

If A Tree Falls

Will David Suzuki be there to write about it?

Do you consider yourself environmentally conscious? Do you buy organic veggies from local farms? Do you hand-stitch your own shopping bags out of used juice boxes and candy wrappers? Uh-huh, sure you do. It's just so easy to take the environment for granted. But when you're buying that greaseball burger in a non-biodegradable disposable wrapper, do you ever stop and think, "Now, what would David Suzuki say about this?"

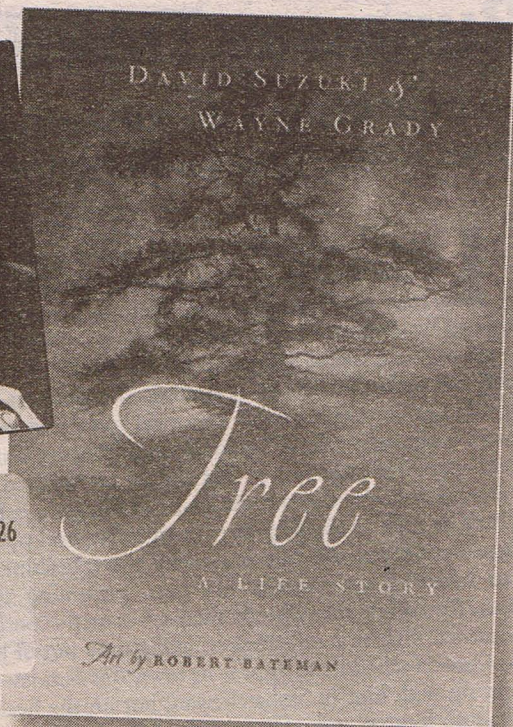
For decades Suzuki has been telling us exactly what he thinks about the way humans treat the planet. Through his books, essays, TV shows and websites he has been showing us a different view of the world we live in—a conscious view, one in which we are connected with the environment and take responsibility for our actions. In his new book, *Tree: A Life Story*, Suzuki and co-author Wayne Grady guide us through the mystical life cycle of a Douglas fir, from the ashy bed in which it first takes root, to its final resting place as a home to budding hemlocks, and all the 550 years in between.

Why a tree? "My theme over the past few years has been that the ecological crisis [we are experiencing] is a reflection of the fact that we no longer see that we are still a part of and dependent on the natural world," Suzuki explains to me. "I wanted to take something that is so ordinary that we don't even think about it, and show how it links us not only to the rest of the planet but also back through time. Trees are always there, but we hardly think of them as living beings."

By showing how all the plants, animals, water and air in a forest are interconnected and dependent on each other for survival, Suzuki has woven into the tale of our Douglas fir the story of the entire forest it inhabits. Salmon, bears, termites, truffles, owls, carpenter ants, cougars and salamanders all take the stage in *Tree*.



David Suzuki
7:30 pm Friday, Nov. 26
Alix Goolden Hall,
907 Pandora
Sold Out
592-4232



Each plays an important part in the health and survival of the forest . . . and each one is at the mercy of how we choose to treat its habitat.

"We think we are in charge," Suzuki continues. "That we are not subject to the laws of nature, that human priorities come before anything else . . . But how can we hope to survive if we don't have clean air, clean water, clean soil?" Suzuki asks. "Yet we use air, water and soil as toxic dumps—as if somehow we are immune to its effects. We tear at the web of living things without realizing that it is the source of the most fundamental needs we have."

With *Tree*, Suzuki provides a nice perspective on how insignificant our presence in the web of living things is, and yet how dramatically our actions can affect every other species with which we share the globe. He also reminds us that everything we do has consequences, and we need to start taking responsibility for the harm we are doing.

—Sarah Gignac