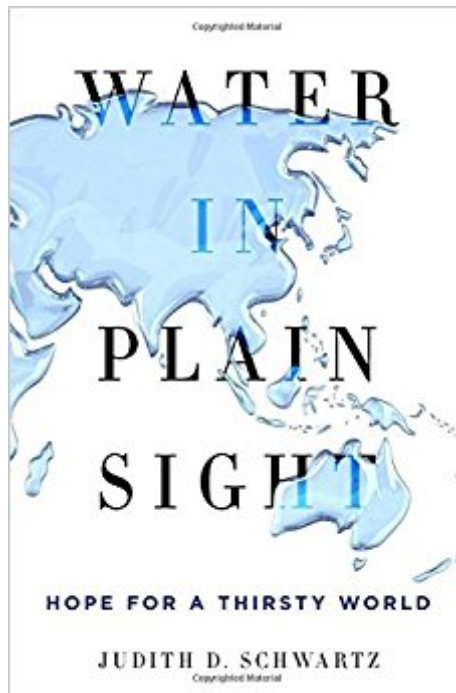




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# Water In Plain Sight: Hope For A Thirsty World



## Synopsis

Water scarcity is on everyone's mind. Long taken for granted, water availability has entered the realm of economics, politics, and people's food and lifestyle choices. But as anxiety mounts - even as a swath of California farmland has been left fallow and extremist groups worldwide exploit the desperation of people losing livelihoods to desertification - many are finding new routes to water security with key implications for food access, economic resilience, and climate change. Water does not perish, nor require millions of years to form as do fossil fuels. However, water is always on the move. In this timely, important book, Judith D. Schwartz presents a refreshing perspective on water that transcends zero-sum thinking. By allying with the water cycle, we can revive lush, productive landscapes. Like the river in rural Zimbabwe that, thanks to restorative grazing, now flows miles further than in living memory. Or the food forest of oranges, pomegranates, and native fruit-bearing plants in Tucson, grown through harvesting urban wastewater. Or the mini-oasis in West Texas nourished by dew. Animated by stories from around the globe, *Water In Plain Sight* is an inspiring reminder that fixing the future of our drying planet involves understanding what makes natural systems thrive.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A call to expand our thinking to include plants and animals as part of the planet's water cycle, and, further, to emphasize water in solutions to rebalance nature and to save us from ourselves." *Waterkeepers Magazine* "Schwartz says that improving practices on the land

can reap huge water and climate benefits...offers a vision of water for a thirsty world through a better understanding of what makes natural systems thrive." Society of Environmental Journalists"Compelling...Schwartz takes the reader on a global tour of experts who have devoted their lives to alternative natural resource management techniques that focus on water...should be required reading." Biohabitats.com"In her heartening new book, Schwartz brings us the stories of ecologists all over the world who are employing simple, old-fashioned, low-tech methods to solve the critical problem of keeping our warming planet hydrated." Women's Voices for Change"Reading and then rereading Schwartz's work has again given me inspiration to make some very real positive changes in our communities and lands. I can recommend it to all. Water in Plain Sight provides us with motivation and hope, in the form of a whole global toolbox of solutions to actively heal our planet with." KT Shepherd Permaculture"Inspiring...We are accustomed to thinking of water as nourishing life, but Schwartz is focused upon the converse phenomenon: the ways in which life promotes water." Pacific Standard"Schwartz makes a strong argument that solutions for water management must be localised, repairing small water cycles." Sustainable Food Trust"Inspiring." Nature"[Schwartz] examines how human activity has damaged global water and climate systems and provides an unusually hopeful vision of what we can do to restore them." Shelf Awareness"The work of Judith Schwartz...is so important....Schwartz is a powerful storyteller and accessible writer." The Christian Century"Throughout the ongoing drought, millions of Californians have lifted eyes skyward, yearning for rain. But Judith Schwartz believes we should spend just as much energy puzzling over the ground at our feet." Matt Weiser, NewsDeeply"Excellent...for once a book about water and climate change isn't just gloom and doom: Water in Plain Sight leaves you with the notion how things can be fixed – by looking at how nature manages water and, by extension, regulates heat." Soil Association"Water makes up much of our planet and our bodies and yet what keeps it available and safe is a mystery to most of us. This fascinating and readable book is a primer for how to save our health as we save our ecosystems." Daphne Miller MD, author of Farmacology and The Jungle Effect"What a great book! Judith Schwartz shows how better management of our land and water could change the climate." Alice Outwater, author of Water: A Natural History"Carbon, and energy cycles are out of whack; the good news is that solutions to these problems are within reach. Journalist Schwartz, who challenged much of the conventional thinking about global warming in Cows Save the Planet (2013)...[looks] more broadly at how nature manages water and thus regulates heat." Kirkus Reviews"Hope, like water, often lies

