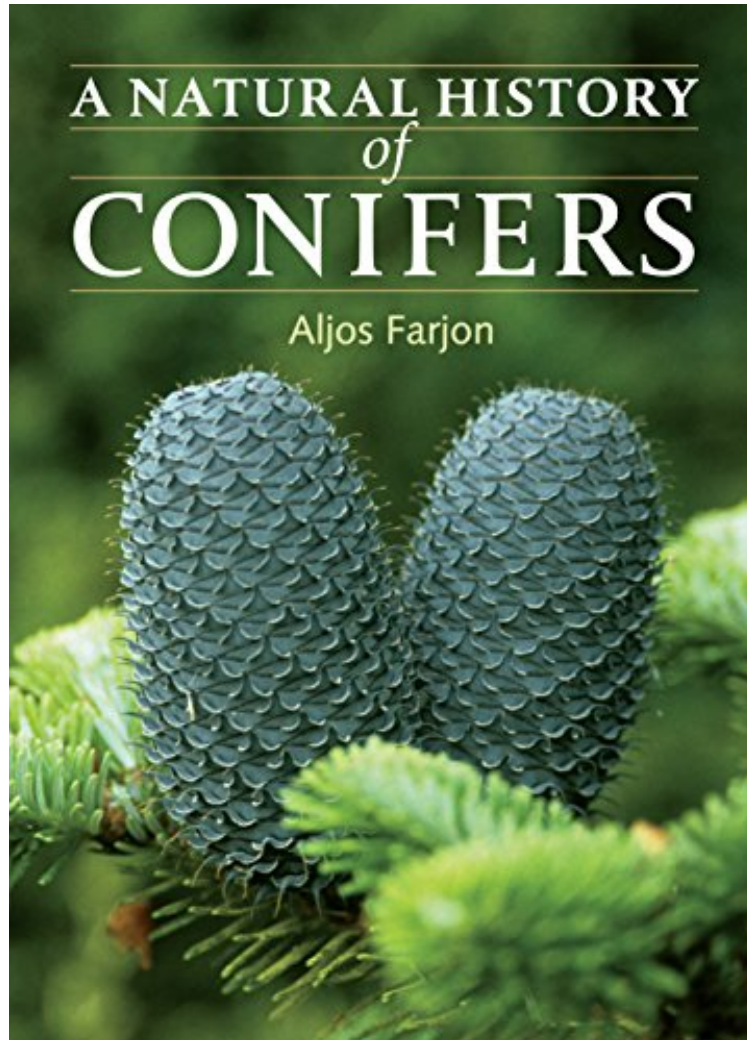


(Free pdf) A Natural History of Conifers

## A Natural History of Conifers

*Aljos Farjon*

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**Aljos Farjon : A Natural History of Conifers** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Natural History of Conifers:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. GREAT Book On The Biology Of Conifers By P. Pollock I came into possession of this book in the strangest way ... but I'm so glad I did! I asked a botanist for a book that would help me with tree systematics (identification) and this book was recommended. It was a little strange to make the purchase, because I was really looking for info on oak and birch trees. And secondly, it just so happened ... that I had found some very unique conifer trees on the tops of the southern Andes mountains, and I really wanted to identify them. So what the heck, I bought the book. What a pleasure, when it arrived!! Author Aljos Farjon has done a terrific job of describing conifer trees, how they have evolved and changed over time, and how the various aspects of their biology ...

produce the tree that is standing in front of you today. Furthermore, the book is very readable, and the color plates are high quality. I was encouraged to discover that I could identify which Family 'my tree' in the Andes belonged to ... it didn't take long at all. This book is Highly Recommended if you have an interest in conifers, tree identification, tree biology ... or you just love trees. Big thanks to the author!

23 of 23 people found the following review helpful. I wanted to like this book more than I did.

By James Philipp This book fills a gap in the popular literature on conifers: there's really a strong need for a comprehensive review of the natural history of conifers. But if that's what you are looking for, you will be disappointed here. Still, this volume has some strengths. Some of the high points of this text: (1) There are many photos of species where it is difficult to find good photographs; most notably of the Southern hemisphere species. It is almost worth keeping the book on my shelves just for the "tree porn". (2) Again, it is really the Southern species where this book really provides new details. If you are looking for a work that discusses the new finds in Indo-China or New Caledonia this is a book not to be missed.

Where I was disappointed: (1) Most notably, this book is in dire need of editorial coherence. It reads mostly like a collection of magazine articles that have been very lightly reshaped into a thematic structure. This book really would have benefited from a more disciplined analytic structure. (2) I really wanted to see more sustained discussion of the evolutionary linkages of the conifers--especially in reference to Northern hemisphere species. There's bits and pieces here (even chapters with titles that look like they will provide the sustained analysis that I'm looking for) but the discussions are just so scattered as to be frustrating. In short, this is the type of book that you can open up at almost any point and start reading--and that's not necessarily a good thing. Again, I really wanted to like this book more than I did.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

paleobotanic

By Green Man I bought this book through my interest in paleobotany. I have read Beck's classic on gymnosperm evolution so this did not add much from this point of view nor fossil wise. But I was fascinated by the use of phylogeny and morphology as against pure genetic studies which rule the day elsewhere. In conifers they just have not worked as yet! And perhaps this is a good thing. More and more botanists are criticising the laboratory pundits who don't even know what the plant they are studying the genes of looks like! Field work like that of the author is very impressive and was in days gone by, *de rigueur*! So much can be gleaned from the simple contact with the plants. Touch and observation are far from obsolete. I would like to have known a bit more about *Araucariaceae* in the northern hemisphere continent of Laurasia. We are not told that it was a species close to *Araucaria heterophylla* that occurred in this area. Any others? *Wollemia*, *Agathis*? But otherwise an excellent book written with and from great passion! A few spelling mistakes though which is most unlike this publisher.

A compelling account of the extraordinary relatives of ordinary garden conifers. Leading expert Aljos Farjon provides a compelling narrative that observes conifers from the standpoint of the curious naturalist. It starts with the basic question of what conifers are and continues to explore their evolution, taxonomy, ecology, distribution, human uses, and issues of conservation. As the story unfolds many popular misconceptions are dispelled, such as the false notion that all conifers have cones. The extraordinary diversity of conifers begins to dawn as Farjon describes the diminutive creeping shrub *Microcachrys tetragona*, whose strange seed cones resemble raspberries, and the prehistoric-looking *Araucaria meulleri*. The taxonomic diversity of conifers is huge and Farjon goes on to relate how, over the course of 300 million years, these trees and shrubs have adapted to survive geological upheavals, climatic extremes, and formidable competition from flowering plants. All who seek to learn more about the early history of life on our planet will cherish this book.

Organized in topically centered, lively chapters that include a discussion of conifer ecology and conservation. It is well illustrated with color photographs and line drawings of the trees, their structures, and the landscapes they dominate. Not exactly an encyclopedia but rather a sourcebook, this is the place to go for information about conifers. Highly recommended.

Choice If you want to find out more about conifers, then [this book] by the naturally acclaimed expert, Aljos Farjon, will sate your curiosity, your thirst for knowledge and your enthusiasm for those exciting plants that make up this group.

Virginia Master Gardeners Association Not since Rachel Carson has the public been graced with a scientist that writes with the interest of a novelist. Anyone with a curiosity about the early history of plant life on our planet will relish this book.

Garden Compass