

The Blueberry Award



Welcome!



EVANSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

The Blueberry Award



The Blueberry Award celebrates children's books that inspire a love of nature and action for the planet for children between the ages of 3-10+.

- Provides excellence in children's literature in writing, art, and design
- Shares nature, nature intersections, or climate peril with kids in developmentally appropriate, truthful ways
- Reflects the diversity of people in our world
- Delivers content grounded in real science
- Incites kids to action that would make a real difference
- *Bonus: Topics that coincide with the City of Evanston's Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) goals!*



the blueberry award





Anti-Anxiety Criteria and Research

Anti-Anxiety Criteria for the Blueberry Awards

1. Love of nature first, climate action 2nd. (you only save what you love)
2. Recommend GROUP action, not going it alone
3. Include practical suggestions for mitigating the actual problem shared in the text
4. State that adults are engaged. Never say, it is up to YOU or young people alone.
5. Follow child development guidelines about what kind of information kids can handle at which age. (*"No doom and gloom before 3rd grade."*)

Louise Chawla, Prof Emeritus, U of C, Boulder, Scientific Advisory Council of the Children and Nature Network gave a lecture at the Brookfield Zoo in 2023 about kids' mental health, which led to researching her professional articles and then to these more formal guidelines.

Research shows that 82% of 10-12 year olds fear their climate future! (Colorado Data)



Blueberry Awards Committee!

Broad Range of Skills:

1. Four librarians, one has served on the Newbery and other ALA awards committees, three are book selectors and buyers
2. A STEM specialist (former animal keeper) and an Evanston Ecology Center manager and a Park District Administrator
3. PhD in Chemistry, another in Early Childhood Development
4. Two school librarians (Preschool, Elementary and Middle)
5. Black and Latine folks (we consult with an Indigenous educator at Northwestern University.)
6. A Masters in Writing for Children with a heart for Asian representation
7. A School District Sustainability Manager
8. The City's Sustainability Manager
9. Youth Paraprofessionals

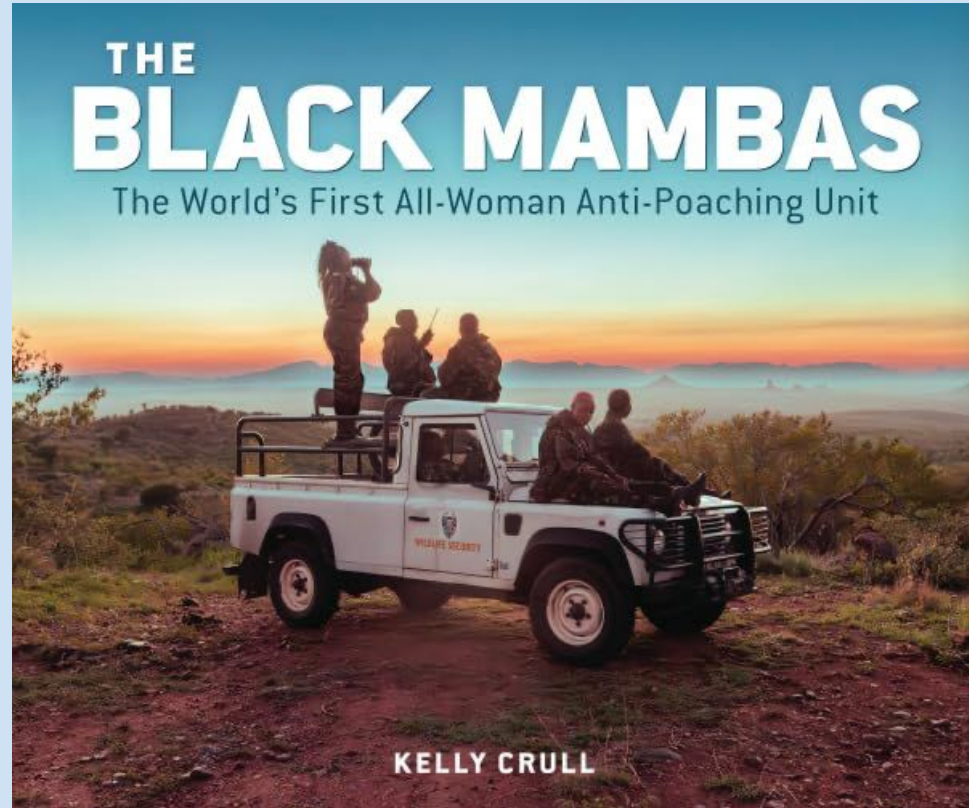


2025 Blueberry Award Winner!

The Black Mambas: The World's First All-Woman Anti-Poaching Unit by Kelly Crull (author & photographer)

Crull centers the voices of the Black Mambas themselves. He creates great interactions, like asking kids to analyze the graph of the reserve and select the best route for patrolling it. **Brilliant** picture book nonfiction!

Age Range: 6 - 10 years





2025 Blueberry Award Winner!

When we arrived on our first day on the job, we discovered that we were not alone. We are part of a sisterhood!



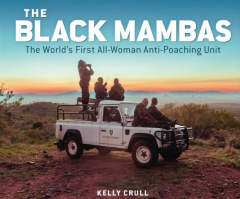
"On our first day, we were all very excited, although we didn't know what we were getting ourselves into. Training was hard, but it taught us the discipline we need to do our jobs."

—Naledi



We named ourselves the Black Mambas after the most feared snake in South Africa. Together, we are strong and brave enough to take on any challenge.

DID YOU NOTICE THAT THE BLACK MAMBA IS NOT ACTUALLY BLACK?
Its name comes from the black inside of its mouth. It is one of the most dangerous snakes in the world, and just two drops of its venom can kill a person. Like most snakes, though, a black mamba will avoid people when possible and would rather hide or escape than bite someone.

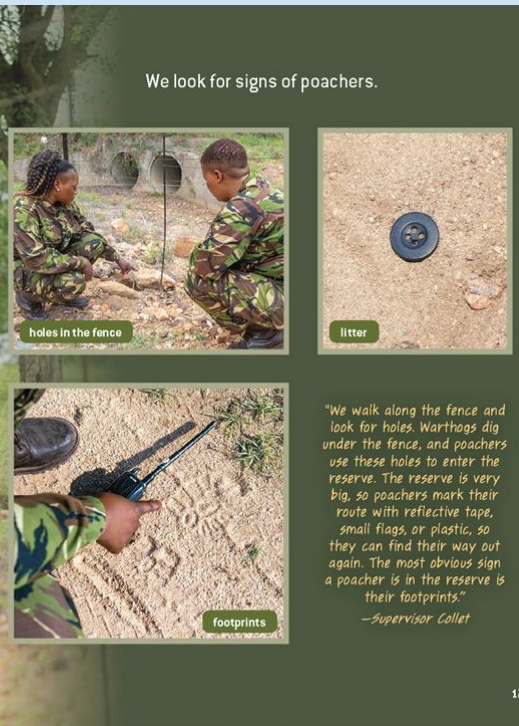




2025 Blueberry Award Winner!



Twice a day, we patrol the reserve.



We look for signs of poachers.



holes in the fence



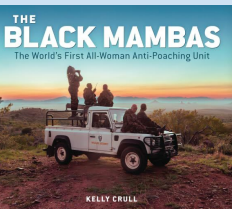
litter



footprints

"We walk along the fence and look for holes. Warthogs dig under the fence, and poachers use these holes to enter the reserve. The reserve is very big, so poachers mark their route with reflective tape, small flags, or plastic, so they can find their way out again. The most obvious sign a poacher is in the reserve is their footprints."

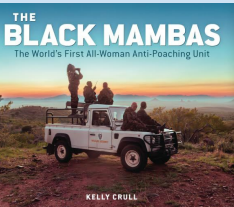
—Supervisor Collet





2025 Blueberry Award Winner!

Follow the
Black
Mambas on
Social
Media!





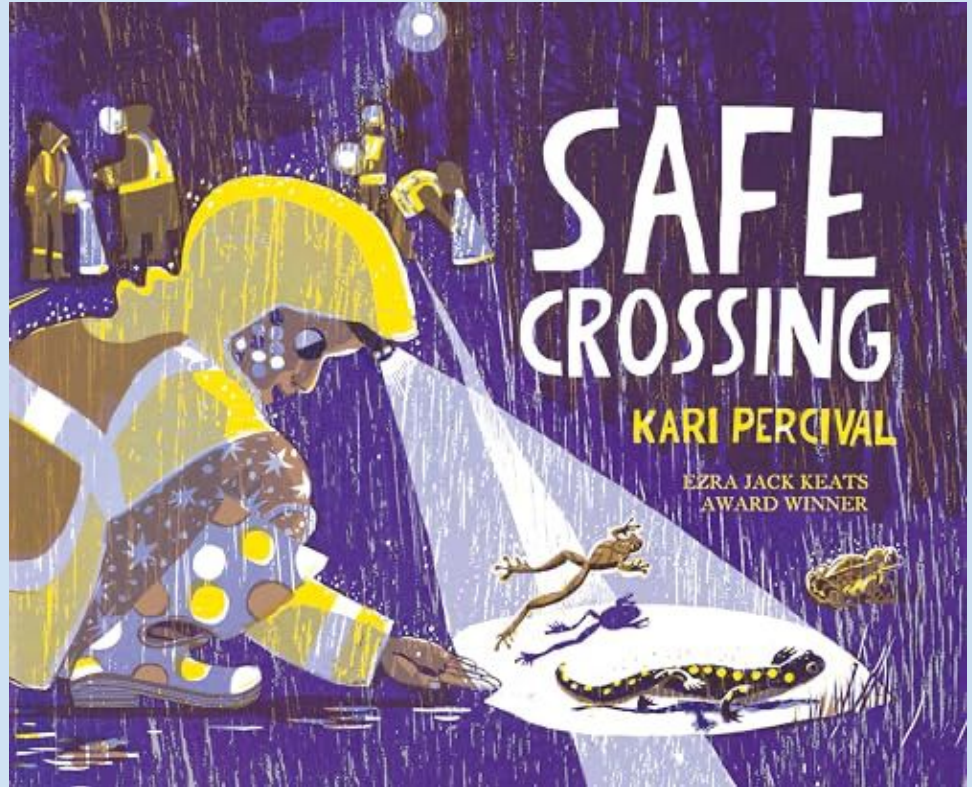
2025 Blueberry Changemaker Winner!

Safe Crossing by Kari Percival

A family with the Amphibian Migration Team helps frogs and salamanders cross the road to an ephemeral pond in the spring.

The young citizen scientist then proposes a better way to save these animals. Empowering and deeply informative!

Age Range: 5 - 8 years





2025 Blueberry Changemaker Winner!



The wood frogs, spring peepers, salamanders—spotted, blue-spotted, and Jefferson—and other amphibians

WOOD FROGS

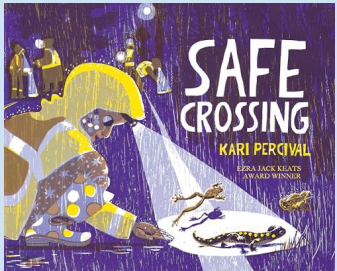
SPRING PEEPERS

JEFFERSON SALAMANDER

SPOTTED SALAMANDERS

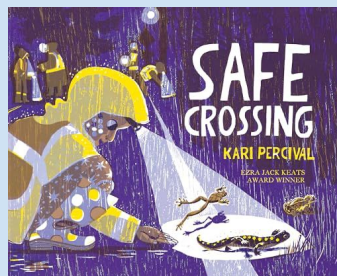
BLUE-SPOTTED SALAMANDER

are crossing the road tonight:
a wet road on a wet night in spring.



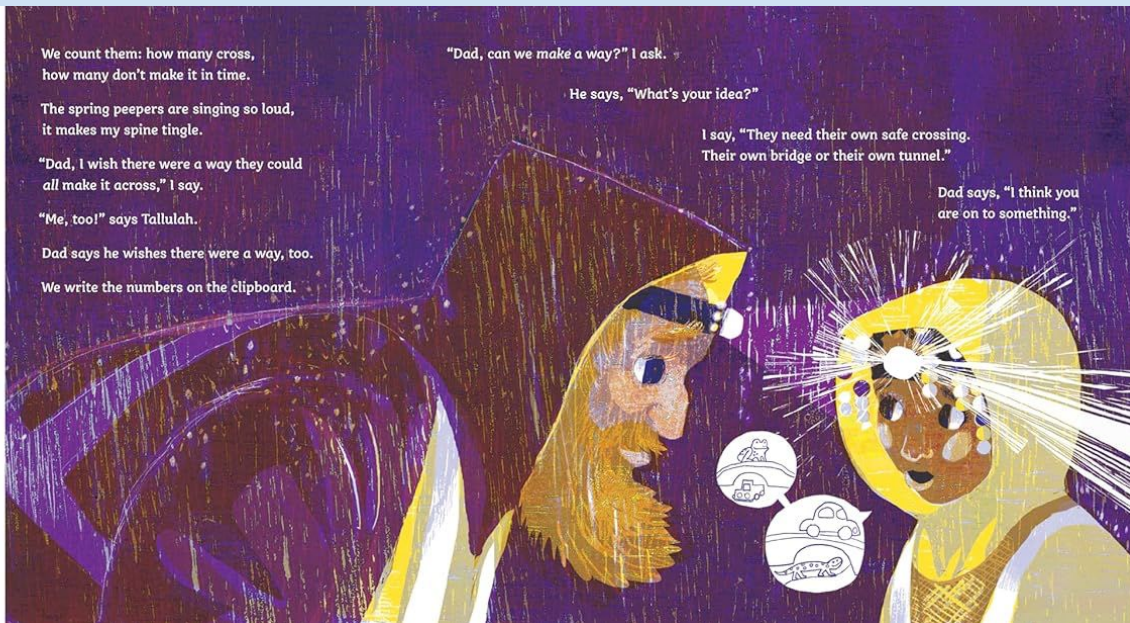


2025 Blueberry Changemaker Winner!





2025 Blueberry Changemaker Winner



We count them: how many cross,
how many don't make it in time.

The spring peepers are singing so loud,
it makes my spine tingle.

"Dad, I wish there were a way they could
all make it across," I say.

"Me, too!" says Tallulah.

Dad says he wishes there were a way, too.

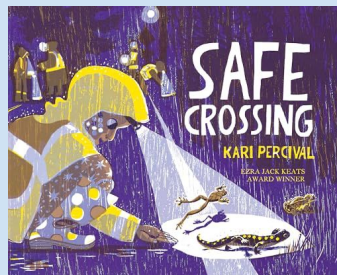
We write the numbers on the clipboard.

"Dad, can we make a way?" I ask.

He says, "What's your idea?"

I say, "They need their own safe crossing.
Their own bridge or their own tunnel."

Dad says, "I think you
are on to something."





2025 Blueberry Changemaker Winner

THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION GETS PERMITS AND HIRES CONTRACTORS TO BUILD THE TUNNELS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TELLS US HOW TO APPLY FOR A ROAD GRANT AND MAKES SURE OUR PROJECT WILL WORK.

A WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST MAPS WHERE THE MOST AMPHIBIANS GO.

Dad looks into it. It turns out that wildlife tunnels are already a real thing!

There is a lot to do, and we need a lot of help.

BUT WE HAVE ALREADY DONE PART OF THE WORK.

Mom says all those frogs and salamanders we counted add up:

They could show the Town Council how important a wildlife tunnel would be.

They could show the Department of Transportation why the animals need a safe crossing.

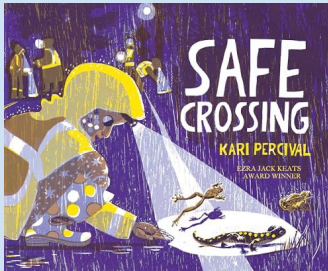
A HERPETOLOGIST AND A ROADWAY ENGINEER DESIGN THE TUNNELS TO BE AMPHIBIAN FRIENDLY.

REPORTERS ASK QUESTIONS AND SHARE OUR IDEA WITH EVERYONE!

THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE HELPS ORGANIZE OUR DATA AND TELLS US HOW TO APPLY FOR A WILDLIFE GRANT.

CONTRACTORS PRIDE OUT ALL THE PARTS OF THE DESIGN.

A SURVEYOR MEASURES THE HILL.





