

★ **Chasing Plants: Journeys with a Botanist through Rainforests, Swamps, and Mountains**

Chris Thorogood

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In *Chasing Plants*, botanist Chris Thorogood shares how his lifelong obsession with plants led him to precarious situations in far-flung places to find them, no matter what it took.

Thorogood sketched and scribbled his way around the world in a race against time to discover, record, and learn from new plant species that evolved marvelous solutions to environmental challenges. Based on field diaries kept while on expeditions to various parts of the UK, Borneo, Israel, and elsewhere, his book conveys the wild exhilaration of practicing “extreme botany,” when chasing down a plant involves encounters with volcanic eruptions, landslides, typhoons, sizzling desert heat, landmines, and vertical, mist-slick walls of rock as tall as buildings. But Thorogood writes that such extremes aren’t always necessary: important plants can also be found nearer to home, even among the Coca-cola cans in an Essex IKEA parking lot.

The book supports its argument that there’s a lot to be learned from plants with examples of amazing evolutionary adaptations to environmental threats. Some of these solutions could help industries to solve design issues, while others, like those of the desert hyacinth (*Cistanche*), may contribute to reversing global desertification, as well as providing food and medicine for Earth’s growing human population. Further, Thorogood’s exquisite hyperrealistic oil paintings highlight each plant against the background of its native environment in vibrant color and rich detail. They are breathtaking in their beauty.

Chasing Plants is an exuberant, awe-inspiring, and artistic science book that conveys absorbing love for plants. Here, tracking down nature’s beauty, wherever it may be, is one of life’s greatest thrills.

KRISTINE MORRIS (November / December 2022)

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