

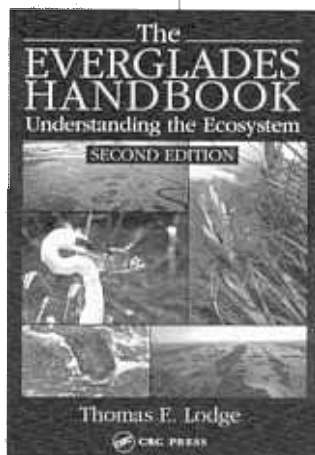
The Everglades Handbook – Understanding the Ecosystem

(2nd edition, 2005) by Thomas E. Lodge, CRC Press.

Reviewed by Suzanne Koptur

When *The Everglades Handbook* first came out, I liked it, and used it as a supplemental text for the general Ecology course we teach at Florida International University. It was 'light-hearted, well-rounded, and highly readable' (quoting from a 1995 review I wrote), but a little light on the treatment of plants and the historical literature. Professors in Environmental Studies used it for the textbook for the Ecology of South Florida course, as it provided a concise introduction to all the habitats as well as a brief history of the geology and climate of the area. I am happy to report that in its second edition, it has gotten even better!

The author, an independent ecologist, agreed to teach one semester's offering of that course, and used his experience in teaching to guide the revision of his book. He has done a wonderful job. Though still highly readable, the book is now replete with references on every topic, so that interested readers can go to the sources he used, and learn more about every aspect of Everglades ecology. Each habitat has a plant list, and refers readers to relevant, up-to-date resources for plant distributions, conservation status, and illustrations. A new section on food webs helps the reader understand the importance of all the different habitats to the functioning of the ecosystem. The final section of the book reviews the influences of humans on the Everglades, including



the impacts of specimen collecting and exotic introductions (plants and animals). Water and its movement determines what habitats exist and what organisms live there, and non-native humans transformed much of Florida over the last century with canals and draining flooded areas for agriculture and habitation. The author discusses Everglades restoration in a way everyone can understand, especially after his earlier explanations of geology and the aquifer system underlying the state.

Tom Lodge confides to his readers that he can understand the urge that many people have to collect things from nature, but says that once he learned to photograph things in nature, that urge subsided. The book has beautiful photos, mostly of animals and landscapes, but there are some distinctive plants, and the beautiful diagrams and maps convey the orderly complexity of habitat differentiation based on elevational differences of a few inches. After reading this book, who wouldn't want to visit this wonderful 'river of grass'? And for most visitors to the Everglades, eco-tourists, ecology students, and long-time residents of Florida, a better book for understanding the history and challenges to this ecosystem has probably not been written. 🌿

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A New Method of Propagation for *Ziziphus celata*

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cuttings are generally taken only when the parent plant is in severe decline. For these reasons, micropropagation technology still holds promise for the restoration of the species and should be examined further to determine viable rooting and acclimatization procedures. 🌱

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