



Nature's Palette: The Science of Plant Color

David Lee

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Though he didn't realize it at the time, David Lee began this book twenty-five years ago as he was hiking in the mountains outside Kuala Lumpur. Surrounded by the wonders of the jungle, Lee found his attention drawn to one plant in particular, a species of fern whose electric blue leaves shimmered amidst the surrounding green. The evolutionary wonder of the fern's extravagant beauty filled Lee with awe—and set him on a career-long journey to understand everything about plant colors.

Nature's Palette is the fully ripened fruit of that journey—a highly illustrated, immensely entertaining exploration of the science of plant color. Beginning with potent reminders of how deeply interwoven plant colors are with human life and culture—from the shifting hues that told early humans when fruits and vegetables were edible to the indigo dyes that signified royalty for later generations—Lee moves easily through details of pigments, the evolution of color perception, the nature of light, and dozens of other topics. Through a narrative peppered with anecdotes of a life spent pursuing botanical knowledge around the world, he reveals the profound ways that efforts to understand and exploit plant color have influenced every sphere of human life, from organic chemistry to Renaissance painting to the highly lucrative orchid trade.

Lavishly illustrated and packed with remarkable details sure to delight gardeners and naturalists alike, *Nature's Palette* will enchant anyone who's ever wondered about red roses and blue violets—or green thumbs.

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