



Fifty Plants that Changed the Course of History (Fifty Things That Changed the Course of History)

Bill Laws

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The fascinating stories of the plants that changed civilizations.

Fifty Plants that Changed the Course of History is a beautifully presented guide to the plants that have had the greatest impact on human civilization. Entries feature a description of the plant, its botanical name, its native range and its primary functions -- edible, medicinal, commercial or practical. Concise text is highlighted by elegant botanical drawings, paintings and photographs as well as insightful quotes.

Many of the plants are well known, such as **rice, tea, cotton, rubber, wheat, sugarcane, tobacco, wine grapes and corn**. However, there are also many whose stories are less known. These history-changing plants include:

- **Agave**, used to make sisal, poison arrows, bullets, tequila and surgical thread
- **Pineapple**, which influenced the construction of greenhouses and conservatories
- **Hemp**, used for hangman's rope, sustainable plastics, the Declaration of Independence and Levi's jeans
- **Coconut**, used for coir fiber, soap, margarine, cream, sterile IV drips and coagulants
- **Eucalyptus**, used in mouthwash, diuretics, vitamins, honey, underwear and fire-resistant uniforms
- **Sweet pea**, which Gregor Mendel used in his research on genetic heredity
- **White mulberry**, used to make silk
- **English oak**, used for fire-resistant structures, dyes, leather tanning, charcoal, casks and ships
- **White willow**, used in the manufacture of aspirin, cricket bats, hot-air balloon baskets and coffins

This attractive reference provides an innovative perspective on both botanical and human history.

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