

Eco Book Selection Box

'Tis the season for cozy snuggles on the sofa with a cup of tea and a good book. These books all have an eco theme but underlying all of them is a message of hope to take us forward into the next season and a new year.

The Book of Hope – A Survival Guide for an Endangered Planet, Jane Goodall

I've just finished this inspiring book by the 'Chimpanzee Lady' as my daughter calls her and it is a wonderful read - bringing together the author's vast knowledge and understanding of the natural world with her belief that there is still hope for our planet in crisis. It can be very easy to read the negative news stories and feel that all is lost, but as the title suggests, this is a book to genuinely inspire hope. As a naturalist, she certainly knows her stuff, having spent more than half a century studying and teaching about the environment and the role that animals and humans play within it. She defines hope as more than just thinking positively, more that it is a built-in survival trait which means we can desire an outcome, but at the same time know that we will need to work hard to achieve it. Each chapter explains the main reasons why she still has hope for the natural world and humanity even in the face of such damage and destruction – the *'amazing' human intellect*; the *resilience of nature*; the *power of young people* and the *indomitable human spirit*. She says that without hope comes apathy and when we give up, that is when the fight is lost.. so it really does leave you inspired to keep on making those small changes that will collectively make the difference!

Wilding, Isabella Tree

This is another personal account of a project that inspires hope for the future of the natural world. It tells the story of the 'Knepp experiment' in East Sussex where traditional farming methods have been replaced with a pioneering rewilding project which has now been inspiring similar projects around the world for 20 years. By reintroducing grazing herds of native cattle, deer, ponies and pigs the estate has effectively let nature take hold and with the renewed habitat creation, many rare native species have found their way back to the estate and are now thriving. By allowing fallen trees to rot where they land and the herds to roam freely, new habitats have been stimulated, the soil and water systems restored - nature is more in balance and demonstrates the resilience that Jane Goodall uses as a reason for hope in her book. It all just makes complete sense and while we don't all have 3,500 acres to rewild, we can all encourage more wildlife into our gardens by choosing bee-friendly plants, leaving an area to run a bit wild, putting up a bird box or building a bug hotel – again the small things all contribute to the wider solution.

One Pot, Pan, Planet

Lost words, Robert MacFarlane & Jackie Morris

If you want a truly beautiful book to dip into, then this is it. I came across it by accident on a trip to London where there was a small exhibition of the original artwork by Jackie Morris – stunningly detailed water colours with added gold leaf which depict the plants and animals beautifully! The sad truth is that the book came about as a response to the removal of everyday nature words – such as "acorn", "bluebell", "kingfisher" and "wren" - from a widely

used children's dictionary, because those words were not being used enough by children to merit inclusion.

So each of these Lost Words has been woven into a 'spell' designed to be read (or sung) aloud to bring them back into our consciousness. As the author says "*We find it hard to love what we cannot give a name to. And what we do not love we will not save.*"

So The Lost Words is partly a celebration of the animals and plants that we are surrounded by, and partly a call to action to save and protect them within the natural world.

How to help a hedgehog and protect a polar bear, Jess French

I met this lovely author at Latitude Festival the other year and saw first-hand her passion for wildlife and fighting for its future in this endangered world. She is on a mission to make kids love the planet and fight to save it. It's not all about the big rewilding projects and COP26, we need to inspire the younger generation to really care about the planet. It explains in simple terms the different habitats around the world, the animals that live there and the difficulties they face, from the smallest insects to the largest mammals. Dotted through the book are 70 simple things that anyone can do to make a difference from simply noticing more in nature, to not using chemical pesticides in the garden to having a 'rhino rant' to friends and family about the plight of the rhino and why we should protect it! One thing we can probably all do straight after reading this, is dust our light bulbs.. dusty light bulbs use more energy than clean ones (obvious right?!) There are also simple but staggering facts like 'the energy you save by recycling one glass bottle could light a 100-watt bulb for four hours!' It's a great book to share with children of all ages. In our copy she's written 'Together we can save the planet!' – so there's a recurring theme here.. the future of the planet is something we all need to fight for!