

Georgescu-Roegen, N. (1971) *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process*, Harvard UP

14. Steady-State Economics

by Herman Daly (Freeman, 1977).

The signals sent by conventional economics have been signposts to long-term ruin. For people have done more than Daly to mark out another road, both in theoretical and policy terms. The concept of the steady-state is much misunderstood yet it represents the essence of the green economic alternative. Daly explains why it is so vital and puts forward challenging ideas about how to institutionalise it. His focus on the throughput of energy and raw materials in the human economy dispels a lot of the fog generated by vague words like 'growth' and 'development'. There is, of course, much noise about 'new economics' but most of it fails to go beyond a very pale green Keynesianism. Daly also anticipated reformist policies such as pollution

levies and emissions trading, showing that they are the wrong tool applied to the wrong end of the economic process.

Other key presentations of a new economics are:

Douthwaite, R. (1996). *Short Circuit: Strengthening Local Economies for Security in an Unstable World*. Resurgence Books.

Hamrin, R. D. (1983). *Renewable Resource Economy*. Praeger.

Lang, T., & C. Hines (1993). *The New Protectionism: Protecting The Future against Free Trade*. Earthscan.

McKibben, B. (2007). *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. Henry Holt.

**15. The Conserver Society: Alternatives for Sustainability
by Ted Trainer (Zed, 1995).**

This is the best nuts-and-bolts vision of a sustainable society. It is firmly grounded in the theory of limits-to-growth and the fact that we must all learn to tread more lightly and to share smaller pies as the American writer Tom Bender once put it. Trainer shows that a no-longer-affluent society (in conventional terms) could not only be much safer but also much richer in all kinds of other ways. The construction of a conserver society will depend upon devolution of powers to the lowest appropriate level (often the framework created by watershed and river basins, sometimes smaller, sometimes larger, and, given the predicaments facing the planet as a whole, continental and even global in a few cases). Those latter cases will be options only of the last resort given the negative side-effects when decisions are made by those who will not be affected by them and who therefore receive no 'feedback' on the error of their choices. National and local government boundaries ignore the geological, hydrological or biological patterns on which constitution, economy and culture all depend. The most obvious examples are the straight lines plotted across maps to divide one political zone from another, regardless of biophysical and cultural contours. Many campaigners for decentralisation fall into the same trap, failing to connect their proposals to those underlying world of biogeography. Similarly debates about 'national culture' ignore the primary need to rebuild human cultures so that they become attuned to and reflect the specificities of local places — its climate, its landforms, its soils, plants, waters and wildlife.

Other pictures of a more sustainable society are painted in:

Aberley, D. ed. (1994). *Futures by Design: The Practice of Ecological Planning*. New Society Publishers.

Coates, G., ed. (1981). *Resettling America: Energy, Ecology and Community*. Brick House.

Devall, B. (1990). *Simple in Means, Rich in Ends*. Green Print

Plant, C., J Plant et al. (1990). *Home! A Bioregional Reader*. New Society Publishers.

**16. Ecological Literacy
by David Orr (SUNY Pr., 1992)**

Part of the modern malaise is the failure of the education system. In many ways it has been dumbed down to crude training in a narrow range of skills and often fails to deliver even that. To be fair, schools and teachers are much more the victim of wider social trends than many critics recognise. Conversely, any hopes of sustaining a 'conserver society' will depend most of all upon the socialisation of its future citizens so they understand – and want to live – sustainable lifestyles.. Contrary to the position of many radical critics of contemporary education systems, there will be much prescription in the curriculum we need. Its content is the key issue, with matters such as organisational form, funding and assessment methods significant but nonetheless secondary questions. There is no better guide than David Orr, whose study also has much light

to shed on the meaning of 'sustainability'. See also his *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment and the Human Prospect* (Island Pr., 1994).

Other key books on education are:

Bowers, C. A. (1993) *Critical Essays on Education and the Recovery of the Ecological Imperative*. Teachers College.

Davies, N. (2000). *The School Report: The Hidden Truth About Britain's Classrooms*. Vintage.

M'Gonigle, M. & J. Starke (2006). *Planet U: Sustaining the World, Reinventing the University*. New Society Publishers.

Sacks, P. (1996). *Generation X Goes to College*. Open Court Books.

**17. Green Architecture: Design for a Sustainable Future
by Brenda and Robert Vale (Thames and Hudson, 1991)**

More and more people live in urban environments but the modern megalopolis is as ugly and oppressive as it is unsustainably rapacious in the demands it places on both local and distant ecosystems. However, there is an alternative and this book provides examples as well as draws out the principles on which planning must be based. See also their study *The New Autonomous House* (Thames & Hudson, 2000).

