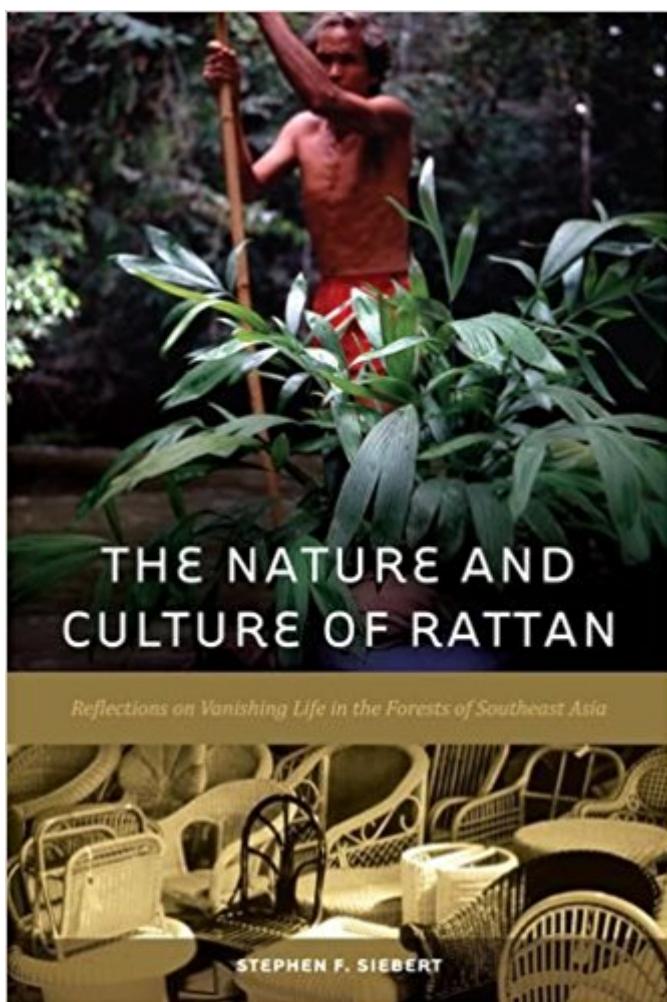


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The Nature And Culture Of Rattan: Reflections On Vanishing Life In The Forests Of Southeast Asia



Synopsis

Rattan is the common name for a diverse group of climbing palms found throughout Old World tropical forests. For centuries people have used them for binding, basketry, house construction, food, and numerous other non-market purposes; more recently the canes of some species have been gathered for the multi-billion-dollar furniture, handicraft, and mat-making industries. Thus rattan continues to be vital to the culture and economic well being of millions of cane collectors, laborers, and artisans throughout tropical Asia and Africa. The Nature and Culture of Rattan explores this valuable forest product, the tropical forests on which it depends, and the societies that flourish by using and managing these remarkable plants. The Nature and Culture of Rattan provides a distinctive and engaging review of rattan and the people whose lives are centered on it. It examines rattan use, biology, human culture, and challenges in tropical field research and conservation through the knowledge of cane workers in three Southeast Asian forest villages where the author lived over a twenty-five-year period. He effectively challenges commonly held views of "slash and burn" farming, rainforest destruction, and population increase while underscoring the myriad forces involved in individual decision-making and social and environmental change. Personal stories and experiences are integrated with scientific information in a manner that will attract nonspecialists as well as students and researchers. The Nature and Culture of Rattan will be a valuable addition to undergraduate and graduate courses in ecology, anthropology, rural sociology and development, forestry, and natural resource management. A website (www.cfc.umt.edu/rattan) includes additional photographs, suggested reading, and discussion topics.

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Customer Reviews

Stephen F. Siebert is professor and co-ordinator of international conservation and development in the College of Forestry and Conservation, The University of Montana.

Great book, provides a solid knowledge base on multiple topics surrounding rattans. Clearly written and enjoyable to read whilst providing the scientifically valid and well-researched facts that can only be given by an expert in the field. I would recommend this book as a great introduction to the topic of rattans for anyone who is interested, whilst the extensive references listed allows for further in-depth research should one wish to undertake it.

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