



The Infested Mind: Why Humans Fear, Loathe, and Love Insects

Jeffrey Lockwood

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The human reaction to insects is neither purely biological nor simply cultural. And no one reacts to insects with indifference. Insects frighten, disgust and fascinate us. Jeff Lockwood explores this phenomenon through evolutionary science, human history, and contemporary psychology, as well as a debilitating bout with entomophobia in his work as an entomologist. Exploring the nature of anxiety and phobia, Lockwood explores the lively debate about how much of our fear of insects can be attributed to ancestral predisposition for our own survival and how much is learned through individual experiences. Drawing on vivid case studies, Lockwood explains how insects have come to infest our minds in sometimes devastating ways and supersede even the most rational understanding of the benefits these creatures provide.

No one can claim to be ambivalent in the face of wasps, cockroaches or maggots but our collective entomophobia is wreaking havoc on the natural world as we soak our food, homes and gardens in powerful insecticides. Lockwood dissects our common reactions, distinguishing between disgust and fear, and invites readers to consider their own emotional and physiological reactions to insects in a new framework that he's derived from cutting-edge biological, psychological, and social science.

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