2025 Blueberry Changemaker Winner - Middle Grade

This year we named a Middle Grade Changemaker Winner, too:

Climate Is Just the Start by UK climate activist Mikaela Loach, empowers kids to tackle the climate crisis by connecting it to social justice issues like capitalism and colonialism.

Loach's personal stories and experiences encourage young readers to feel empowered to create a better world through activism, protests, and lifestyle changes, while acknowledging the emotional toll of the crisis.

Age Range: 8 - 12+





The Blueberry Votes Programs!



The Blueberry Committee asks for help from kids every fall to make our decisions!

The Blueberry Votes Program, a children's choice award!

- early elementary school (K - 2nd)
- kids choose a winner from **5** nominees

Preschool Blueberry Votes Program, a children's choice award!

- Kids 3 - 5 year olds
- kids choose the winner from **3** nominees

You are welcome to join us, too! All *you* need is the book titles & the QR code for reporting; All *we* need is your email address! **We announce the books in the program at the end of August, 2026. You can sign up anytime in the fall.**

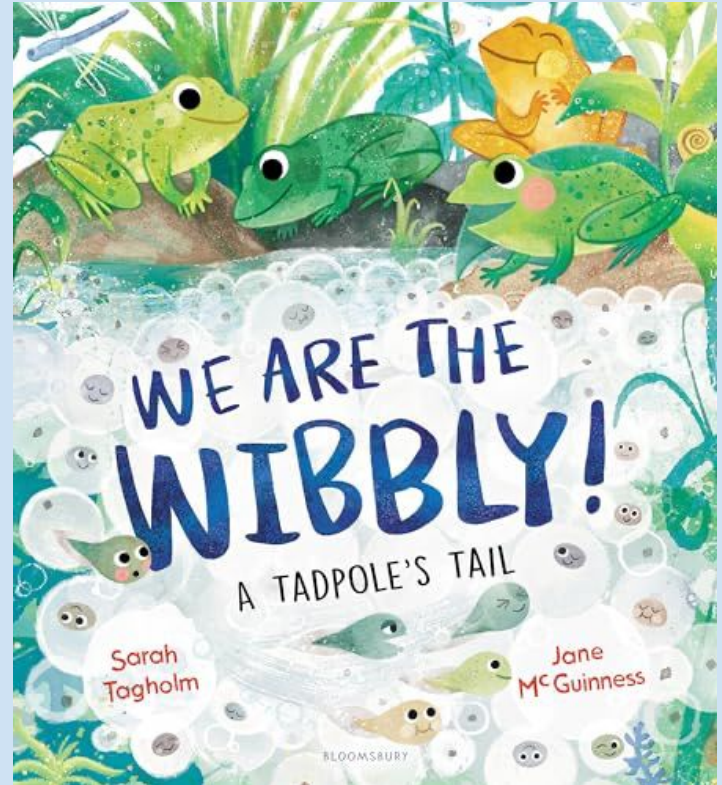


2025 Blueberry Votes Winner

We Are the Wibbly! A Tadpole's Tail by Sarah Tagholm illustrated by Jane McGuinness

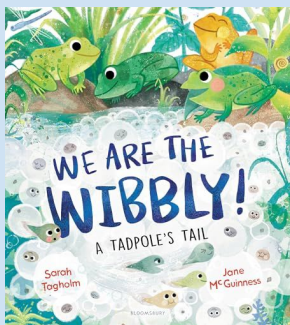
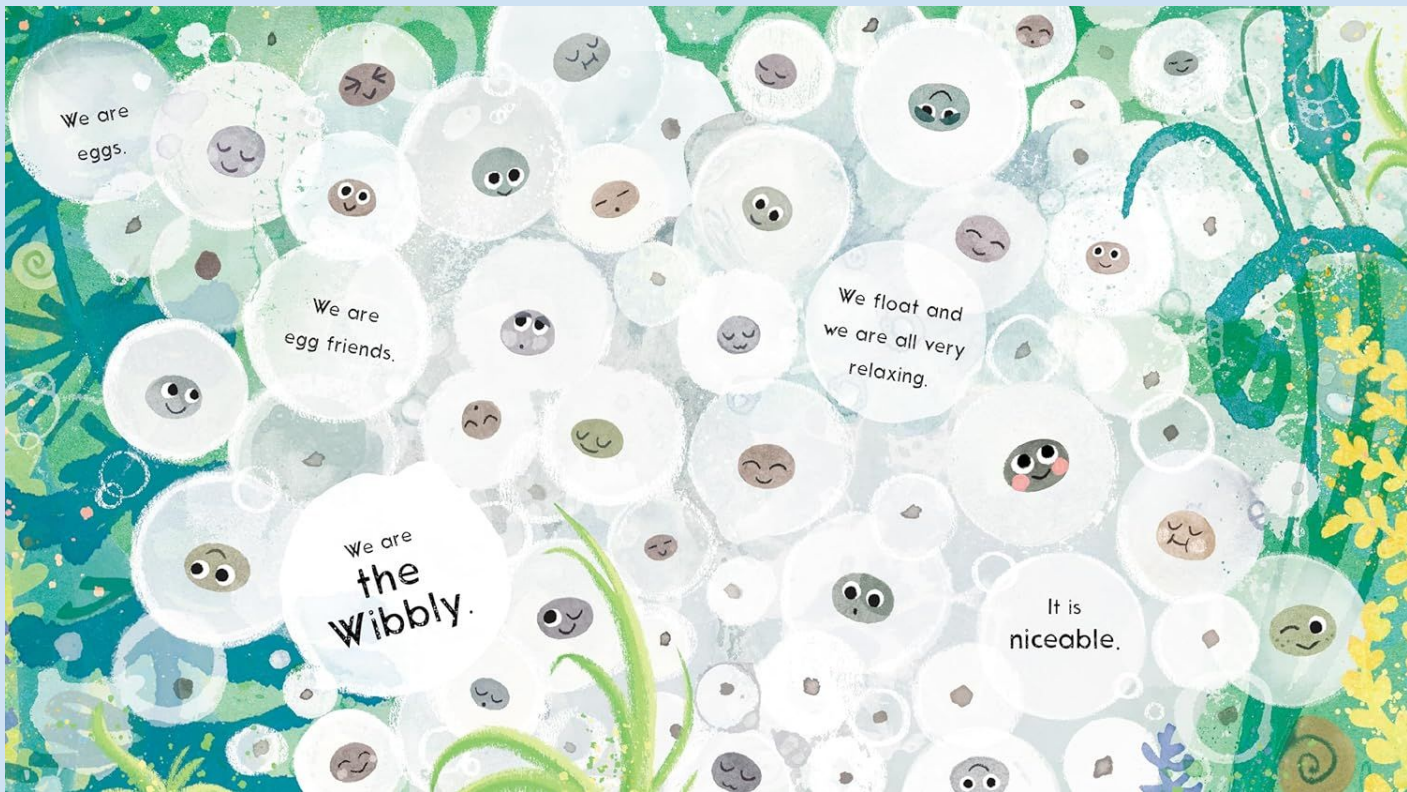
A tadpole narrates his journey as he grows up alongside the other frog spawn in the pool. Extremely funny with a delightful voice but full of clear science.

Age Range: 4 - 7 years



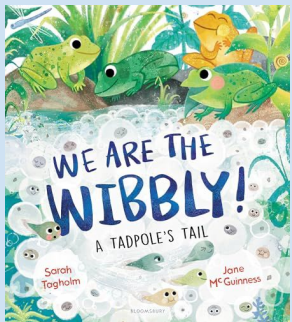


2025 Blueberry Votes Winner





2025 Blueberry Votes Winner





2025 Blueberry Votes Winner

OH MY CRIKEYS!

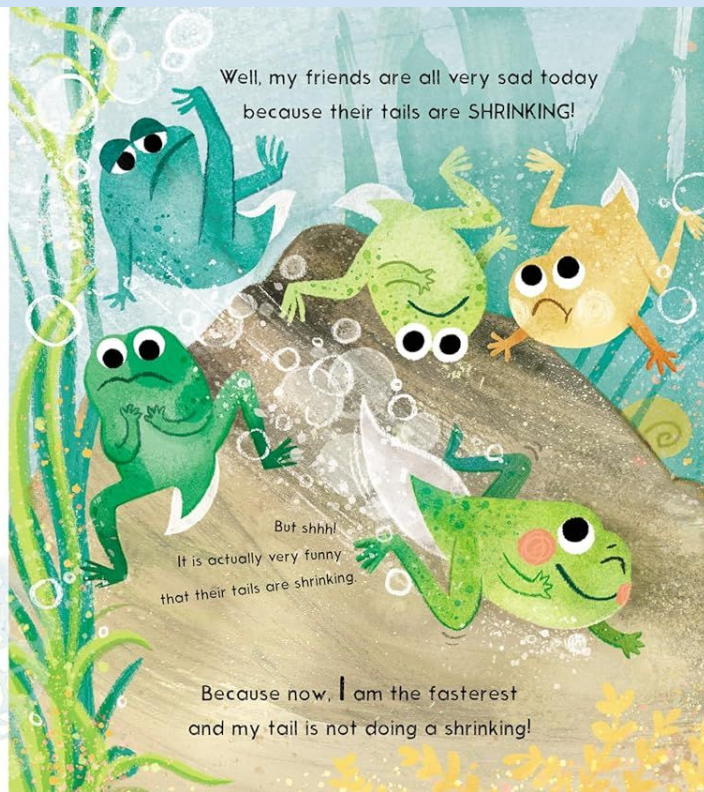
You will not believe all this.
You will think I am making up the stories.

But look! Two things grew out the front of me!



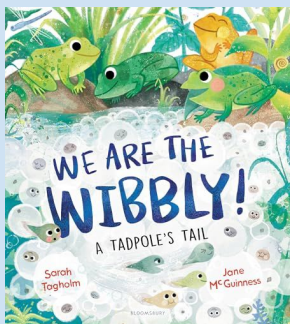
And now I can do holding the hands
and grabbing of juiceable dinners too!

Well, my friends are all very sad today
because their tails are SHRINKING!



But shhhh!
It is actually very funny
that their tails are shrinking.

Because now, I am the fastest
and my tail is not doing a shrinking!



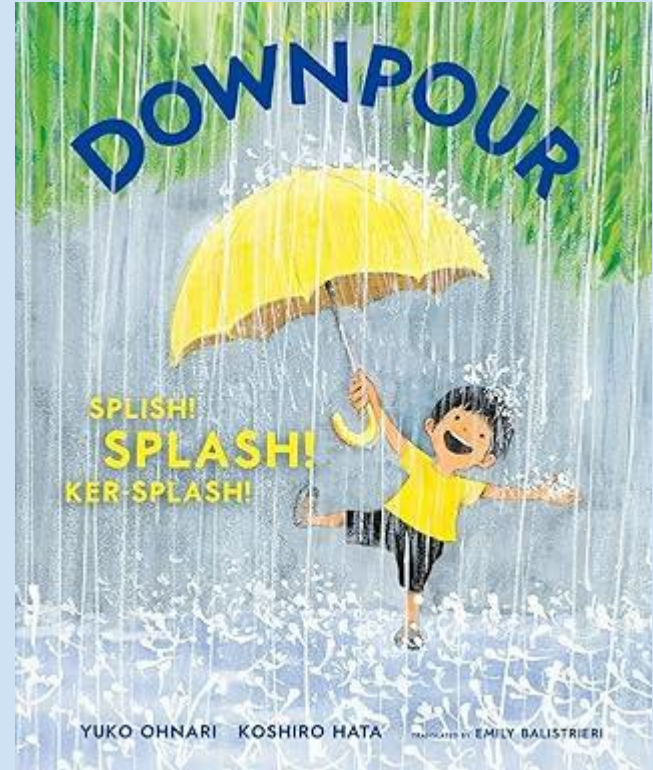


2025 Preschool Blueberry Votes Winner

*Downpour: Splish! Splash!
Ker-Splash!* By Yuko Ohnari
illustrated by Koshiro Hata
Translated by Emily Balistrieri

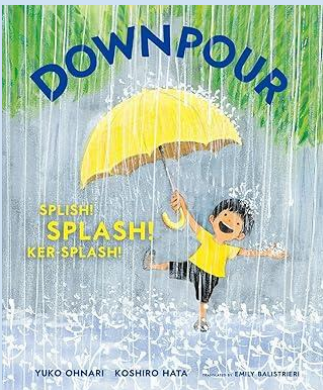
A joyous onomatopoeia-laced paean
to rain! Perfect for a read aloud.

Age Range: 3 - 6 year



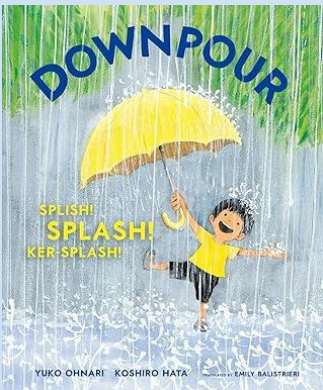


2025 Prechool Blueberry Votes Winner





2025 Preschool Blueberry Votes Winner





2025 Blueberry Changemaker recipient

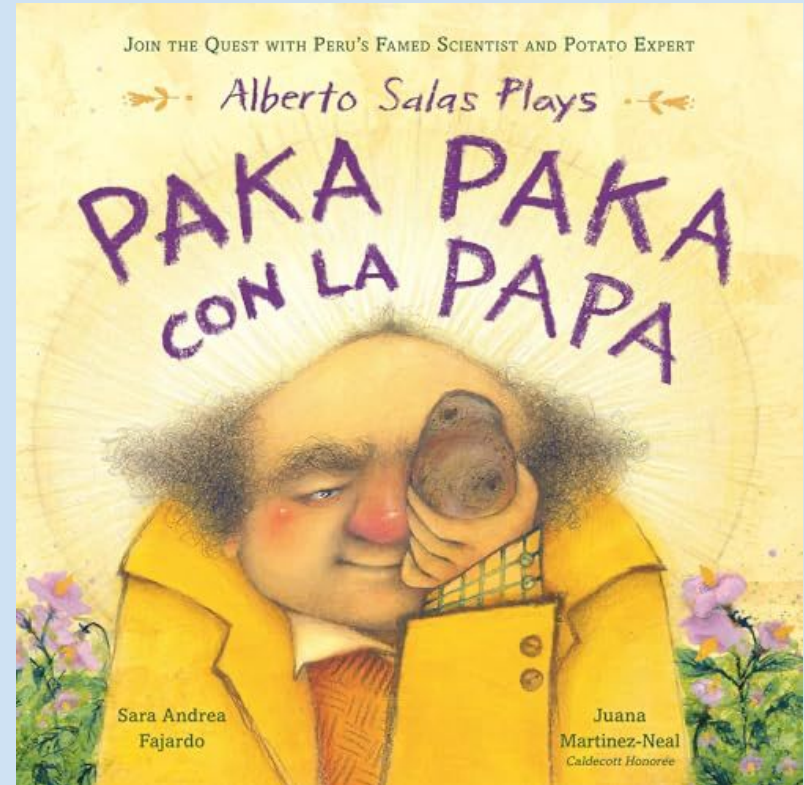
The 2026 Sibert Winner!

Alberto Salas Plays Paka Paka con La Papa (i.e. potato hide and seek) by Sara Andrea Fajardo illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal

Join Peruvian scientist Alberto Salas to hunt down and find all the Andean potatoes so all their genetic material can be saved!

Also available in Spanish.

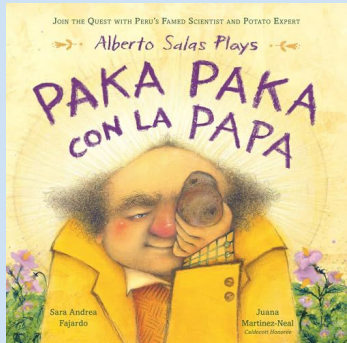
Age Range: 3 - 8 years





2025 Blueberry Changemaker recipient

The REAL Alberto Salas!





2025 Blueberry Changemaker recipient

Copyrighted Material

In the Andes Mountains, where papas grow in thousands of shapes and colors, Alberto Salas is on a quest for the potatoes of the Americas.

Up and down the crooked spine of the Andes goes Alberto, playing an epic game of paka paka con la papa, potato hide-and-seek.

It's a serious game.

Across the globe, families count on delicious potatoes to fill their bellies.

Alberto's discoveries help farmers grow potatoes in a changing world.

