

Books recommended for learning more about the natural world...
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There is of course, no one single source that can cover all the intricacies of in nature, but here are a few that offered me insight, and led me to new sources. While many of these are delightful and informative Internet sources, in my opinion, there is nothing like a powerfully written book that carries you into new ways of thinking and seeing the world. I am not a fan of dry stodgy books so I hope that you find these as interesting and delightful as I did.

The *one most valuable thing* you can do to learn more about the thousands of little family lives that surround us is to simply pay attention. Stop, look, listen! Every season has its own revelations. Creating a landscape that invites all the 'baby makin' possible will bring these intriguing interactions to you and your family, plus, it might just be the right thing to do as we humans crowd the planet.

All sources are **not** equal in accurate information, especially on the Internet. While I heartily recommend some of the wildlife and plant based Facebook pages, be forewarned that some information can be wild guesswork, because most pages allow all members to post and offer opinions, but in time, you will begin to recognize there are some true authorities on particular topics. If you frequent the Southeast Naturalists Facebook page for example, you will soon come to know who is the definitive authority on topics as far ranging as reptiles, moths, fungi, wildflowers, birds, dragonflies, animal tracks or fossils. Every state seems to have several naturalist groups and Facebook communities, so seek them out and be amazed, and always fact check using more than one source. The following list is a rudimentary and highly partial guide for more info.

Facebook pages I enjoy, though you are likely to find many directed to your home state:

Southeast Naturalists

Mississippi Naturalists

Wildflowers - What's Blooming in Tennessee

Tennessee Birding

Tennessee's Watchable Wildlife

Soil, Plant Pest Center

UT Gardens Jackson (where we often post pics of garden critters and their antics)

There are *many many* more, just search using terms such as wildlife, pollinators, conservation, or whatever your interest is, along with the name of your state or region, for example West Tennessee or Cumberland Plateau, or Southeastern, etc.

Science based sources offer reliable information. Of course, I like to promote the many UT publications and **you can start at UTHort.com**, though there are many more to be found with a search of UT publications relating to wildlife. I am proud to be co-author of one with Dr. Natalie Bumgarner and Dr. Craig Harper. This particular pub has one section devoted to attracting wildlife and the other describes most effective methods of controlling those that have become pests.

<https://ag.tennessee.edu/fwf/craigharper/Pages/Backyard-Wildlife-Management.aspx>
but there are many to be found in the Wildlife and Fisheries publications as well.

Other trusted science based sources can be found in government agencies, state, such as TWRA and federal, also try usda. the .gov or .tn or usda

www.tnwatchablewildlife.org

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/features/?cid=nracs143_023553

a favorite of mine for learning frogs and toads by their calls is

<https://leaps.ms/index.html>

Some insect identification websites that are useful places to start.

iNaturalist apps

Ask an Entomologist

What's That Bug?

BugGuide.Net.

Insect Identification Forum.

Insect Identification Key.

AntWeb.

All those sources are valuable, but I love nothing better than immersion in a moving book. Here are a few that changed the way I see the world.

Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold

Pilgrim at Tinker's Creek by Annie Dillard

The Botany of Desire by Michael Pollan, or really anything by Michael Pollan especially the Omnivore's Dilemma

A Country Year by Sue Hubbell and any of her other books

Illumination in the Flatwoods and The Light in High Places by Joe Hutto

Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer

The Invention of Nature by Andrea Wulf

The Voyage of the Beagle by Charles Darwin

A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson (hilarious, too)

Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded Simon Winchester

If you love horses that speak to the relationship between horse and human:

Dancers in the Grass: essays by horse trainer Maria Tsimmu Martino who also wrote the Wolf, the Woman, the Wilderness about her lessons learned when returning a wolf pup to its wild origins.

Novels that moved and taught me while entertaining:

Jayber Crow by Wendell Berry

The Signature of All Things by Elizabeth Gilbert

Thanks for caring about the natural world!