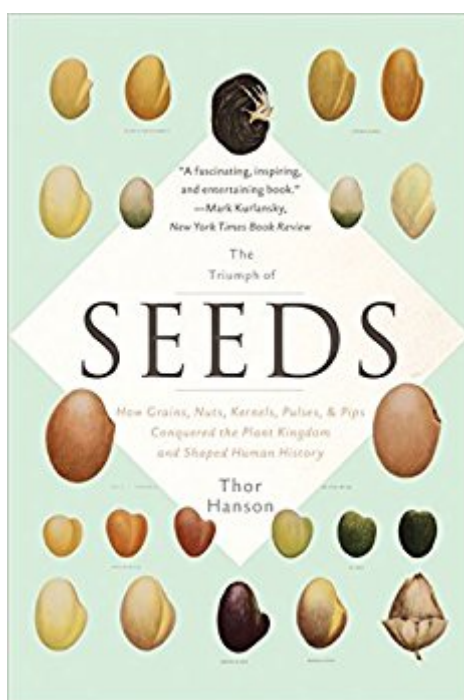


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The Triumph Of Seeds: How Grains, Nuts, Kernels, Pulses, And Pips Conquered The Plant Kingdom And Shaped Human History



Synopsis

We live in a world of seeds. From our morning toast to the cotton in our clothes, they are quite literally the stuff and staff of life: supporting diets, economies, and civilizations around the globe. Just as the search for nutmeg and pepper drove the Age of Discovery, coffee beans fueled the Enlightenment and cottonseed sparked the Industrial Revolution. Seeds are fundamental objects of beauty, evolutionary wonders, and simple fascinations. Yet, despite their importance, seeds are often seen as commonplace, their extraordinary natural and human histories overlooked. Thanks to this stunning new book, they can be overlooked no more. This is a book of knowledge, adventure, and wonder, spun by an award-winning writer with both the charm of a fireside story-teller and the hard-won expertise of a field biologist. A fascinating scientific adventure, it is essential reading for anyone who loves to see a plant grow.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

‘Hanson’s highly readable *The Triumph of Seeds* is replete with fascinating facts, including the development of caffeine in coffee beans. –Texas Gardener’s Seeds’ Thor Hanson has taken the history and science of these little marvels and drawn out a fascinating account of seed culture. We should not forget the importance of seeds in the liquor cabinet, as well. From rye whiskey, to wheat vodka, to barley beer, it would be a lot harder to get drunk without our friends in the grain world. –Home Wet Bar blog’ [Hanson’s] luck for finding then writing about the magic in something common

continues with *The Triumph of Seeds*.¹ Seattle Times²; Lest you get the impression that Hanson's book is all academic grit and gruel, be advised that he has thoroughly leavened his narrative with odd facts and fascinating digressions.³ Natural History⁴; This is a charming book, inspired by Hanson's forays into seed identification and dispersal with his young, seed-obsessed son.... Hanson's twist of looking at human interactions with plants in their embryonic stage is new.... *The Triumph of Seeds* will engender thoughtful consideration of our joint future.⁵ Nature⁶; For the past fifty seven years I have relied on seeds for food and, throughout much of my horticultural career for earning a living. This new book has re excited my fascination for these wonderful living structures.... [I]nformative, yet readable.... [A] fascinating book.⁷ Chris Allen, *The Gardening Times* (UK)⁸; In *The Triumph of Seeds*, Thor Hanson offers the reader a smorgasbord of the science and lore of seeds.... Hanson, following the recipe developed in his acclaimed book *Feathers*, breathes life into the sometimes dry topic of seed biology by weaving a colorful tapestry of stories that entertain as well as inform.... *The Triumph of Seeds* is eminently readable. Hanson is a great story teller and writes in a conversational style, so reading the book is like having an extended conversation with an entertaining friend.... *The Triumph of Seeds* is a thoroughly fun read, perfect for anyone wanting an introduction to seeds or for those who enjoy lively natural history.⁹ Douglasia (*Washington Native Plants Society journal*) PRAISE FOR THE PAPERBACK EDITION¹⁰; [Seeds's] ubiquity has often meant that their evolutionary solutions are overlooked, but the author appraises them with a keen and appreciative eye.¹¹ New York Times Book Review, Paperback Row¹²; Biologist Thor Hanson sows the ultimate celebration of seeds and how they conquered the earth.¹³ Nature¹⁴; [The Triumph of Seeds] explores the importance of seeds, with scientific explanations, humorous first-person accounts and historical anecdotes.¹⁵ Alaska Beyond¹⁶; Hanson's style is that of a well-honed raconteur¹⁷. For every point he makes, there's a tale (or two) that illustrates, and connects, and invites us explore the idea further. We begin to realize the amazing impact seeds have had on development of civilizations.¹⁸ Connie Bennett, KLCC-FM (Eugene, OR)¹⁹; A delightful work of natural history by San Juan Islands writer Hanson, about seeds, their role in nature's life cycle and in our lives.²⁰ Seattle Times