Copyrighted Material

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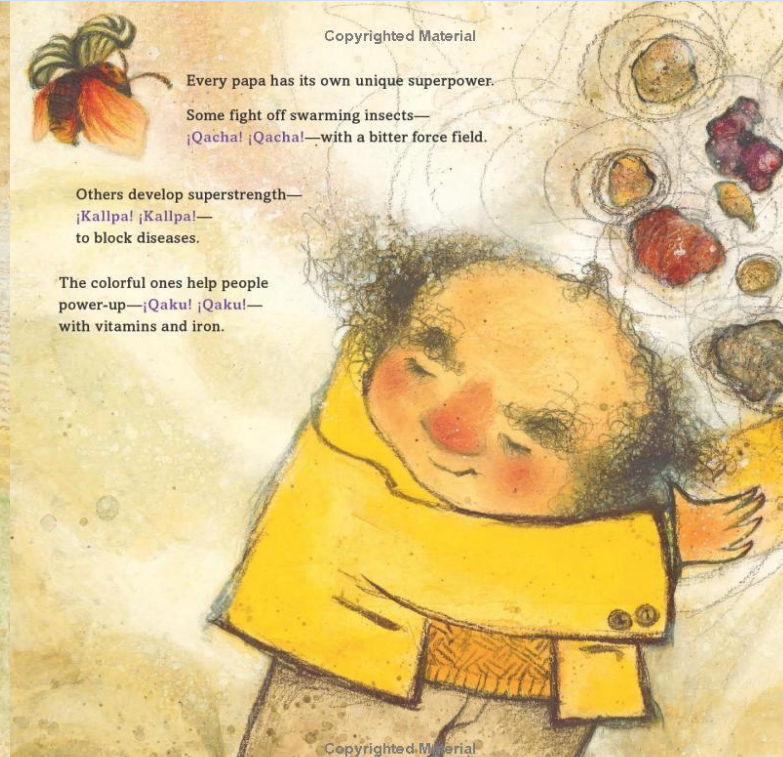
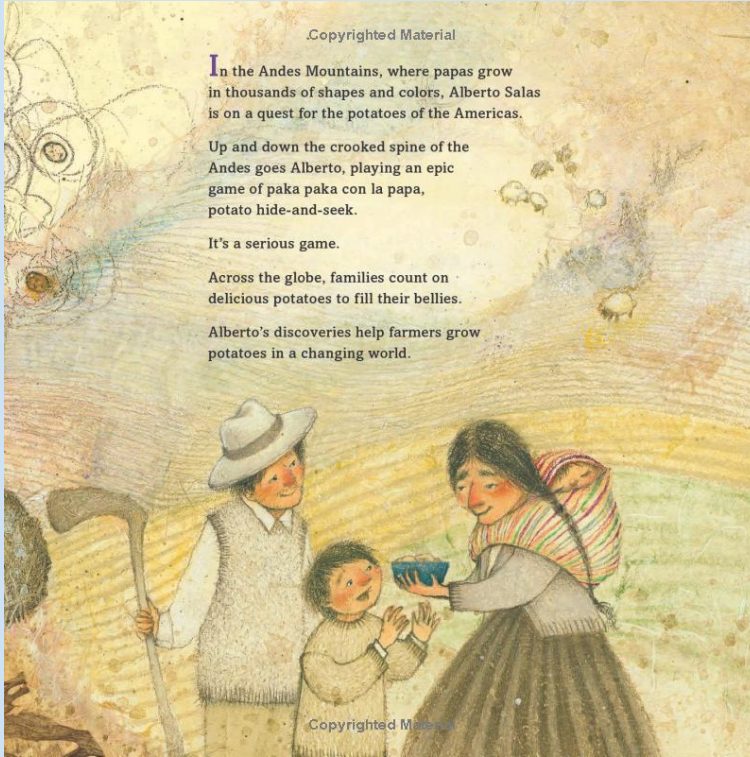
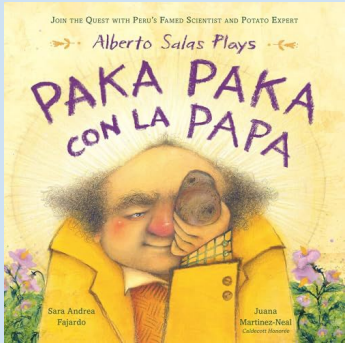
Every papa has its own unique superpower.

Some fight off swarming insects—
¡Qacha! ¡Qacha!—with a bitter force field.

Others develop superstrength—
¡Kallpa! ¡Kallpa!—
to block diseases.

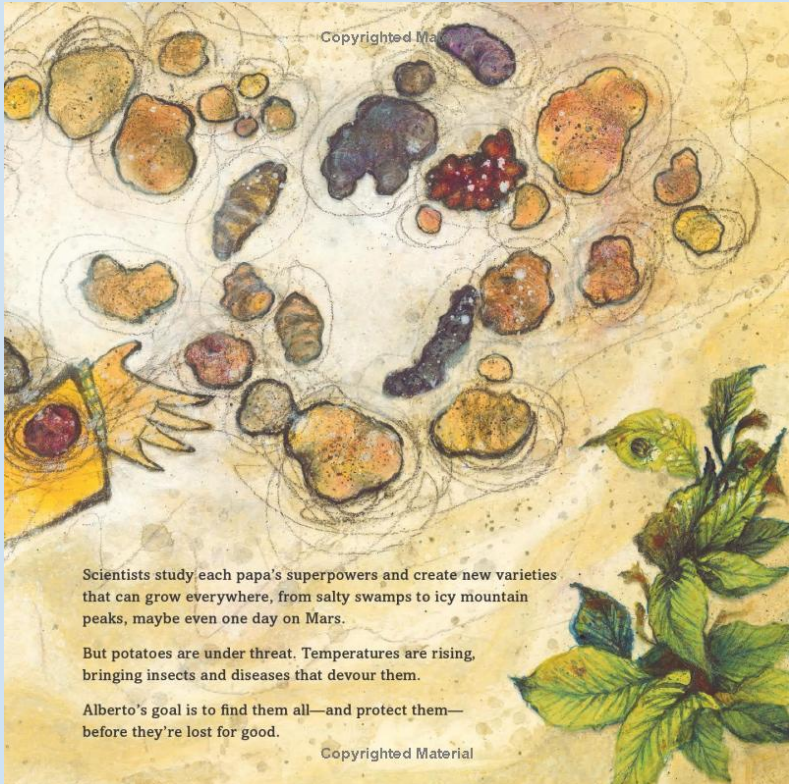
The colorful ones help people
power-up—¡Qaku! ¡Qaku!—
with vitamins and iron.

Copyrighted Material





2025 Blueberry Changemaker Recipient

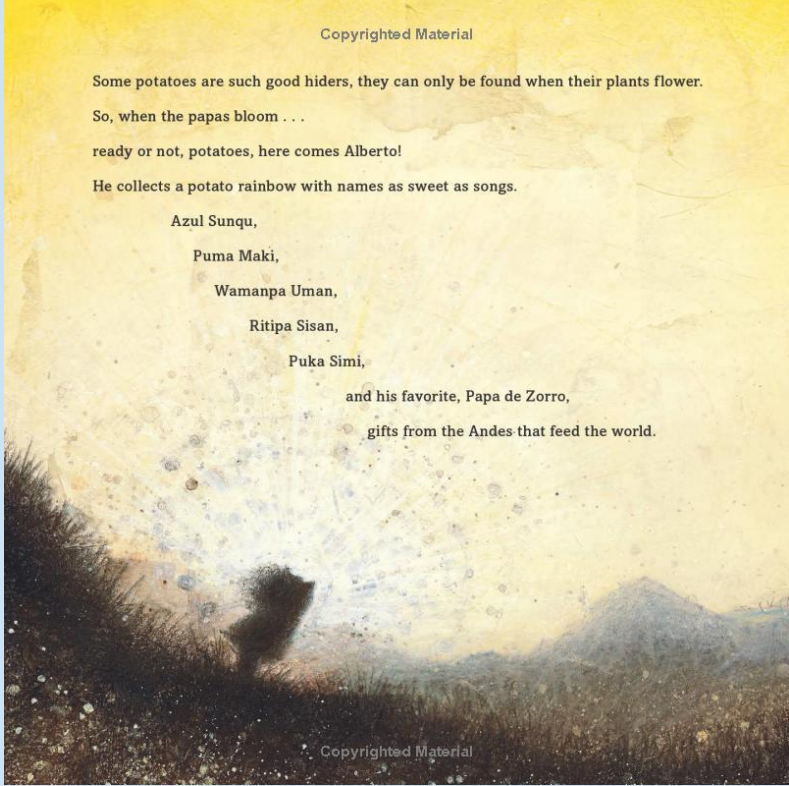
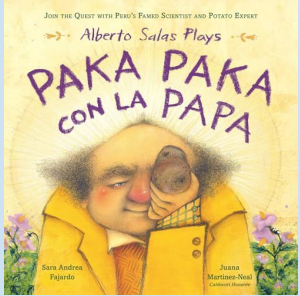


Scientists study each papa's superpowers and create new varieties that can grow everywhere, from salty swamps to icy mountain peaks, maybe even one day on Mars.

But potatoes are under threat. Temperatures are rising, bringing insects and diseases that devour them.

Alberto's goal is to find them all—and protect them—before they're lost for good.

Copyrighted Material



Copyrighted Material

Some potatoes are such good hidiers, they can only be found when their plants flower.
So, when the papas bloom . . .
ready or not, potatoes, here comes Alberto!
He collects a potato rainbow with names as sweet as songs.

Azul Sunqu,

Puma Maki,

Wamanpa Uman,

Ritipa Sisan,

Puka Simi,

and his favorite, Papa de Zorro,
gifts from the Andes that feed the world.

Copyrighted Material

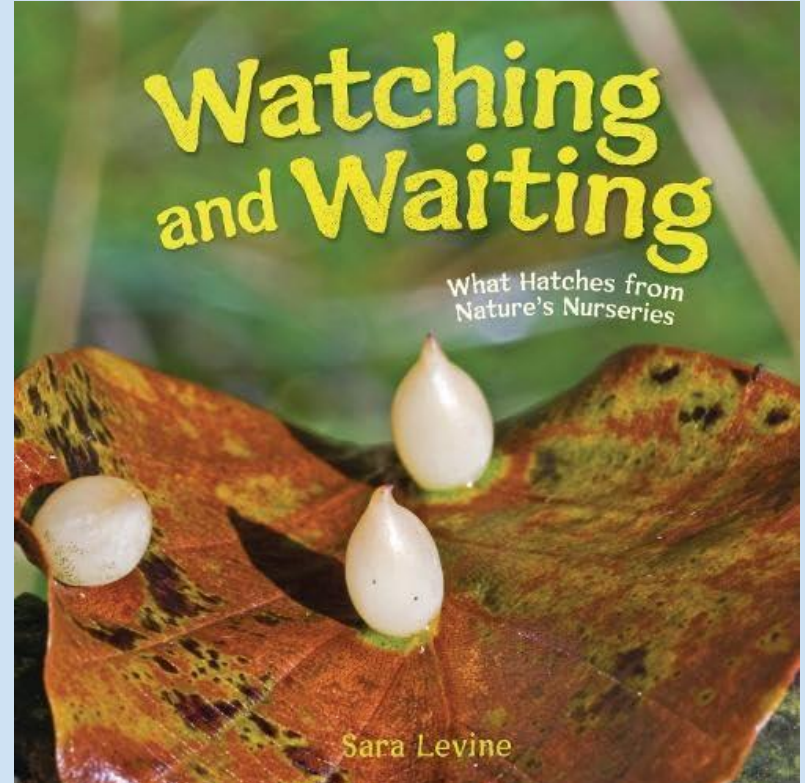


2025 Blueberry Awards

Watching and Waiting: What Hatches from Nature's Nurseries by Sara Levine
(A Veterinarian and an Assistant Professor of Biology)

This is a compelling look at eggs, egg cases, and galls in nature, gently encouraging kids to be curious and patient to discover the mystery of what grows inside.

Age Range: 4 - 9 years





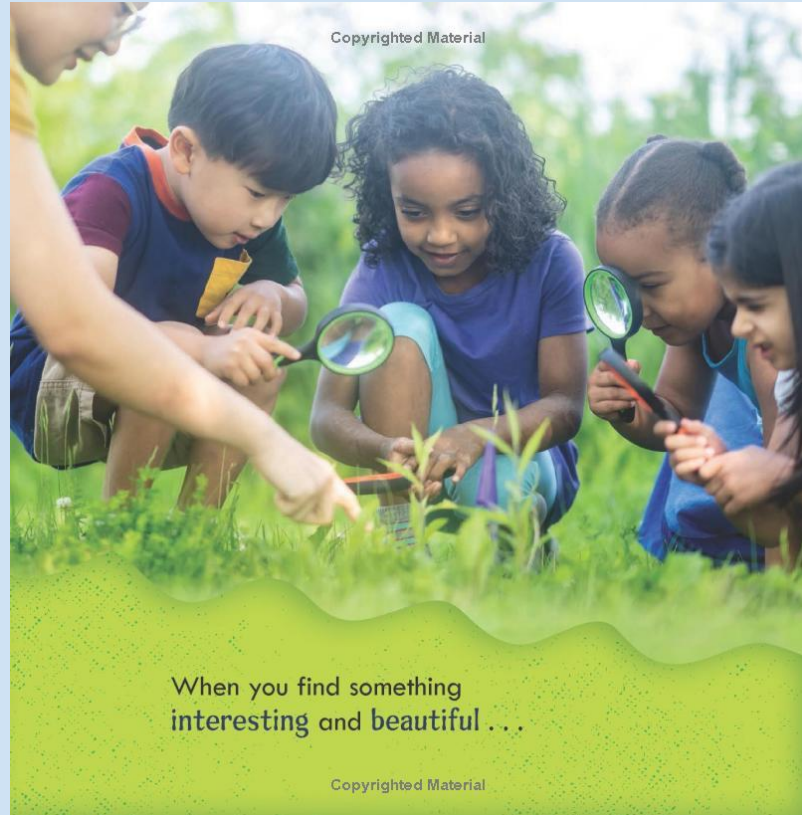
2025 Blueberry Awards Contender

The book answers a question: what should I do if I find eggs, an egg case, or a gall in nature?

If you do, you can open them, but what's growing inside will die.

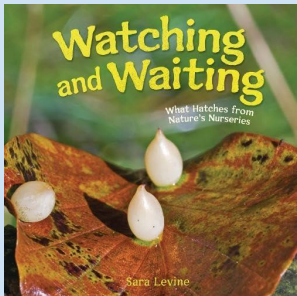
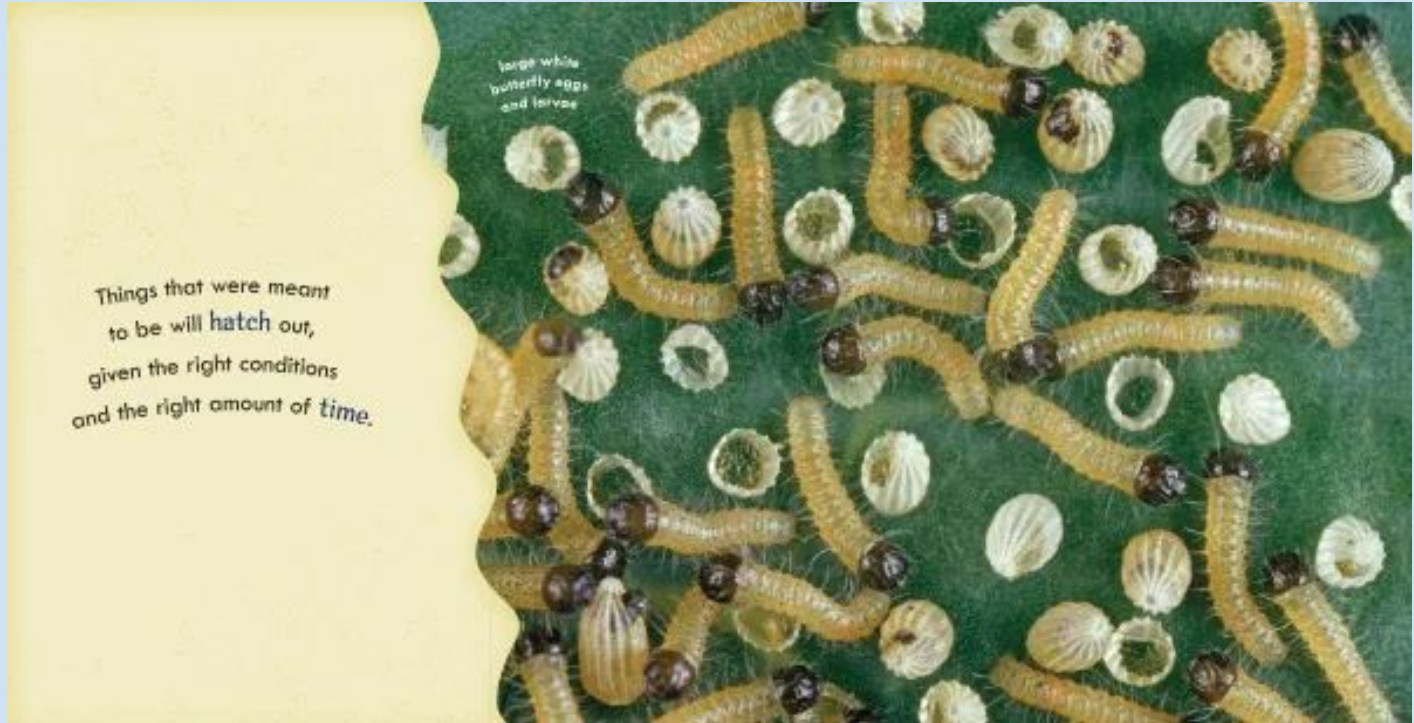
Instead watch and wait and you'll be rewarded with something amazing –

Only book for young kids about galls.





