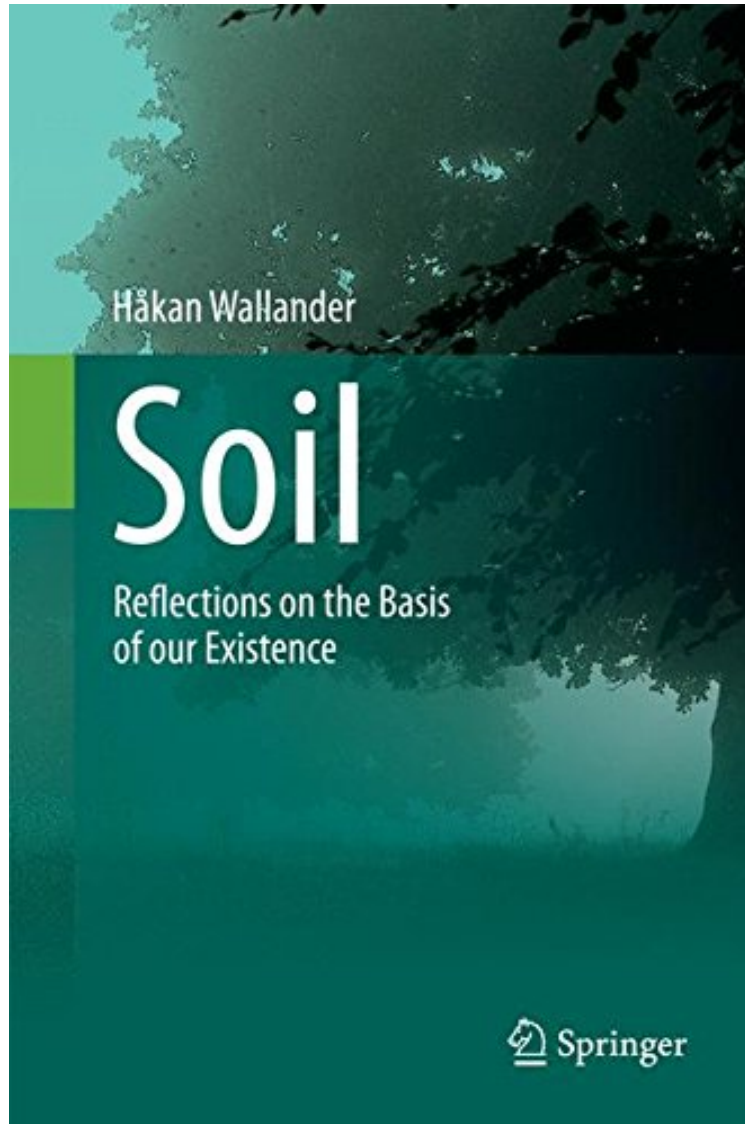


[Download ebook] Soil: Reflections on the Basis of our Existence

Soil: Reflections on the Basis of our Existence

Hkan Wallander

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Hkan Wallander : Soil: Reflections on the Basis of our Existence before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Soil: Reflections on the Basis of our Existence:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A lot of soil science in a lively form. Wallander explains more about soil than textbooks five times as long.By lyndonbrechtThis is an excellent little book by a Swedish scientist, an odd book full of information, but written with many first-person sections, such as doing research in Tunisia or Nepal. His specialty is mycorrhizal aspects of fungi, especially as symbiotic with trees and plants. The science is current and the

writing is very good. There are some diagrams and a number of excellent photos. Typical of the information: one gram of soil from a temperate Swedish forest can contain hundreds of meters of fungal hyphae and more than 10 billion bacteria. There's more diversity of species in a shovelful of that forest soil than the total animal and bird diversity in all tropical forests. Soil really is another world. The chapters are not numbered. They cover what a longer and boring textbook would cover: definition, description (pore space for example, is important), life in the soil. water, nutrients, erosion and so on. It's done here well, with wit and admirably briefly. He brings in his specialty of course. Here's an example. In Tunisia an acacia species is important and can draw water from 40 meters underground, but has mostly been cut for animal feed and firewood. Wallander investigated what changes in the soil are occurring (each species of tree has relationships with fungi and other species so the impact is much more than the loss of a tree. One chapter considers terroir, on wine and tomatoes, that is, the impact of soil on taste; given the vast complexity of soil ingredients, for lack of a better word, this must vary considerably. Another chapter is on "biological warfare," how many species produce substances that discourage or kill competitors, or may increase symbiosis. These substances sometimes have medical value, such as penicillin and cyclosporine. We have barely investigated all the possibilities, so here is a frontier of medicine worth following. Another chapter discusses life in the soil, of remarkable complexity and not fully understood. Another chapter considers soil and climate, that is, the impact of climate (temperature, rainfall and so on). There's all sorts of incidental information. European worms, for instance, are beneficial in European soils, but in Minnesota, have had quite negative impact on the soil ecosystems--admittedly it may be difficult to think of worms as invasive species. There's an interesting few paragraphs on why people eat soil and clay; it can neutralize stomach acids, and if mixed with acorns makes them edible by neutralizing the tannin content. Overall, this is a highly readable, pleasant book that brings in a scientist's vast experience in almost a conversational way. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a terrific book, and very timely since 2015 is the ...By Membro del Oliveto This is a terrific book, and very timely since 2015 is the international year of soils. It is full of anecdotes mixed with interesting facts. In Sweden it was elected as the garden book of the year 2013. Both professionals and layman can learn a lot from this book, and after reading it you ask yourself why is soil so neglected in the garden literature? Here is so much interesting stuff; the book definitely fills a knowledge gap.

Hkan Wallander is a professor in Soil Biology and the reader is guided through the fascinating world below ground. The book has a free form and the author mixes scientific facts with personal stories from active research experiences and everyday life. The main focus is to make the reader aware of the vast biodiversity that exists in the soil, and to describe the important processes provided by the soil organisms. Reflections are made on how dependent we are on living soils, and how vulnerable the soil is if managed in a wrong way. The importance of soils as carbon sinks and reflections about the possible influence of soils for taste and quality of food and wine is also covered. The book is illustrated with photographs and every picture has a legend that stands on its own. In this way the reader will have an easy way into the book, and the main aim is to gain new readers to a subject that is immensely important, but not very attractive to laypersons.