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Quercus Petraea

Friend of the Forest

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“Forests are the only way to escape the woes of the world; only in forests can we feel true happiness and cultivate the beauty in everything.” — Jean Jacques Rousseau, French philosopher

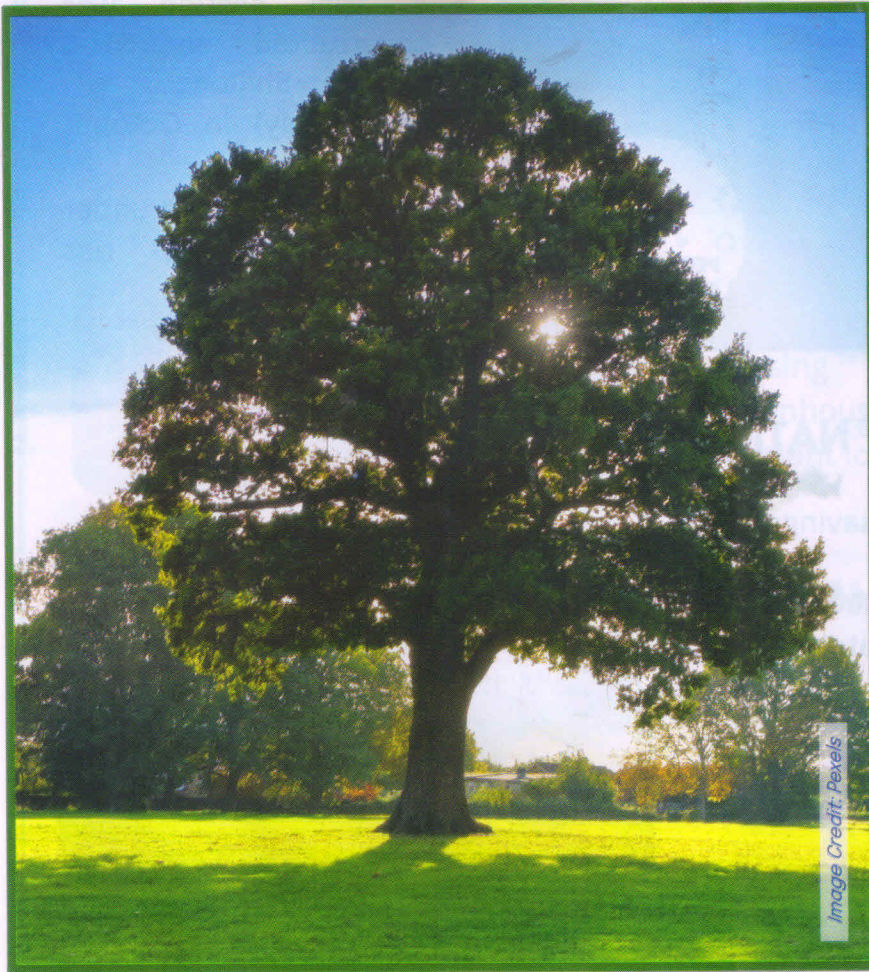


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promoting social welfare and economic growth — we are scratching the surface, and thereby missing a great deal. Laurent Tillon’s book, *Being an Oak — Life as a Tree*, promises to play a key role in spreading awareness about the intrinsic value of flora and fauna.

Published by Ithaka Press (an imprint of Bonnier Books UK) in June 2025, this 277-pager offers readers a rich account of arboreal metabolism and a detailed exposition of a complex temperate-forest ecosystem with its myriad symbiotic interrelationships, using the sessile oak (*Quercus Petraea*) as the central character — a representative of arboreal landscapes around the world, with a “diverse supporting cast” chosen from Mother Nature’s treasure-chest. There are takeaways for one and all, to help in the contribution to sustainable human existence in perfect harmony with Mother Nature. Composed of several short chapters arranged chronologically from 1780 to 2020, illustrated by the author himself with beautiful sketches (of leaves, trees, insects, birds, reptiles, animals, etc.), it magically transports the reader in space and time. As you read, you will recall *Yggdrasil* from Norse mythology, or the *Ashvaththa* tree from the Vedas (if you already know about these two, that is).

SUSTAINABLE Development Goal (SDG) #15 — Life on Land aims to conserve all terrestrial life-forms in the biosphere (flora and fauna), by protecting ecosystems, restoring biodiversity, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, and reversing land degradation. Mikhail Gorbachev once said that the value of water is known only when the well runs dry. The same applies to floral and faunal species on earth, the worth of which is comprehended by humans either when they are on the verge of becoming extinct, or have already disappeared from the surface of the earth. When we think of the usefulness of wildlife from a purely anthropocentric point of view — usefulness in

Born as an Acorn

Escaping weevils, a product of wind pollination, self-, or cross-, would be difficult to establish falls to the ground from a sessile oak tree sometime in 1780. Tillon has christened this acorn Quercus (the genus name of the sessile oak is derived from the Celtic ‘quer’ meaning beautiful, and ‘quez’ meaning tree), and assigns a family-name, Petraea (the species name is Latin for “strong as a rock”). The author successfully makes readers imagine the acorn (Baby Quercus) as a “doer” quite like the other creatures (enemies, most of them — pigs, boars, mice, deer, etc.) which cross its path, as it waits patiently to be able to strike root in the soil. If you endure, providence