Thor Hanson is a conservation biologist, Guggenheim Fellow, Switzer Environmental Fellow, and winner of the John Burrough Medal for excellence in nature writing and natural history. The author

of Feathers and The Impenetrable Forest, Hanson lives with his wife and son on an island in Washington State.

This is a book written by someone whose passion for their corner of the natural world is joyful and infectious. It is a pleasure to read. It is also a fount of information useful to help us thread our way through the risky future of genetically modified food crops even though the author specifically places that whole world outside of consideration for this book. I recommend this book, and if you have youthful family members showing interest in the natural world this book is an excellent doorway into a rewarding world.

I love both reading/learning about plants and working with them. This was a good look at seeds and the profound influences they have on human life. The writing was interesting with bits of humor and for someone like me anyway, kept me avidly reading. The science and history behind seeds and their use is fascinating. The tiniest criticism I have for this book is that the author sometimes wandered into personal tales that had little to do with seed function and history. I would also have enjoyed a few more examples of odd seeds or plant adaptations to distribute seeds. But I found the book enjoyable and well worth reading.

A good read. Evolution always has some surprises that are counter intuitive. Teasing out those facts in some seeds makes for very interesting reading and provides impetus for viewing life around you with a wider vision to understand why, how and where plants live. But the section on coffee making kind of stunned me and made me shake my head. Really? Brewing to a half degree and to seconds? Considering that amount of sun, rain, nutrients and other variables in the process of getting those coffee beans to your cup of java, I had a good laugh. Even a scientist is not above falling for hyperbole and marketing.

I'm about half-way through this book, and it is wonderful. Interesting mix of science and personal anecdotes. I, too, have read "An Orchard Invisible," which is also informative. I am a botanical artist driven to learn about what I attempt to paint. Nuts and seeds are fascinating to look at and hold - so many shapes, sizes, colors, textures. Thor Hanson is good at describing what is going on inside those seeds, and some of the reasons why they vary. I've got some seed packets left over from last year and will try my hand at attempting to get them to sprout. I think I will read Thor's other books as well.

As an Ag major, you could enjoy this book as a leisure way of personifying the life of seeds. It's a good book for basic ecology courses, and it makes someone who is a general seed enthusiast more appreciative of the struggles and triumphs seeds go through to survive.

I'm a changed person after this book. I love seeds now and I can't recommend this book enough if you like food, science, or coffee. If you like books like Emperor of all Maladies, and want something less depressing and more uplifting, read this book.

Very well written. Botanical narrative is smooth and interesting. Thor Hanson reveals interesting insights into the evolution and development of seeds. He uses clear examples to demonstrate principles which result in the amazing powerhouse which is the modern seed. Excellent read.

Really enjoyed reading the book. It was well written and the content was good. He treated the changes in agriculture over recent years in a fair and balanced way. I would recommend this book to those interested in plant biology, agriculture, and their interplay with culture.

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