



Earth Matters: How soil underlies civilization

By Richard Bardgett

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For much of history, soil has played a major, and often central, role in the lives of humans. Entire societies have risen, and collapsed, through the management or mismanagement of soil; farmers and gardeners worldwide nurture their soil to provide their plants with water, nutrients, and protection from pests and diseases; major battles have been aborted or stalled by the condition of soil; murder trials have been solved with evidence from the soil; and, for most of us, our ultimate fate is the soil.

In this book Richard Bardgett discusses soil and the many, and sometimes surprising, ways that humanity has depended on it throughout history, and still does today. Analysing the role soil plays in our own lives, despite increasing urbanization, and in the biogeochemical cycles that allow the planet to function effectively, Bardgett considers how superior soil management could combat global issues such as climate change, food shortages, and the extinction of species. Looking to the future, Bardgett argues that it is vital for the future of humanity for governments worldwide to halt soil degradation, and to put in place policies for the future sustainable management of soils.

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Editorial Review

Review

In conclusion this is an excellent, concise and very well written text which should be read by as wide a readership as possible, not just Soil Scientists. Soil Scientists will find this text interesting, non-Soil Scientist will find it fascinating! * IUSS Bulletin * Richard Bardgett is one of the most eloquent and knowledgeable of the soil scientists who have contributed to the current enthusiasm about soils ... a must read * Wim H. van der Putten, Trends in Ecology & Evolution * highly readable and authoritative book * Network Review *

About the Author

Richard Bardgett, *Professor of Ecology at Lancaster University*

Richard Bardgett is a soil scientist and Professor of Ecology at Lancaster University. He is the Editor of the Journal of Ecology and Vice President of the British Ecological Society and holds positions in international biodiversity assessment committees. He has authored and co-authored several books, including *The Biology of Soil* (OUP, 2005).

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