2025 Blueberry Awards Contender





2025 Blueberry Honor Award

After reading this book to her preschool class, Megan Gessler at Little Explorers Forest Day Camp reports,

“They are obsessed with galls!”

Turn your preschoolers or early elementary school kids into “gall hunters” too.





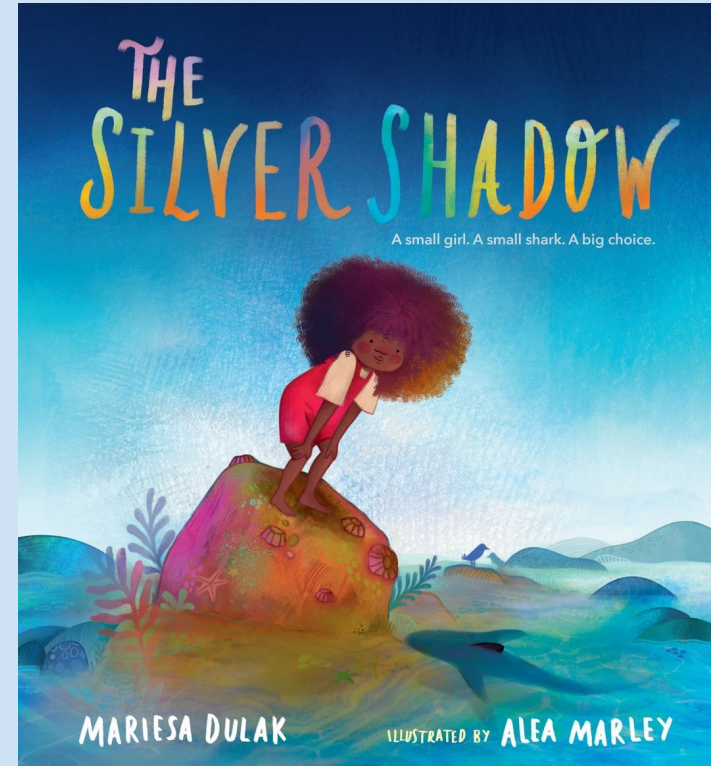
2025 Blueberry Changemaker recipient!

The Silver Shadow by Mariesa Dulak illustrated by Alea Marley

"A magnificently told tale of compassion for the natural world" Kirkus Reviews

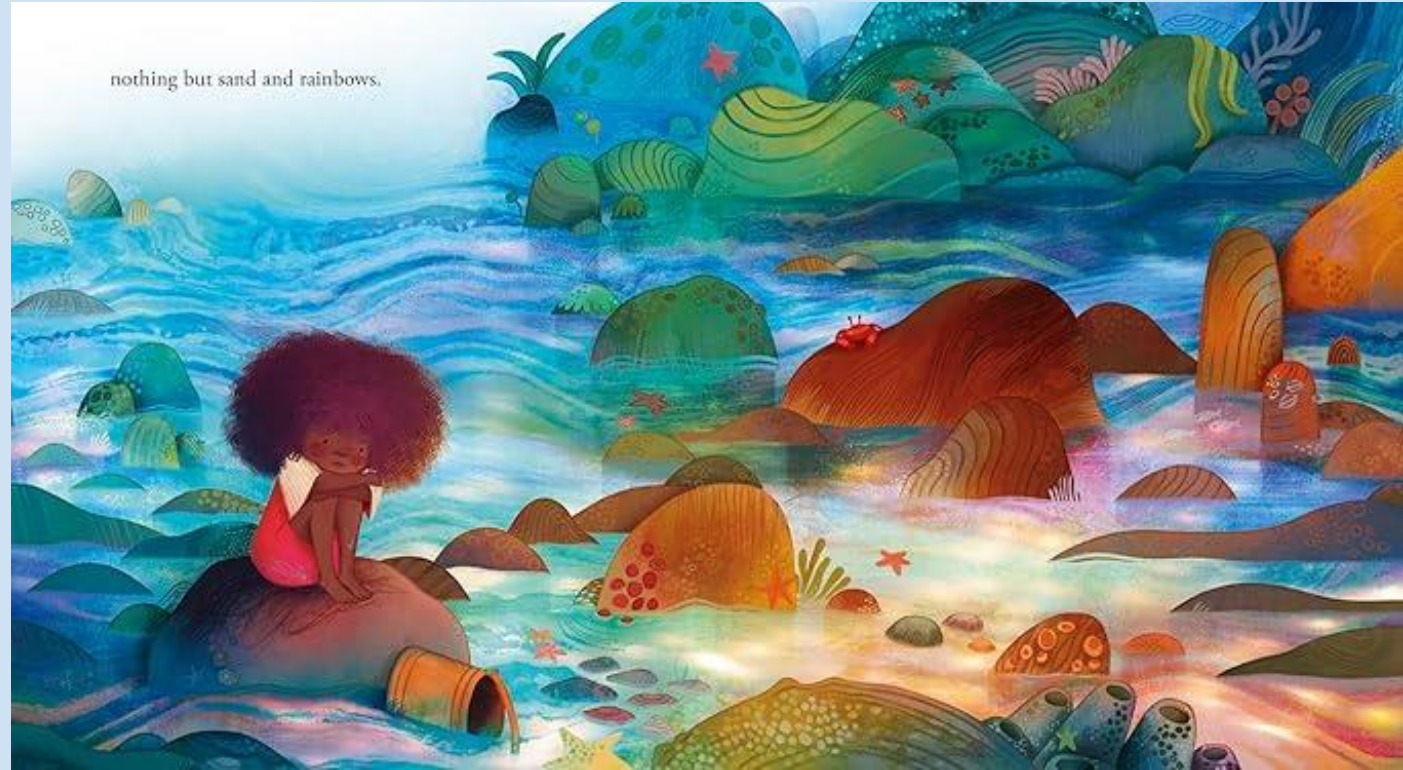
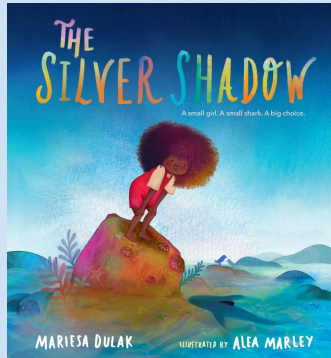
Set in Barbados, a shy young girl stands up for a juvenile Caribbean shark against bullies who want to capture and sell it.

Fiction Picture Book; Age Range: 3 - 7 years



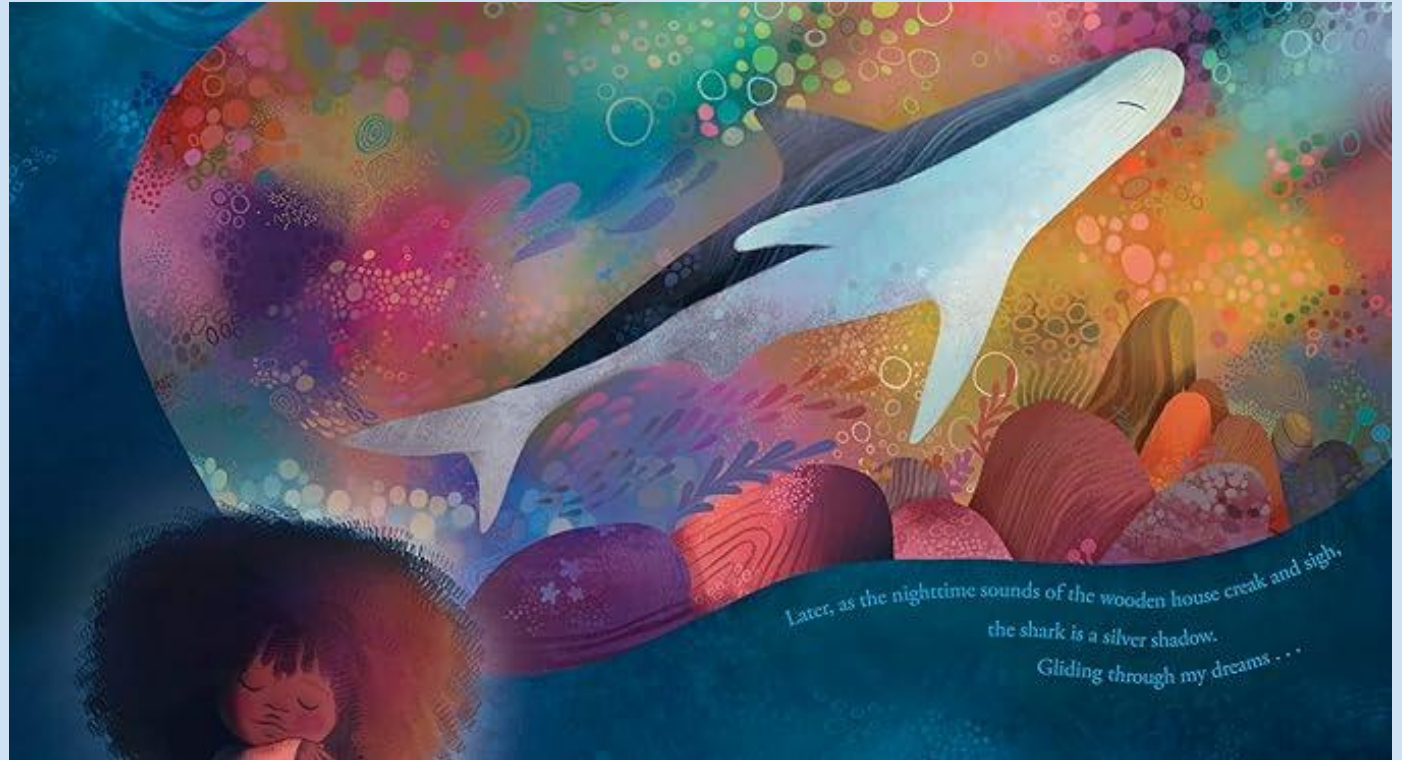


2025 Blueberry Changemaker Award!





2025 Blueberry Changemaker Award



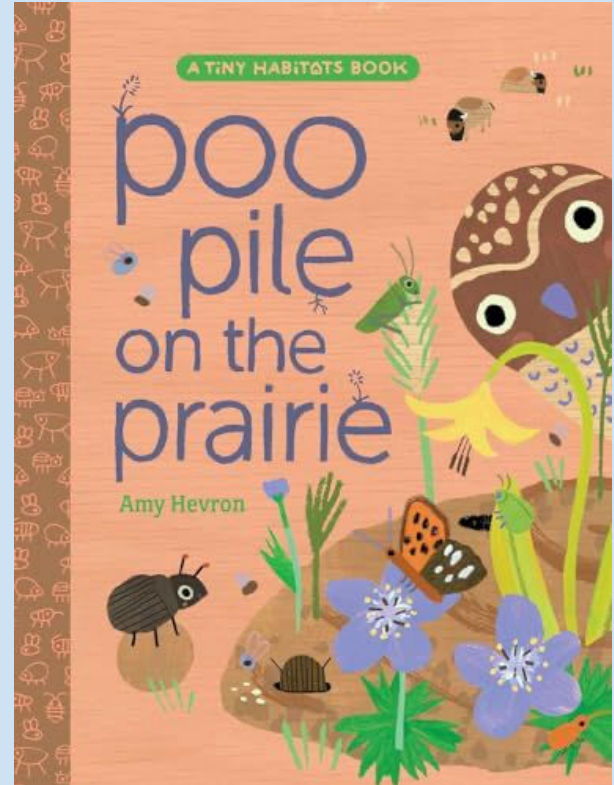


2025 Blueberry Honor Award

Poo Pile on the Prairie by Amy Hevron

Welcome to learning about bison poo! Although the pictures are cute, the science is cutting edge: what creatures live and hatch on a bison patty? Bison poo is a brilliant incubator of beetles, flies, and prairie plants. Deep science in a delightful package.

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

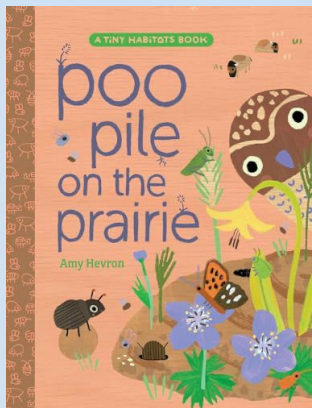




2025 Blueberry Honor Award



Watch her munch in
fresh meadows with Mama.





2025 Blueberry Honor Award



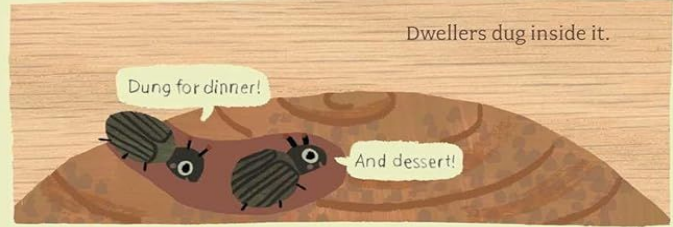
Dung beetles were the first to sniff out the steamy poo pile.

Home sweet home!



Tunnelers burrowed underneath it.

The perfect place to raise a family!



Dwellers dug inside it.

Dung for dinner!

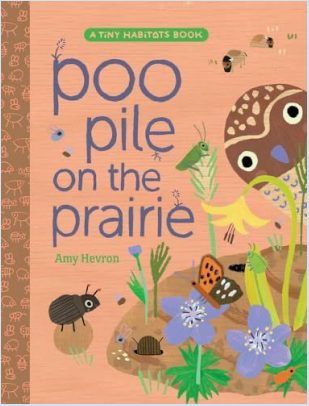
And dessert!



Rollers carted away poo balls and buried them.