Other good books on the failings of the modern built environment and better alternatives are:

Kilbert, C. ed. (1999). *Reshaping the Built Environment: Ecology, Ethics & Economics*. Island Pr.

Register, R (2002). *Ecocities: Building Cities in Balance with Nature*. Berkeley Hills Books.

Ryn, S. van der & Calthorpe, P. (1992). *Sustainable Communities*. Sierra.

Wells, M. (1982). *Gentle Architecture*. McGraw-Hill.

18. So Ye Shall Reap

Colin Tudge (Allen Lane, 2003)

The dawn of agriculture was the most fundamental change in the people-planet relationship. It also radically changed society itself. Modern industrialised farming is destructively mining soil and water systems. It devastates wildlife and, together with the food processing industry, produces food that often harms rather than helps human health. Mechanisation has also decimated rural communities. The treatment of farm animals on intensive livestock units is both cruel and wasteful in terms of resource inputs. 'Burger culture' and the snacking diet compound all these problems. However, there are far more sustainable, more humane and tastier alternatives. Colin Tudge covers both sides of the plate.

Feed your mind further with:

Hart, R. (1991). *The Forest Garden*. Green Books.

Imhoff, D & J. A. Baumgartner (2006). *Farming and the Fate of Wild Nature: Essays In Conservation-Based Agriculture*. University of California Press.

Jackson, W. (1985). *New Roots for Agriculture*. Univ. Nebraska Pr.

Petrini, C. (2004). *Slow Food: The Case for Taste*. Columbia.

19. Ecoforestry: The Art and Science of Sustainable Forest Use

edited by Alan Drengson & Duncan Taylor (New Society Publishers, 1997)

Forestry has wrecked the Earth on a far, far greater scale than many traditional protest targets such as hunts, fur farms or new motorways. This book is a case study of how to put forestry on a more sustainable footing in an approach that firmly recognises the needs of non-human species. It also addresses the social

and economic dimensions of the needed revolution in land use. (Drengson's own writings on both ecophilosophy and technology are well worth seeking out).

Other good books that help to separate the wood from the trees are:

Anon (1992). *The Scottish Forest Charter*. Reforesting Scotland/The Ecologist. A model of a short but sharp statement of the issues. See <http://www.reforestingscotland.org/>

Devall, B, ed. (1993). *Clearcut: The Tragedy of Industrial Forestry*. Sierra Books.

M'Gonigle, M and B. Parfitt (1994) *Forestopia: a Practical Guide to the New Forest Economy*. Harbour Publishing.

O'Hara (no date). *Forests in Crisis: The Myth of Sustainable Forestry*. Women's Environment Network

20. Cascadia Wild

edited by Mitch Friedman and Paul Lindholdt

(Frontier Publishing, 1993)

Finally, since sustainability is not just about people, here is a book which points the way to protect remaining wildernesses and ensure habitats for the Earth's other dependants. Their biggest problem is simply that we humans leave less and less space for them. Token conservation based on little parks and reserve here and there is a bit like the proverbial Dutch boy putting his finger in a hole in the dyke when leaks are spring all over. Only comprehensive strategies will work. Apart from being an excellent case study (set in the mountains of the north west United States), this book is also an introduction to some great writers in the field of wildlife conservation such as Reed Noss and Ed Grumbine.

Other case studies in repairing some of the appalling damage humankind has inflicted on Mother earth can be found in:

Ehrlich, P. & A. Ehrlich (1982). *Extinction: The Causes and Consequences of the Disappearance of Species*. Gollancz

Foreman, D. (2004). *Rewilding North America: A Vision for Conservation in the 21st Century*. Island Pr.

Nilsen, R. (1991) *Helping Nature Heal: an Introduction to Environmental Restoration* Ten Speed Press.

Wolke, H (1991) *Wilderness on the Rocks*. Ned Ludd Books.

Afterthoughts

The limited list of core reading above unfortunately means the omission of many good writers on green issues. Some of the best have focused on specific issues and therefore do not figure in a more broad-ranging bibliography like the one above. Others have tended to write shorter pieces that either appear in collections or journals. The same is true of pamphlets, some of which are classics in their own right.

One way to identify such works is to use the British Lending Library catalogue of books in print, on-line journal citation indexes, and a commercial websites like Amazon or Waterstones as well as publishers' catalogues. Often the entry of keywords and phrases like biodiversity, bioregionalism, and biotechnology will spotlight good material. It is important to use a variety of terms such as 'bioagriculture', 'ecoagriculture', 'ecofarming', 'organic farming' and 'permaculture' since different ones tend to be used from one time or place to another.

Finally, do not keep these books to yourself. Lend them to others. Even better, persuade your local library to stock them. Encourage booksellers to include more green books on their shelves. Get academics to 'ecologise' their reading lists. Spread the deeply green word!