hidden just out of sight. Water in Plain Sight helps us find both." —Jim Robbins, author of The Man Who Planted Trees "People all over the world agonize about water—too much or not enough—and are directed to expensive, high-tech solutions. But in this important and exhilarating book, Judith Schwartz argues that the solutions lie in understanding and working with nature. Herein lies abundance and hope." —Kristin Ohlson, author of The Soil Will Save Us: How Scientists, Farmers and Foodies are Healing the Soil to Save the Planet "Happily, this book maps out, in very entertaining fashion, compelling strategies for fixing our broken relationship with water and offers hope that we can find "new routes to water security." —Tom Newmark, Chairman, Greenpeace Fund USA, Co-Founder and Chairman, The Carbon Underground "Imagine having a wise and well-traveled friend eager to take you on a global tour of water triumphs and failures. Minus the airfare and jet lag, that is what Judith Schwartz has brought us with Water in Plain Sight." —Seth M. Siegel, author of New York Times bestseller Let There Be Water: Israel's Solution for a Water-Starved World "Judith Schwartz's work gives us not just hope but also a sense that we humans--serial destroyers that we are--can actually turn the climate crisis around." —Gretel Ehrlich, author of Facing the Wave: A Journey in the Wake of the Tsunami

Judith D. Schwartz is a journalist whose recent work looks at soil as a hub for multiple environmental, economic, and social challenges and solutions. She writes on this theme for numerous publications and speaks in venues around the world. Her 2013 book Cows Save the Planet was awarded a Nautilus Book Award Silver Prize for Sustainability and is among Booklist's Top 10 Books On Sustainability. A graduate of the Columbia Journalism School and Brown University, she lives in Vermont.

When I first decided to get the book, the reviews and briefs had focused my attention on Water availability and shortages. Only after getting into the book did I realize how crucial is the information it provides in TWO OTHER critical areas: Climate change; and Agricultural Sustainability - for the "Developing World" AND the "Developed" world. The material in this book is VERY important, as the material recently in "the general press" about problems in those three (3) areas seems totally unaware of and MIS-directed in it's "technical approach" to some of the most important background "in all three areas, and especially the interrelationships between factors in each area !! Ms. Schwartz makes a

very interesting and challenging statement, to the effect that our world has never contained more, or less, water than it does at present. The “problems we are having are because of LACK OF understanding, or major misunderstanding, about water’s relationship with our soils and especially how our recent “industrial agricultural” approaches jeopardize both our water supplies and our food sustainability, as well as our climate. I truly believe that the problems in these areas WILL NOT be solved unless many more people become informed, and understand the material this book provides. And yet it’s not some long, burdensome tome ...only 224 pages, and readily understandable. I highly recommend this book to anyone concerned about any or all of those three (3) issues above.

Judith’s work in her new book, *Water In Plain Sight - Hope For A Thirsty Planet*, and her previous book, *Cows Save The Planet*, bring us a huge message of hope as we are faced with climate change, drought, floods, wildfire, food insecurity and poor nutrition. Judith talks about how we are used to thinking about drought as a lack of rainfall, but we ignore the effects of land and soil degradation on the soil’s ability to hold onto rainfall. When we talk about climate change we focus on greenhouse gasses such as carbon dioxide and methane, but water has the bigger ability to absorb heat. When we start to investigate the water cycle, we quickly become aware of how inextricably linked this is with the carbon cycle. Our standard agricultural practices, involving tilling the land, planting single species in huge fields and adding artificial chemical fertilizers, release the carbon from the soil, leaving it to hang out in our atmosphere, adding to the problems of climate change. In destroying the soil’s structure, they destroy the amazing ecosystem that works to support plants, to hold carbon in the soil and to create healthy, nutrient dense food crops. In the book, Judith visits with people all over the world and tells us how each of them are changing the way they interact with the land to increase the carbon content of the soil. In doing so, they increase the water holding capacity of the soil, they grow plants that are more robust and nourishing, and those plants in turn create a cooler environment that is not only more comfortable to live in, they deter wildfire, attract more rain, creating this virtuous cycle that gives us refreshing hope in this war against climate change.

What a wonderful book. Fresh water is becoming a more and more important commodity. Having enough is going to be crucial for us to get through the next century intact. And the author makes the point that, as she says, "When soil is left bare, water evaporates, carbon oxidizes and

microorganisms die. The ground becomes a hot plate and can no longer sustain life. Water runs off the land instead of sinking into it."That's the key. We've been focusing on the wrong things. If we want more fresh water, the place to focus is on healthy soil. One more quote from the book: "As in the African bush and on and around North America's industrial farms, all around the world we have problems with water: water shortages and runoff and floods. But maybe we can reframe our challenge as having a keeping-water-in-the-ground problem. For this is certainly a problem we can do something about. What we need to do is promote land management practices that enhance a part of our water infrastructure that we've been treating like dirt: the ground."

A real eye-opener! Timely information regarding individuals and organizations who have restored ecosystems and water cycles. They have demonstrated and proven that global warming and climate change can be reversed. People, individually and collectively, can do this without government support. More governments will become supportive as more and more degraded and desertified areas are recovered for the benefit of the local populations and the world.

Another great job by Judith Schwartz. It's refreshing to read an environmental book that focuses on something other than CO2. The effects of water on weather are complicated but important. She is a skilled writer.

Very insightful look at how we can use and conserve water by using Mother Nature. Must read for everyone as water becomes scarcer and simple ways to have water available through plants and common sense.

Should be required high school reading

Packed with excellent information about projects around the world that are being used to save/recycle potable water. Perfect for those first two years of college environmental studies

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