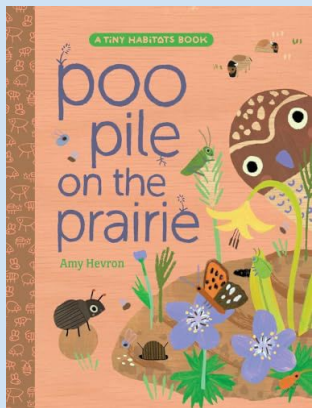
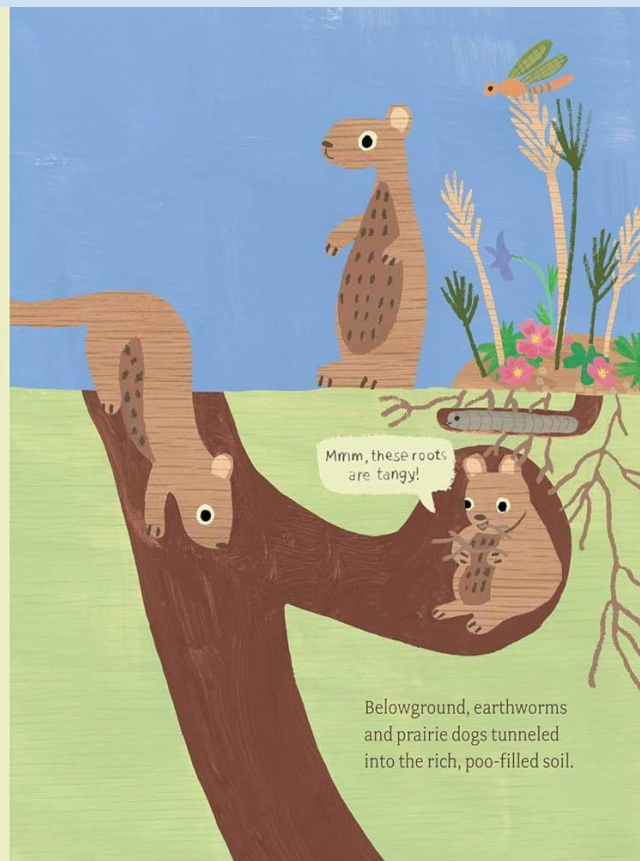
I'm saving this for later!

Me too!





2025 Blueberry Honor Award



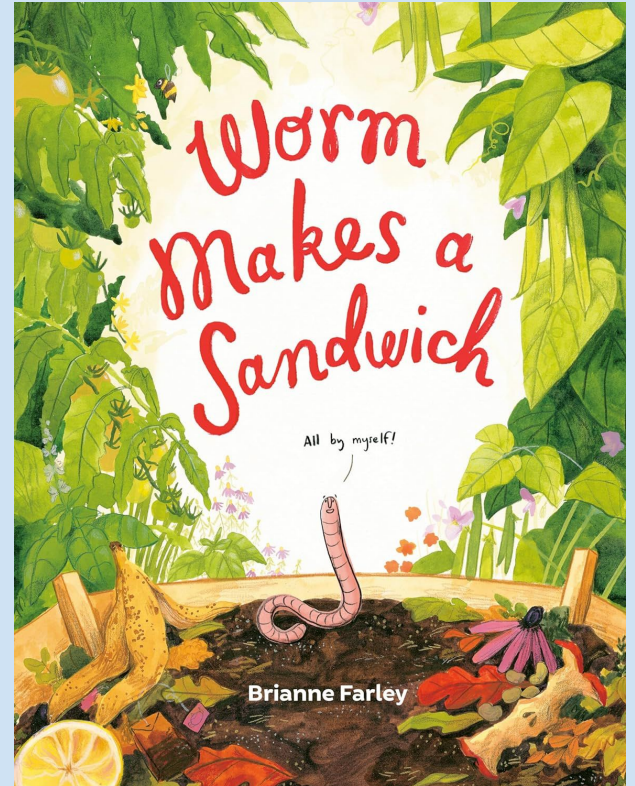


2025 Blueberry Honor Award

Worm Makes A Sandwich by Brianne Farley

A very humorous introduction to composting for preschool to younger elementary school kids! Worm keeps telling us he'll make us a sandwich but it looks like he's only playing with garbage. (YUCK) Finally, a tomato grows in the dirt enhanced with compost and the issue is nicely resolved. Who wouldn't want to help worm out with some lovely food scraps!

Age Range: 3 - 7 years





2025 Blueberry Honor Award

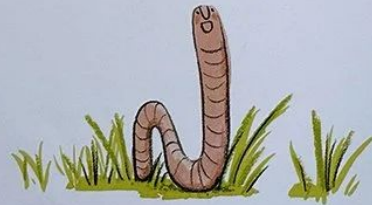
Worm
sandw

He onl
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This I
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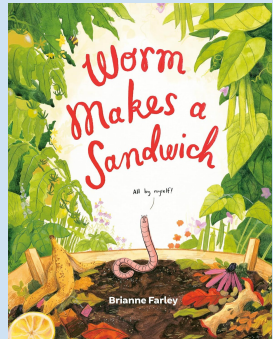
Excuse me! Hello!

Can I interest you in a sandwich?
I'd like to make you a sandwich,
all by myself.



I know what you're thinking.
You're just a worm!
Worms are so little!
Worms don't have hands!
They cannot make sandwiches.

But I can! I definitely can, I think.
I just need one thing.

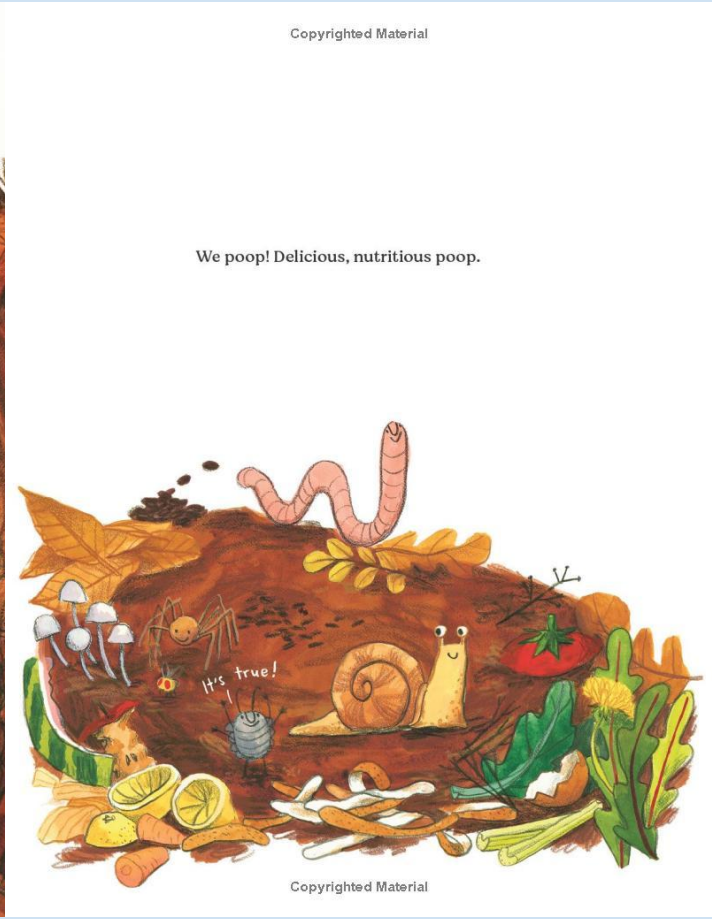




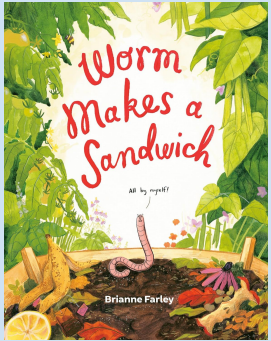
2025 Blueberry Honor Award



Then we do what everyone does after they eat garbage and sometimes each other.



We poop! Delicious, nutritious poop.





2025 Blueberry Honor Award

A Sky that Sings by Anita Sanchez
and George Steele Illustrated by
Emily Mendoza

Mia, a blind girl who identified birds by their calls and songs, leads her tía (her aunt) through the park on a bird-listening adventure!

Age Range: 4 - 8 years





2025 Blueberry Honor Award



Wheels crunch on gravel as the car slows down. We're at the park. My nose tells me they just mowed the grass. We climb out and close the car doors. *Klunk, thunk.*

"Now what?" Tia asks me. "How does this bird-listening work?"

"Just close your eyes," I tell her.





2025 Blueberry Honor Award

Notes come pouring out of the sky like raindrops.
Cheer-up cheerily cheer up cheer!
"That's a robin," I whisper.
"How on earth can you tell the voices apart?" Tia asks. Her shoes scuff the path behind me.
"Just listen! Some of them say their names."

Dee
Dee
Dee
Jay
Jay

Cheer-up Cheerily

Jay! Jay! Jay! yells the blue jay.
Chicka-dee dee dee! sings the chickadee.
Lots of other voices are singing along. The songs weave together like tangled threads. But I don't hear my favorite voice—not yet.





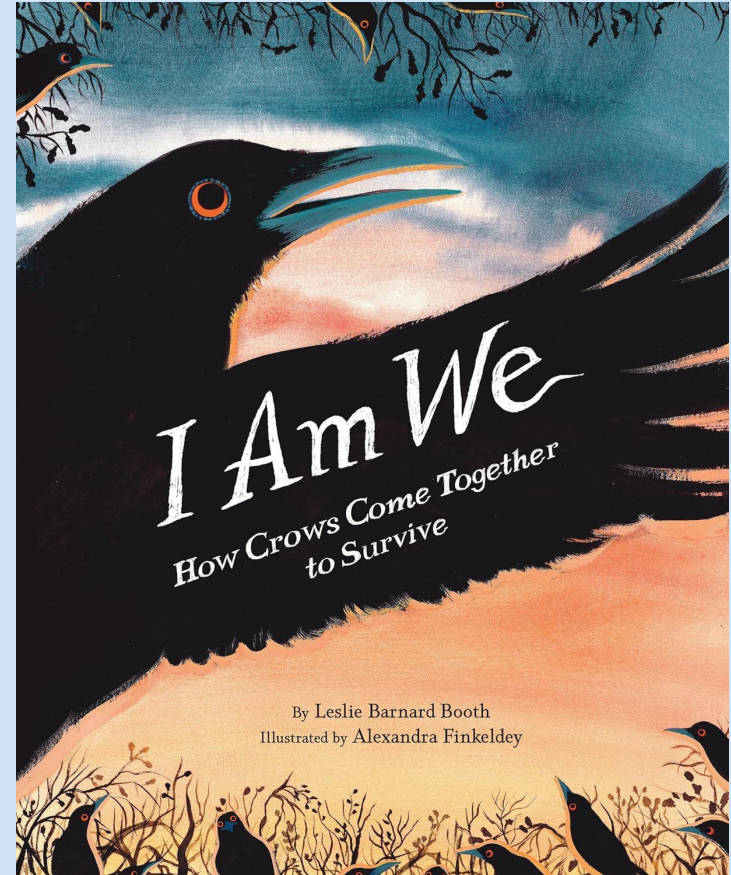
2025 Blueberry Honor Award

I Am We: How Crows Come Together to Survive
by Leslie Barnard Booth illustrated by Alexandra Finkeldey

Gorgeous introduction to crow behavior,
narrated from the crows' point of view about
how they survive, together.

A lesson for us all.

Age Range: 5 - 8 years





The 2025 Blueberry Honor Award





2025 Blueberry Honor Award





2025 Blueberry Honor Award



Our spell is simply this:

I follow him,
and he follows she,
and they follow me,

and me turns to we—



2025 Blueberry Honor Award



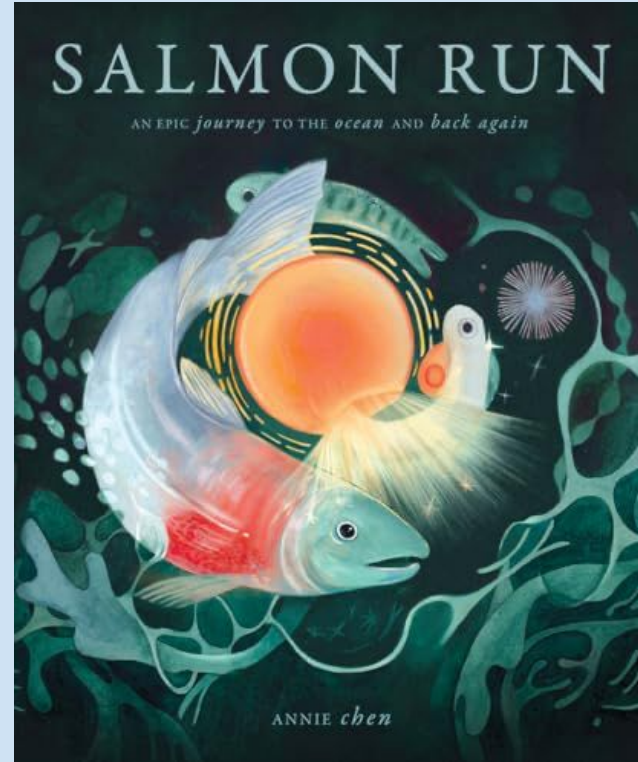


2025 Blueberry Honor Award

Salmon Run, an Epic Journey to the Ocean and Back Again by Annie Chen

Stunningly beautiful look at the whole life cycle of the coho salmon, a keystone species of the Pacific Northwest. It is written by debut author, Annie Chen, a recent graduate of Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design. Gorgeous and wonder - inducing!

Age Range: 5 - 8 years old

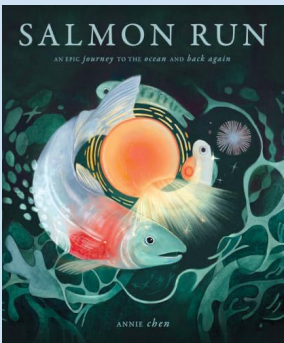




2025 Blueberry Honor Award

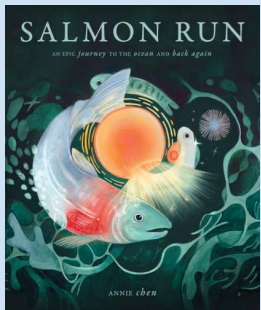
day 2-45

Inside each egg is an embryo, which is what a baby salmon is called before it hatches, and a bright orange yolk. The yolk, a pouch of important nutrients, will feed her while she is still growing and developing inside the egg.





2025 Blueberry Honor Winner



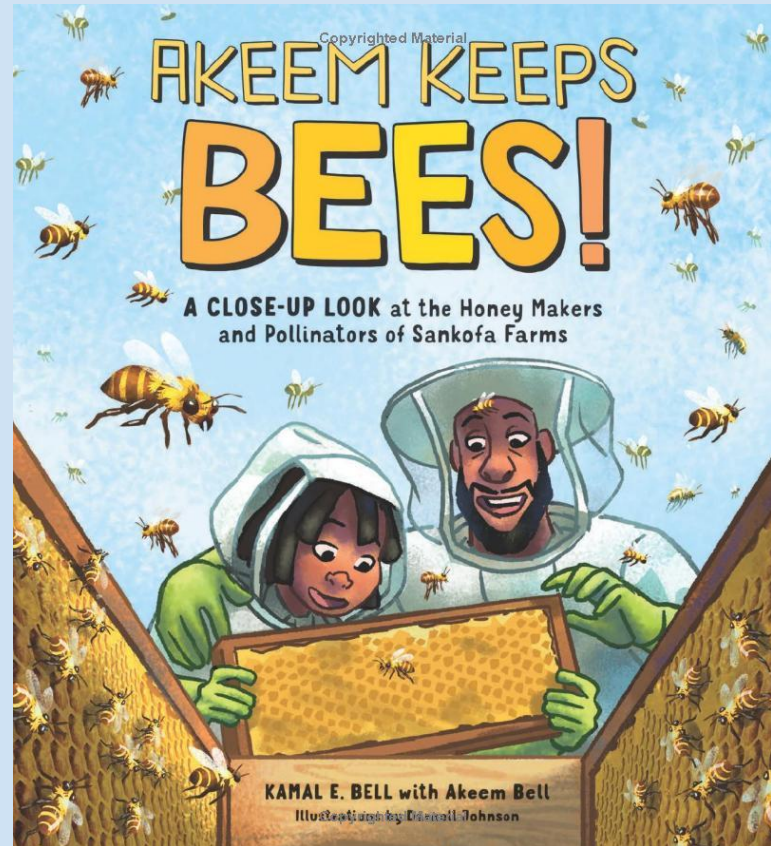


2025 Blueberry Honor Award

Akeep Keeps Bees! By Kamal E Bell with Akeem Bell

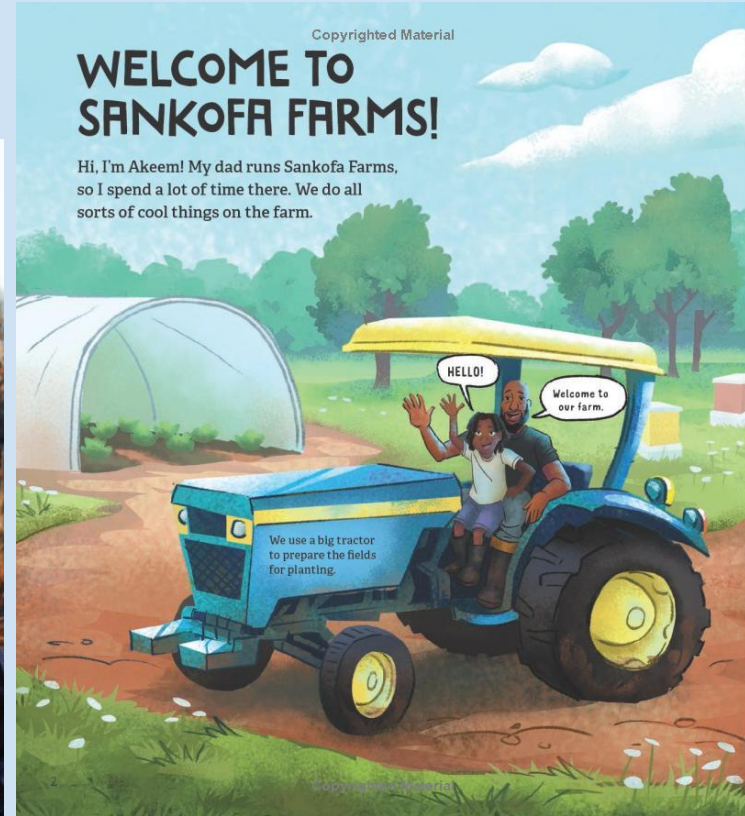
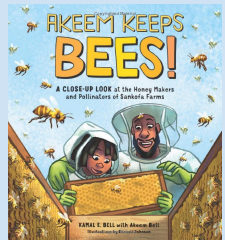
Learn about organic and sustainable agriculture including raising honey bees with an 8 year old narrator to show you the way!

