

# Book shelf

The latest titles reviewed

BIODIVERSITY

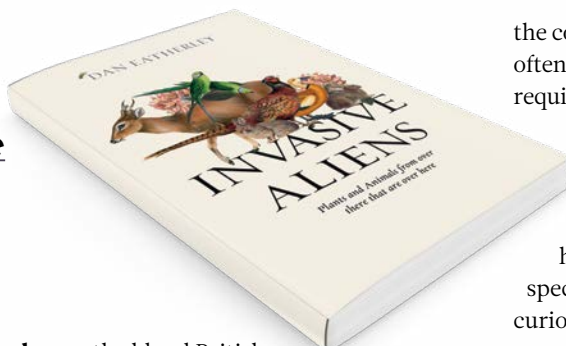
## **Invasive Aliens: Plants and Animals From Over There That Are Over Here**

By Dan Eatherley

Published by William Collins,  
£16.99 (hardback)

**Dan Eatherley's excellent new book *Invasive Aliens* is a fast-paced account packed with fascinating vignettes and trivia about the history of invasive non-native species, writes Harry Greenfield. Eatherley defines non-native species as those that arrive (and often thrive) in a region as a result of some external help – usually from humans.**

The progress of invasive species holds a mirror up to the not always illustrious history of humanity's engagement with the natural world. Probably our first foray into modifying our environment was to domesticate plants and animals for agriculture. These crops soon spread. For example the Romans supplemented what they saw as



the bland British diet with carrots, chickens and cherries among others. With them came further species that co-evolved with them, such as arable weeds and livestock diseases.

The pursuit of pleasure, both sporting and aesthetic, often drove people to bring species to this island from abroad. The Normans began the trend, bringing fallow deer and pheasants to Britain for hunting. In later years explorers and collectors continued to bring exotic creatures to

the country. The landed aristocracy often led the charge, although plants, requiring less space than animals, allowed this enthusiasm to spread to those with even modest gardens.

Another strand in the history of invasive non-native species is the history of human curiosity, though this does not

**'The pursuit of pleasure, both sporting and aesthetic, often drove people to bring species to this island from abroad'**

always lead to a full understanding, with many alien invasions stemming from well-intentioned accidents and an inability to predict consequences. Climate change is unlikely to make predicting species movements and effects any easier.

But as well as chronicling the many, often eccentric, characters who helped introduce species in the past, Eatherley meets the scientists and volunteers around Britain today who are leading the fightback.

EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENT

## **Birds, Bees and Butterflies**

By Iain Grahame

Published by Unicorn Publishing,  
£14 (paperback)

**Members will enjoy a fun offering from Iain Grahame based on his wonderful nature reserve at Daws Hall, writes Robert Frewen. The importance of engaging with children while they are young and impressionable is always important. Iain and his team have clearly done this to enormous effect, and building a major nature reservoir from scratch is no mean feat.**

The anecdotes of Iain's time in Africa and his time with Idi Amin will strike a chord with members old enough to remember the extent to which Idi became the bogeyman of the British press, and his disastrous expulsion of the Indian business population of Uganda.

It is a pity that some overzealous satrap who gold plated EU regulation on labels for honey put the author off the EU altogether. As a beekeeper, I find the regulations simple and easily understood by all ages.

But the main message of this book is the happy use of a nature

reserve and garden to engage with and teach schoolchildren not just about trees and plants, but more about a realisation that nature is fundamental to their lives, and should not be underestimated. ■

