



What Have Plants Ever Done for Us?: Western Civilization in Fifty Plants (Hardback)

By Stephen A. Harris

The Bodleian Library, United Kingdom, 2016. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. When did the British Government become the world s largest drugs pusher? What tree is frequently used to treat cancer? Which everyday condiment is the most widely traded spice on the planet? Plants are an indispensable part of our everyday life. From the coffee bush and grass for cattle which give us milk for our cappuccinos to the rubber tree which produces tyres for our cars, our lives are inextricably linked to the world of plants. Taking us on a chronological journey, Stephen Harris identifies fifty plants that have been key to the development of the Western world, discussing trade, politics, medicine, travel and chemistry along the way. Plants have provided paper and ink, chemicals that could kill or cure, vital sustenance and stimulants. Some, such as barley, have been staples from earliest times; others, such as oil palm, are newcomers to Western industry. Moreover, with time, uses change: beets, which have been used variously as a treatment for leprosy, source of sugar and animal feed, are now showing potential as biofuels. What may the future hold for mandrake or woad? We remain dependent on...

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