Age Range: 5 and up





2025 Blueberry Honor Award

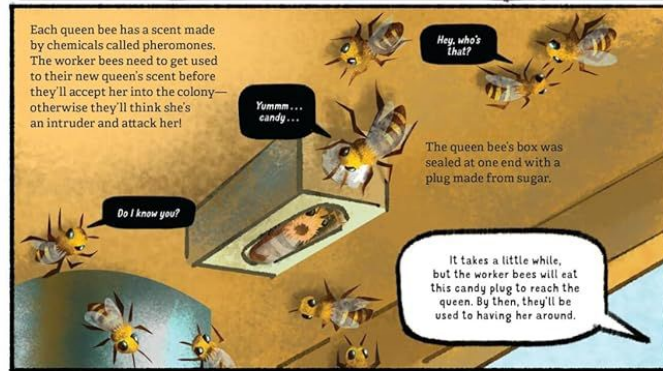




2025 Blueberry Honor Award

A PACKAGE ARRIVES

Did you know that bees can be shipped in the mail? When our new bees arrived, they came in a wooden box with a screen so they could breathe fresh air. In the box there were 3 pounds of worker bees and a can of sugar water. My dad said 3 pounds is about 10,000 bees! Whoa, that's a lot of bees.





2025 Blueberry Honor Award



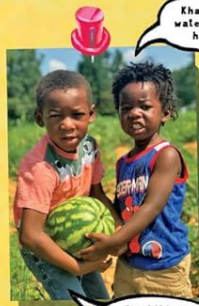
SANKOFA FARMS

Sankofa Farms is a real place!



Akeem's dad, Kamal Bell, grew up in Durham, North Carolina, where he saw for himself that good, healthy food wasn't easy to come by if you lived in certain communities. In college, he learned about "food deserts" and how healthy food wasn't accessible to everyone, usually because of their socio-economic status. He decided to do something about it—and that is how Sankofa Farms was born.

The goal of Sankofa Farms is to create a sustainable food source for people in both rural and urban areas of Durham and Orange County, North Carolina. The Sankofa Farms Agricultural Academy helps young men learn STEM skills that can be used on the farm—including beekeeping. They partner with community organizations to take food from the farms to the tables of people who need it most.



Khalil, this watermelon's heavy!

Good thing we're so strong, Akeem!

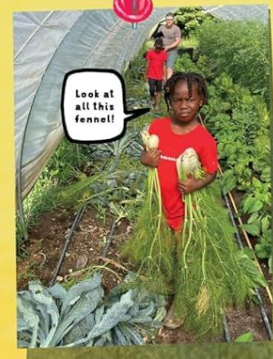
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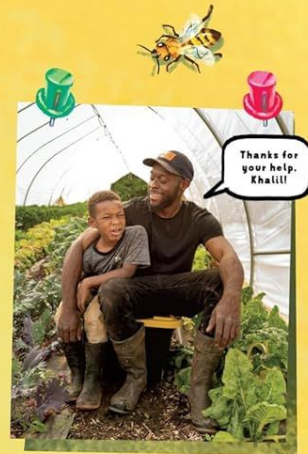
Because everyone deserves farm-fresh healthy food!



We love to serve our community!



Look at all this fennel!



Thanks for your help, Khalil!

Sankofa is a family farm, and the whole family helps out. Akeem has an older brother named Khalil and a younger brother named Adé. His mom, Amber, helps on the farm, too.



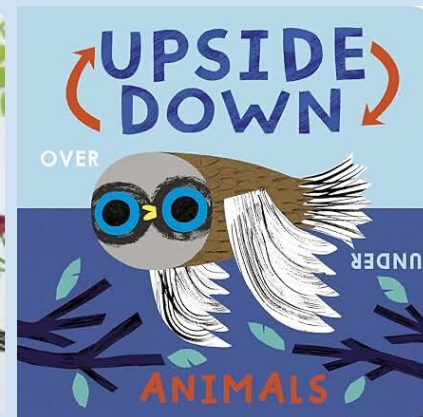
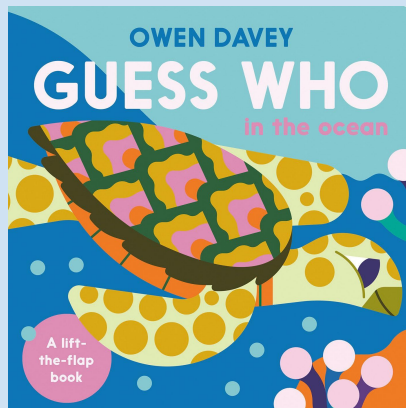
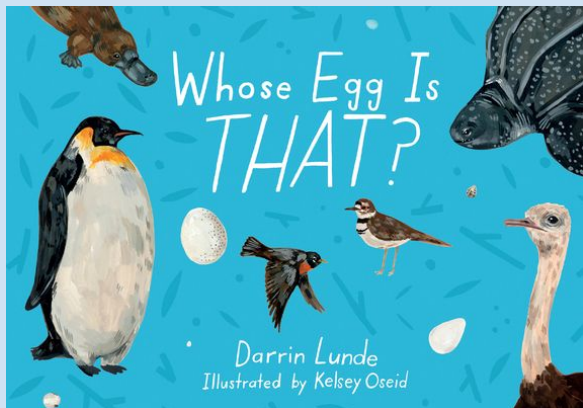
41





The Best Nature Board Books of the Year!

- The best *nature* board books from Betsy Bird's national column for School Library Journal, plus more from the rest of the committee!
- All board books, some for 0 - 6 months and up to **5+** year olds.
- www.epl.org/blueberry for 4 years of the list.





Best Nature Board Books of the Year!

A Home Like This by Laura Purdie Salas
illustrated by Miriam Nerlove

The poetry is so good and the art is quite lovely and the science is accurate. A small quiet treasure about animals and where they live.

Starred review in School Library Journal.
Age Range: 2.5 through 6 years

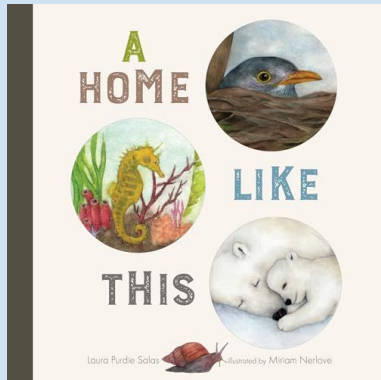




Best Nature Board Books of the Year!



A home can be open
to cloud and sky...



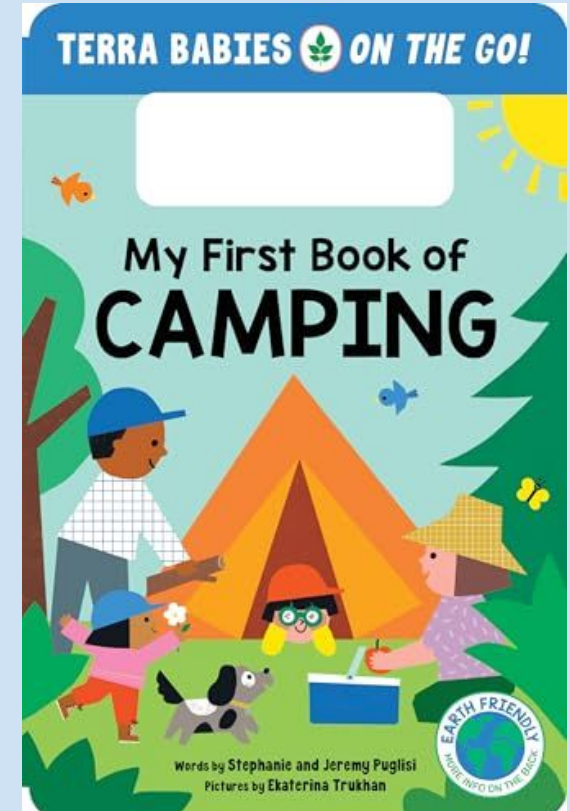
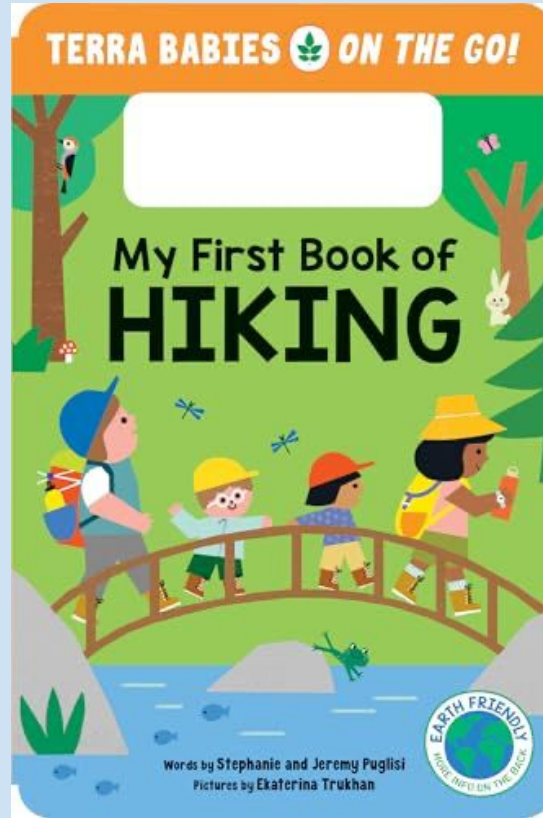


Best Nature Board Books of the Year!

My First Book of Hiking
My First Book of Camping by Stephanie & Jeremy Puglisi

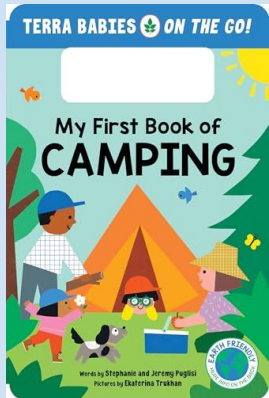
Love the built in handle!
And the warm inclusive message.

Age Range: 0- 4 years





Best Nature Board Books of the Year!



There are different ways to camp:



In yurts with
beds for lots
of kids



In cozy cabins
under twinkling
stars



In tree houses
with spiral stairs



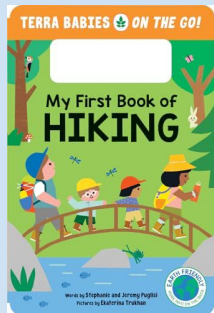
And in campers
pulled by cars



But most people camp in tents!



Best Nature Board Books of the Year!





Best Nature Board Books of the Year!

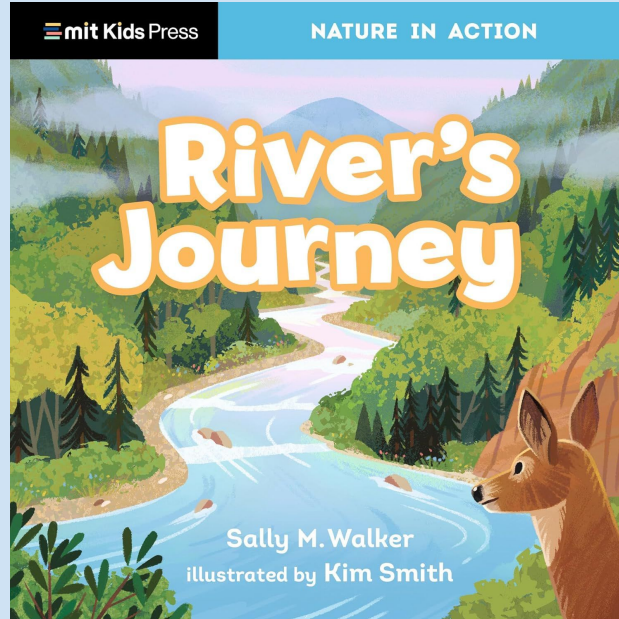
River's Journey

Rock's Journey

Science writer Sally M Walker's first board book series: rhyming text, real science!

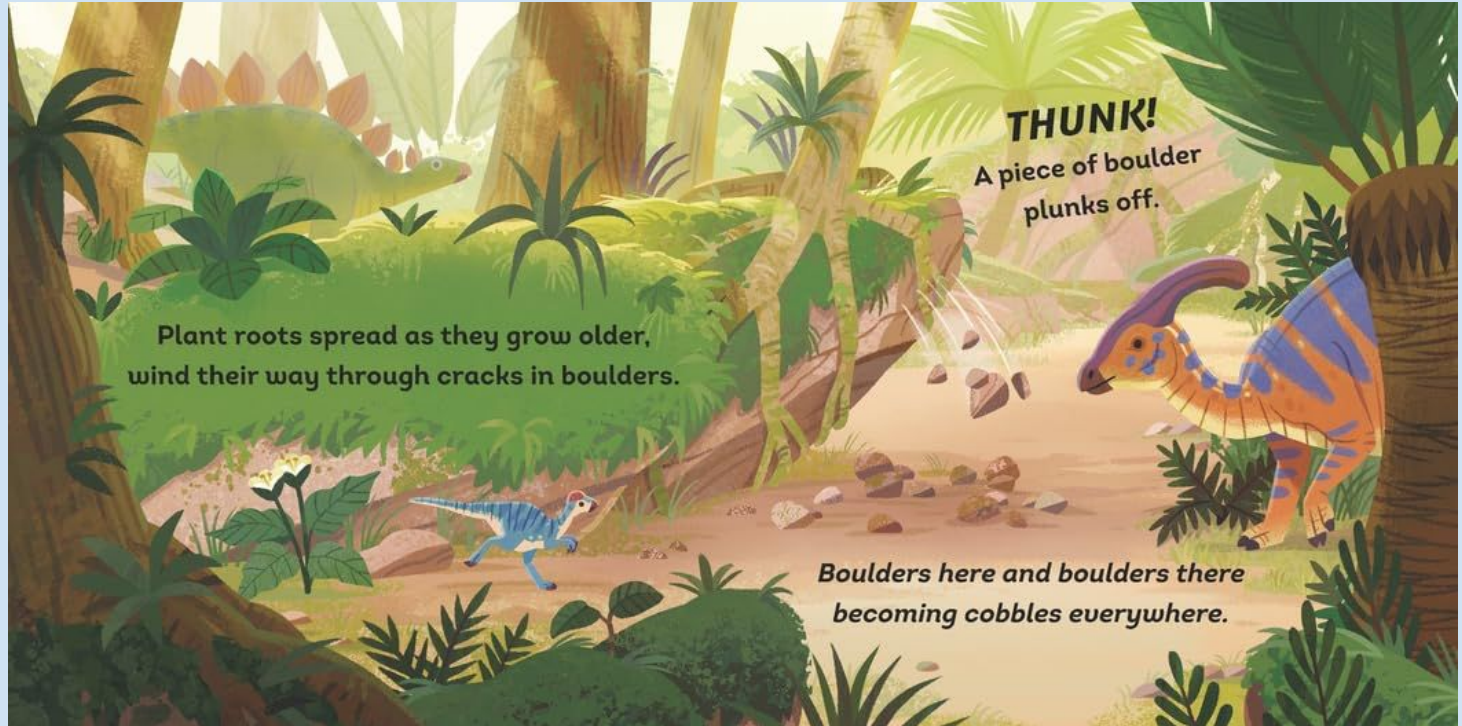
Coming soon: *Tide's Journey* & *Dirt's Journey*

Age Range: 2 - 5 years.





Best Nature Board Books of the Year!



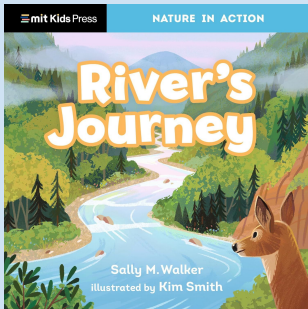


Best Nature Board Books of the Year!



Wet land fills, starts to spill . . .
a little stream runs downhill.

Stream flowing, where's it going?

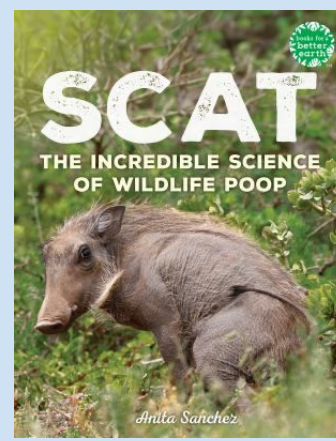
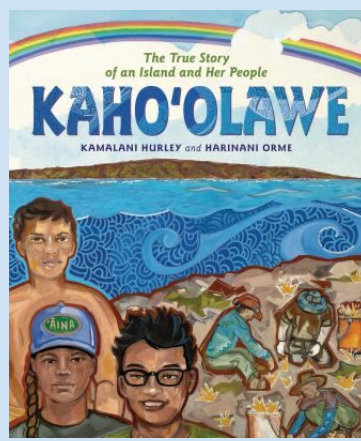
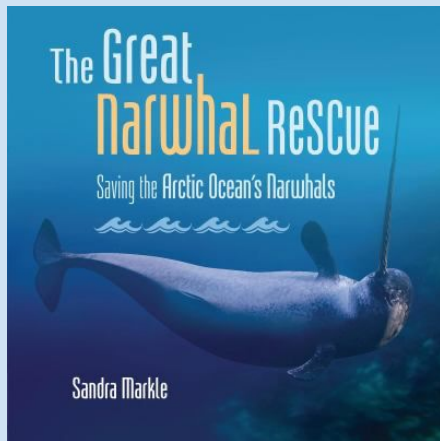
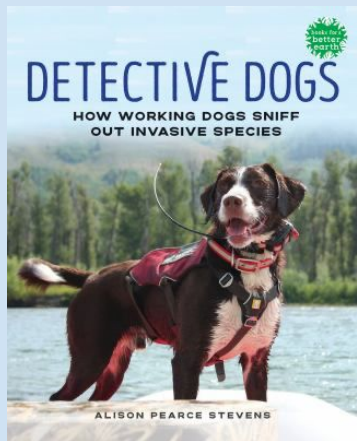




2025 Blueberry Middle Grade Nonfiction to Support Teachers of Young Kids!

Prep for your classes, gather amazing facts, get some cool ideas for displays and group investigations! Learn about:

Invasive Plants; Noise pollution in nature; Rewilding Degraded Landscapes; the Nutrient Cycle.





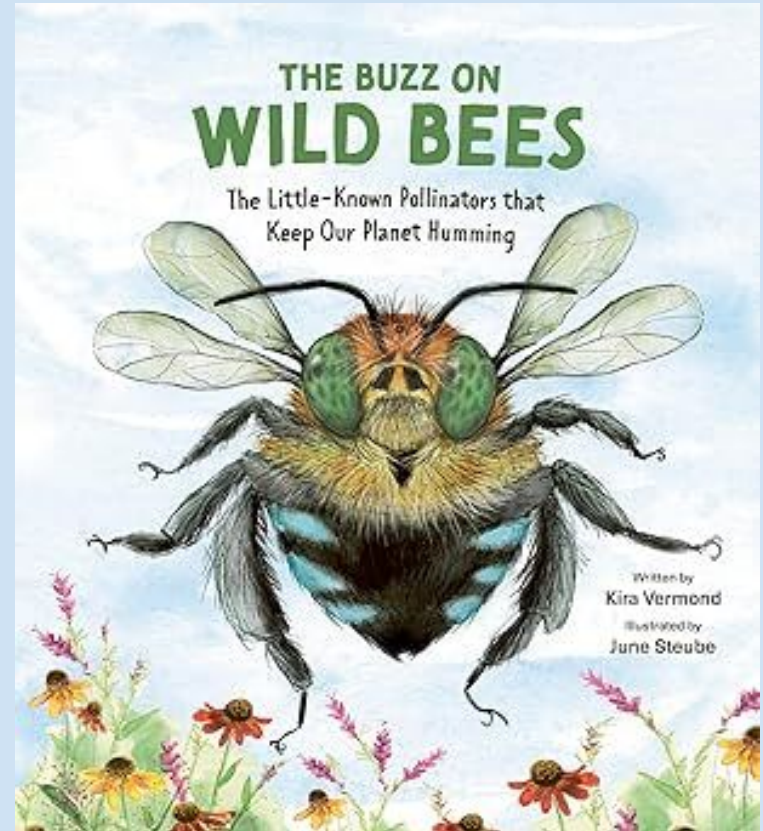
2025 Blueberry Award Honor Award book!

The Buzz on Wild Bees, the Little-Known Pollinators that Keep Our Planet Humming
by Kira Vermond

“Informative and engaging, this is an important addition to nonfiction readers for elementary school aged readers.” Starred Review, School Library Journal

Finally! A great book about native bees!

Age Range: 7 - 10+ years





2025 Blueberry Award Contender!

Copyrighted Material

CAN YOU SPOT THE BEE?

Sigh. I know exactly how this is going to go.

Copyrighted Material

6

Copyrighted Material

Did you choose the honeybee?

If you did, that's not surprising.

Honeybees are the celebrities of the bee world. They're known for living together in groups called colonies that include one queen bee, many drones, and even more worker bees. They're famous pollinators, which means they play a role in an important process called pollination so that fruits, vegetables, and other plants grow. And who could forget the sweet honey and chewy honeycomb they store in their hives? We humans (and other animals) love that stuff!

Honey is basically bee vomit. Just so you know.

Copyrighted Material

7

Copyrighted Material

Well, guess what? They're ALL bees!

It turns out there are about **20,000 different species of bees** on our beautiful planet (that we know of). But of those, only *seven* species are true honeybees. Another 250 species are bumblebees and 550 are stingless bee species. Like honeybees, these are called social bees because they live together in colonies and couldn't survive on their own. (But unlike honeybees, these species either make no honey at all or only a small amount that is far less sweet.)

And all the rest of the species? They're what we call wild solitary bees. They belong to many different groups, such as digger bees, carpenter bees, mason bees, sweat bees, and cuckoo bees.

But even though **wild solitary bees** make up more than **90 percent of all bees on Earth**, there's a good chance you've never even noticed these shy little creatures! They're very good at hiding, and they make their nests below ground or in hollow logs or sticks. Mostly,

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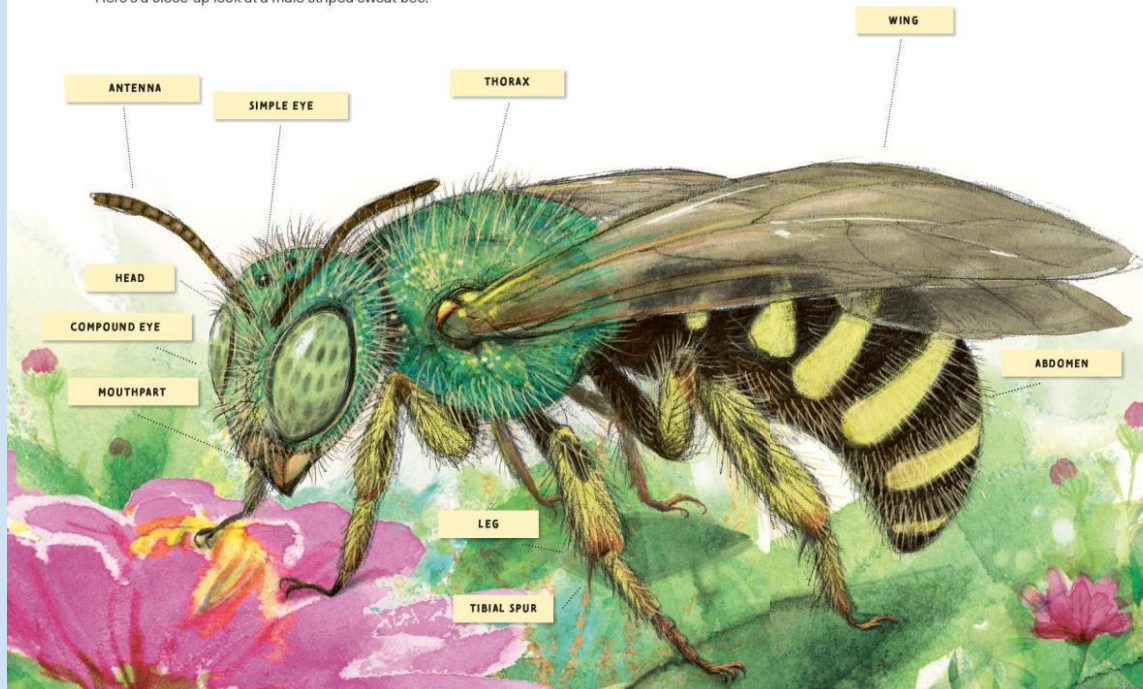
8



2025 Blueberry Award Contender!

Copyrighted Material

Bees are insects. Like other insects, they have three body segments: a head, a thorax with six legs, and an abdomen. All bees also have four wings, two antennae, mouthparts, three simple eyes, and two compound eyes. Females also have a stinger. Here's a close-up look at a male striped sweat bee.

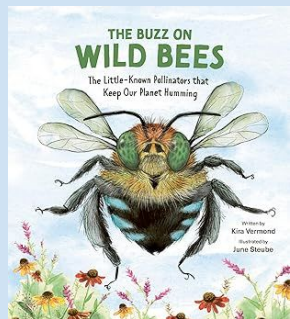


Copyrighted Material

So how can we tell which ones are the wild bees?

- All wild bees do not look one particular way. They are different colors and sizes depending on the species. Some are even shiny and look metallic.
- Most species of wild bees carry pollen around on their leg and belly hairs instead of in the pollen baskets (made of tightly woven hairs) that honeybees have on their back legs.
- Wild bees use tiny spikes (called tibial spurs) on their legs for digging their homes. Honeybees don't have these spikes because they live in smooth, waxy combs—no digging required!
- Although female wild solitary bees have stingers, most rarely use them. But honeybees sting to keep predators away from their hives.
- Wild bees are far less fuzzy than honeybees, which are so hairy that even their eyeballs have hair.

I would never give YOU the HAIRY EYEBALL!





2025 Blueberry Changemaker Award !

Bug Snacks: How Eating Insects Can Change the World by Jess French illustrated by Zoe Ingram

Sounds like a gross-out recipe book (and it does tell you how bugs taste) **but** this is an introduction to the environmental problems of animal agriculture and why environmentalists suggest eating less factory farmed meat, plus one fun solution!

Age Range: 8 - 12 years





2025 Blueberry Changemaker Award

What Do Bugs Even Do?

Insects are extremely helpful creatures that have lots of important jobs; they help to keep the world running.



They pollinate plants, including many that we use as food, such as coconuts, tomatoes, and raspberries.

They break down dead plants to create rich compost, allowing new plants to grow.

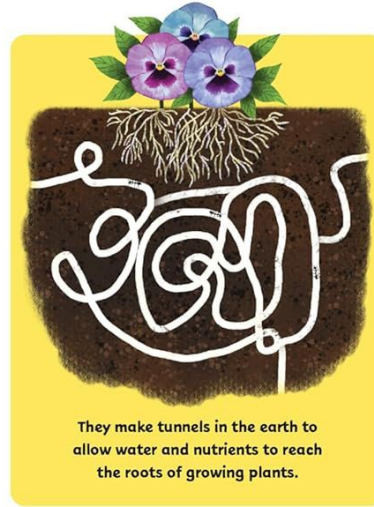


12



They provide food for birds, rodents, and many other creatures.

They control pests such as aphids and mosquitoes.



They make tunnels in the earth to allow water and nutrients to reach the roots of growing plants.

BUG BITE WEAVER ANT

What is it? An aggressive, long-legged ant that makes enormous nests in trees, weaving leaves together to form a huge ball. What does it taste like? A mild, sweet, and fruity flavor, unlike the zesty zing of black ants.

They gobble up poop and dead animal bodies so the world is a cleaner place!



*That sounds cool, but bugs are still gross—
who would want to eat them?*

13





2025 Blueberry Changemaker Award

Is It Good for Us to Eat Bugs?

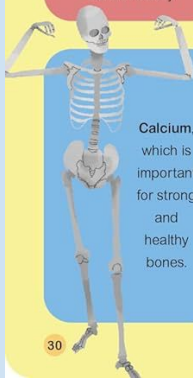
Let's take a closer look at what exactly bugs are made of.

Bugs are rich in:

Iron, a very important mineral that keeps your blood healthy. Most insects contain significantly more iron than beef.



Manganese, which helps your blood clot and keeps your bones healthy.



Calcium, which is important for strong and healthy bones.

30

Zinc, which is used for making new cells and healing wounds.



Selenium, which protects your cells from damage.



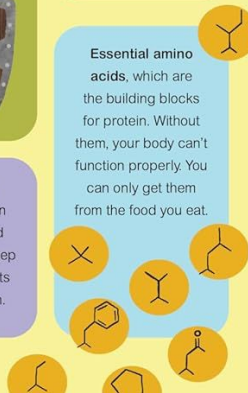
Essential fatty acids, also known as omega-3s and omega-6s. They keep your skin and joints in good condition.

Magnesium, which helps you turn your food into energy.



Copper, which helps your brain develop properly.

Essential amino acids, which are the building blocks for protein. Without them, your body can't function properly. You can only get them from the food you eat.



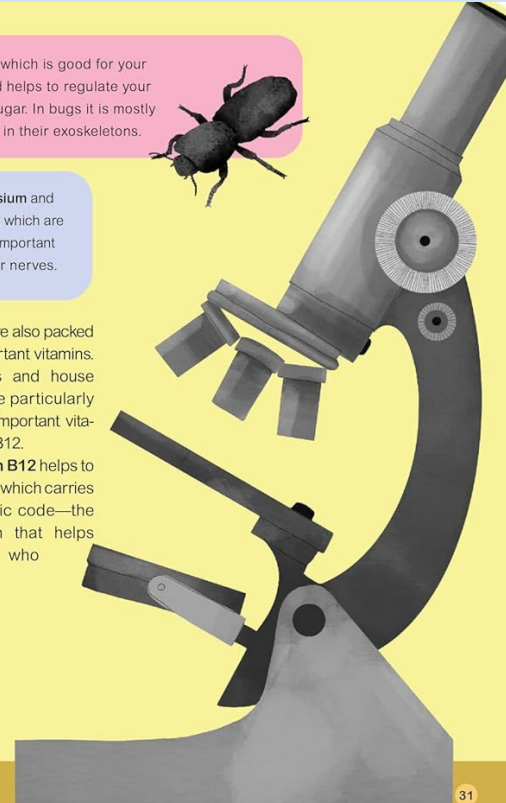
Fiber, which is good for your gut and helps to regulate your blood sugar. In bugs it is mostly found in their exoskeletons.



Potassium and sodium, which are really important for your nerves.

Bugs are also packed full of important vitamins. Mealworms and house crickets are particularly rich in an important vitamin called B12.

Vitamin B12 helps to make DNA, which carries your genetic code—the information that helps make you who you are.



31



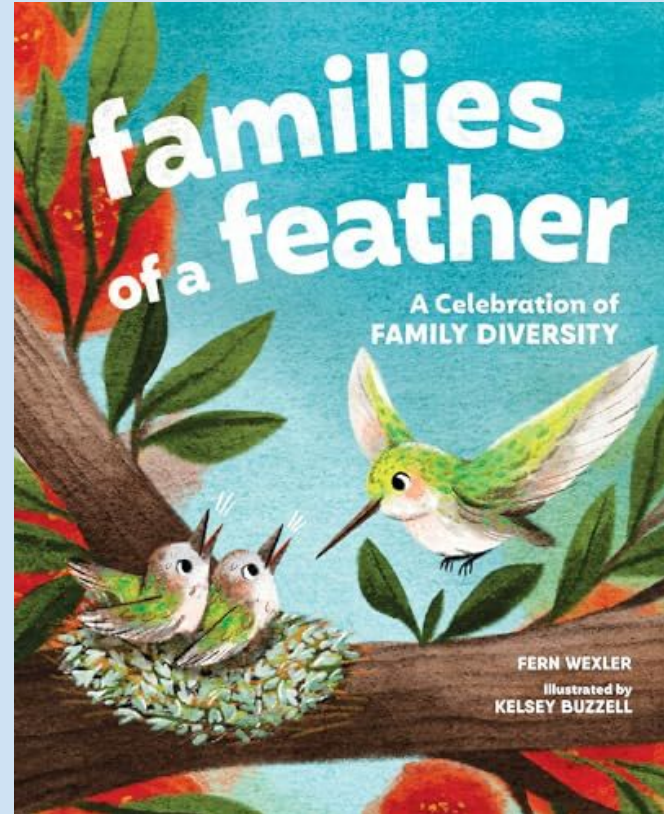


2025 Blueberry Honor Award

Families of a Feather: A Celebration of Family Diversity by Fern Wexler

An introduction to the varied family structures of birds, with an eye to validating many kinds of modern families. This book gently shares nature's queer variety with young children.

Age Range: 4 - 8 years



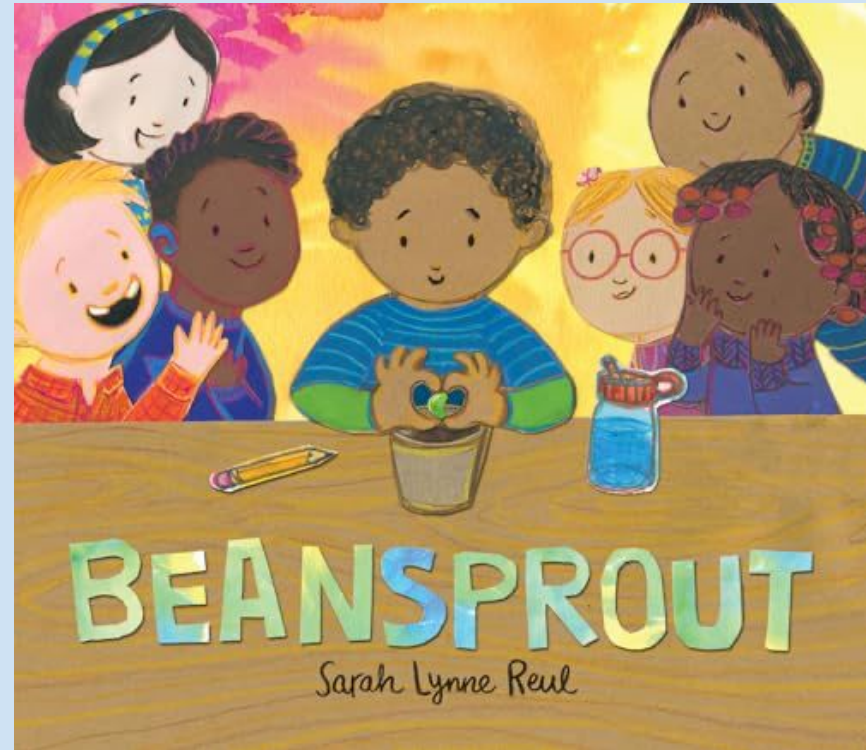


2025 Blueberry Honor Award

Beansprout by Sarah Lynne Reul

A class project involves selecting a mystery seed from a bag, planting it, and seeing what grows. Ben's seed never sprouts, but he doesn't give up – he asks to plant the remainder of the mystery seeds! A fictional seed starting introduction for kids.

Age Range: 4 - 7 years



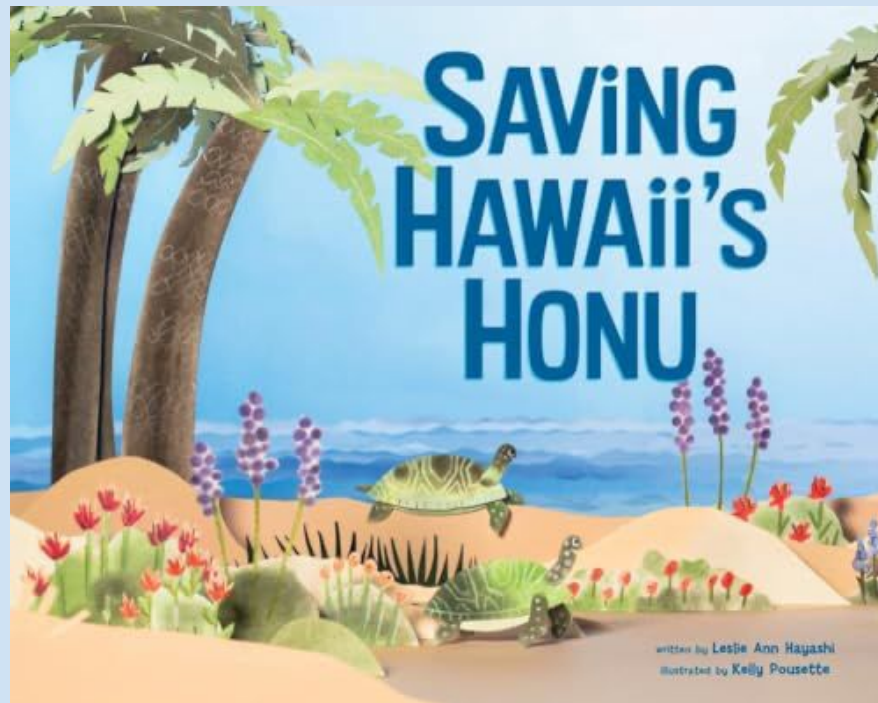


2025 Blueberry Changemaker Award

Saving Hawaii's Honu by Leslie Ann Hayashi

Trace the work of the first scientist to count the sea turtles of Hawaii, learning that there were only 67 remaining turtles! Watch the Island's people pass laws, change customs and livelihoods, support marine life as a result.

Age Range: 4 - 8 years



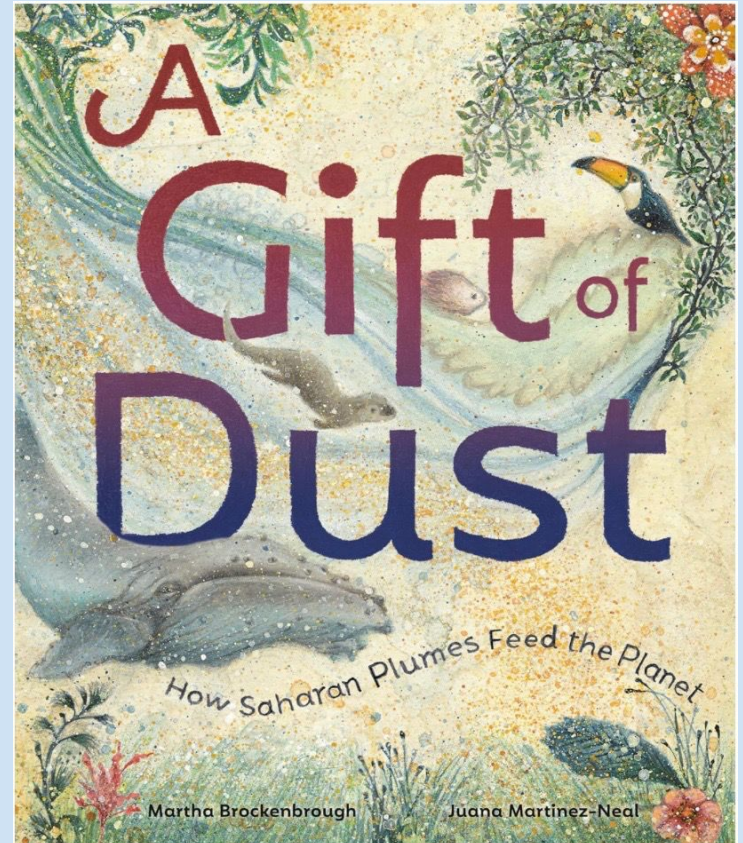


2025 Blueberry Honor Award

A Gift of Dust: How Saharan Plumes Feed the Planet by Martha Brockenbrough, illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal

Gorgeous introduction to how fossil animals in a dry lake bed in Chad become dust that changes how rain falls on the Amazon and reduces the power of hurricanes in the Caribbean and more. An interdependence of nature primer!

Age Range: 4 and up!

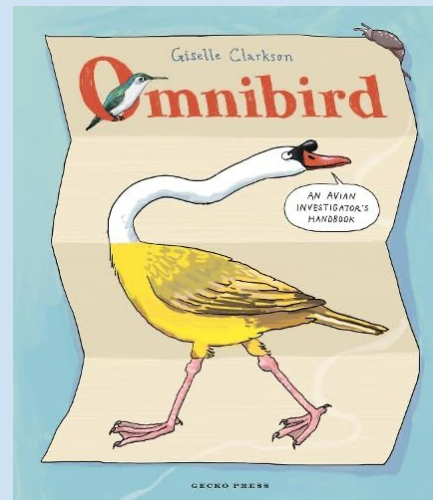
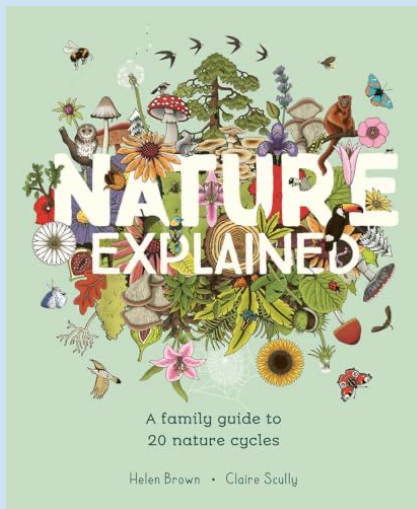
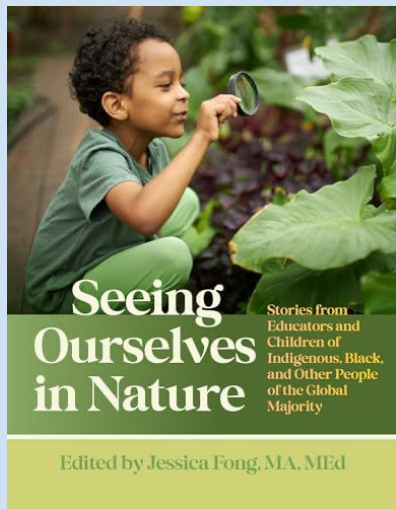
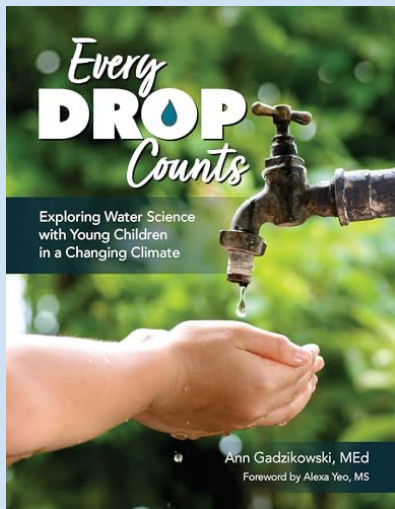




2025 Blueberry Educator's Resources List!

Reviewed and Approved by:

- two Curriculum Development specialists
- a PhD in Early Child Development



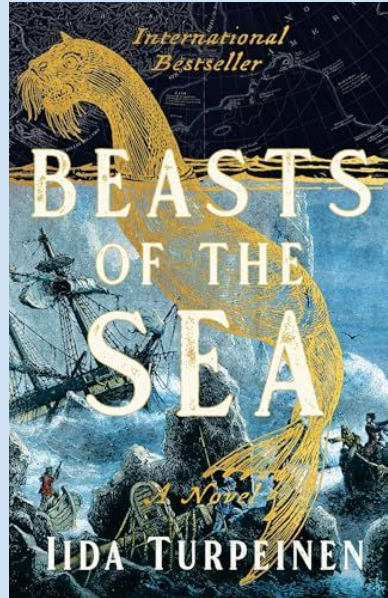


2025 Adult Recommendations, Selected by the Blueberry Committee

IS A
RIVER
ALIVE?

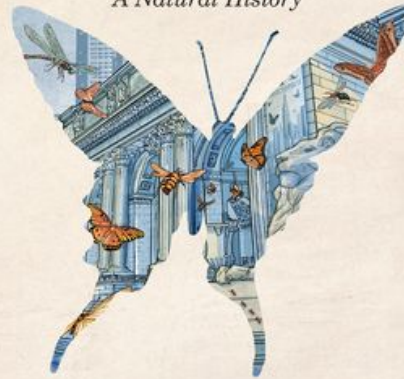
Robert
Macfarlane

Best-selling author of UNDERLAND



INSECTOPOLIS

A Natural History



PETER KUPER

FOREWORD BY PETER WOHLLEBEN
MARTIN GOODMAN

My Head
For A Tree

The Extraordinary Story of the Bishnoi,
Guardians of Nature

"Important, inspirational and humbling"
ANDREA WULF, author of *The Invention of Nature*





How can I use Blueberry lists?

- As a buying guide for nature books!
 - Inspiring storytimes
 - Providing a great opening book to start a nature STEM activity: planting seeds, studying rocks or galls, taking a bird listening walk, learning about frogs and ephemeral ponds!
 - Sharing annually with the parents of the kids you work with, to guide them to the best nature books for their children (free flyer online www.epl.org/blueberry)
- New List: **Every March on the Vernal Equinox, in time for Earth Day buying!**
- Earth Day - hand-out, storytime, sharing with partners
 - Collaborating with the local library or school on an outdoor book walk or outdoor storytime! (Try *How to Bird* by Rasha Hamid, 2023 Blueberry Winner or *How to Find a Fox* by Kate Gardner, 2021 Blueberry Award Winner)
 - Collaborating with local indigenous leaders; consider *The Gift of Mnoomin* by Dr. Brittany Luby, or *The Bee Mother* by Hetxw'ms Gyetxw (Brett D. Huson), *Moon Song* by Michaela Goade and *Kaho'olawe: An Island and Her People* by Kamalani Hurley
 - **What else?**



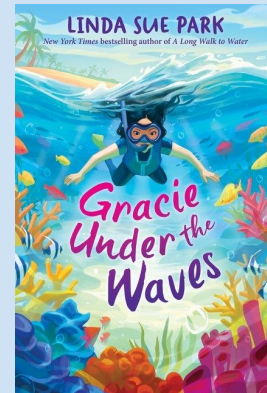
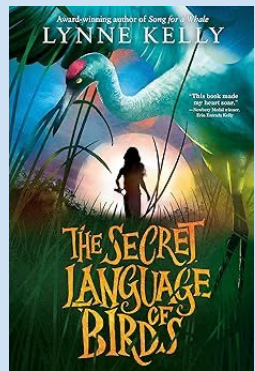
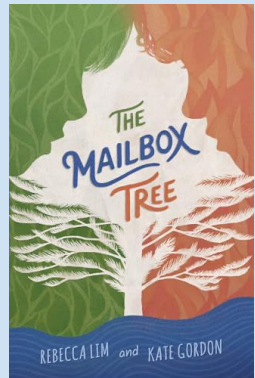
The Blueberry Award 2024

How to get the Blueberry lists, the Blueberry flyers, the Best Nature Board book list, the Educator Resources List, the Adult reading list and Blueberry Spine labels for your books:

www.epl.org/blueberry

msmeyer@cityofevanston.org

Thank you!





The Blueberry Award 2024

Questions?

www.epl.org/blueberry