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The Sting Of The Wild



Synopsis

Entomologist Justin O. Schmidt is on a mission. Some say it's a brave exploration, others shake their heads in disbelief. His goal? To compare the impacts of stinging insects on humans, mainly using himself as the gauge. In *The Sting of the Wild*, the colorful Dr. Schmidt takes us on a journey inside the lives of stinging insects, seeing the world through their eyes as well as his own. He explains how and why they attack and reveals the powerful punch they can deliver with a small venom gland and a "sting," the name for the apparatus that delivers the venom. We learn which insects are the worst to encounter and why some are barely worth considering. *The Sting of the Wild* includes the complete Schmidt Sting Pain Index, published here for the first time. In addition to a numerical ranking of the agony of each of the eighty-three stings he's sampled so far (from below 1 to an excruciatingly painful 4), Schmidt describes them in prose worthy of a professional wine critic: "Looks deceive. Rich and full-bodied in appearance, but flavorless" and "Pure, intense, brilliant pain. Like walking over flaming charcoal with a three-inch nail embedded in your heel." Schmidt explains that, for some insects, stinging is used for hunting: small wasps, for example, can paralyze huge caterpillars and then lay their eggs inside so that their larvae can feast within. Others are used to kill competing insects, even members of their own species. Humans usually experience stings as defensive maneuvers used by insects to protect their nest mates. With colorful descriptions of each venom's sensation and a story that leaves you tingling with awe, *The Sting of the Wild*'s one-of-a-kind style will fire your imagination.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Schmidt's tales will prove infectiously engaging even to entomophobes." (Publishers Weekly)"Even though the pain-laced topic might leave you wincing, Schmidt's engaging and entertaining writing makes for a tale worth reading." (Scientific American)"[Schmidt's] low-down on sting biochemistry and physiology is relentlessly zestful, even as he recounts the swelling, burning consequences of his curiosity." (Nature)"On Schmidt's pain scale, this book rates a zero—no painless. On the pleasure scale, it rates a ten, a highly enjoyable read." (Natural History)"Readers who share my fascination with the natural world, and particularly those who revel in unusual animal facts, will love The Sting of the Wild." (Between the Covers)"... an excellent book..." (Newsweek)"The Sting of the Wild is full of the stories of science of stings. Schmidt is an engaging writer, and his youthful enthusiasm for scary critters makes for a book that will sometimes scare you and sometimes make you double over with laughter... It's a masterpiece of nature writing." (Nature's Cool Green Science)"If you're interested in bugs of any kind, and especially the notorious ones, this book will entertain, educate, and excite." (Discover Magazine)"Not only does he explain his Schmidt Sting Pain Index, wherein he rates the pain of numerous stings on a scale of one to four, but he also relates the fascinating natural histories of these animals." (National Geographic)"... totally fascinating..." (FiveThirtyEight)"The arms race that created the stinger hypodermic, and its biochemical warfare toxins, was a direct result of communal nesting, because the greater risk of predation demanded a formidable defensive strategy. This is the evolutionary theme through which the author lovingly interjects his own personal anecdotes." (BBC Wildlife Magazine)"It's hard to imagine a nature book being more fascinating and fun." (Virgin Radio UK)"In addition to providing colorful, connoisseur-grade descriptions of the pain caused by stings, The Sting of the Wild provides all sorts of information about stinging insects." (Newser)"... beautifully written... like nothing else you have ever read." (NPR's Science Friday)"...[The Sting of the Wild] is full of adventure, humor and Schmidt's impressive scholarship." (Redlands Daily Facts)"Schmidt, an entomologist at the Southwestern Biological Institute, is an excellent writer. He can write clear, engaging explanations of sting evolution and venom chemistry, as well as spin a good yarn about his adventures collecting stinging insects. I enjoyed his dry, judiciously applied, wit." (Pica Hudsonia)"... The Sting of the Wild weaves [Schmidt's] theories about stinging insects through a narrative of his personal experiences digging in the dirt. For many readers, the highlight of the book will be the appendix, his celebrated Pain Scale for Stinging Insects, which rates the pain level of dozens of insect stings, an index he created mostly by firsthand experience, either by suffering stings incidentally during field research or, in some cases, by inducing them. Because

stings of the same magnitude don't necessarily feel the same, Schmidt has written haiku-like descriptions for each of the 83 sting entries." (New York Times Magazine)" The Sting of the Wild is a delicate and highly refreshing glimpse into the private mind of a professional scientist. " (Times Literary Supplement)"Schmidt's story is really new, refreshing, and thoroughly entertaining." (Journal of Natural History)"This is an informative and engaging story about the fascinating lives behind the insects that you may just think of as very annoying visitors at picnics." (The Biologist)"... surprisingly joyful book... Schmidt does a good job of passing on his boundless enthusiasm for insects. The sting of the wild is an easy read, packed with chemistry and anecdotes." (Chemistry World)" The Sting of the Wild sheds light on the mysteries of stinging insects in a delightful and humorous narration. I recommend the book to every entomologist, ecologist, and naturalist interested in exploring the impressive world of Hymenoptera." (American Entomologist)"[The Sting of the Wild] is a good read, with valuable evolutionary context for bees and their insect relatives interwoven with entertaining travel tales of an engaged entomologist." (American Bee Journal)"You'll feel only pleasure and no pain when you read this captivating, accessible, and sometimes humorous account of Justin Schmidt's life with stinging insects; the wasps, ants, and bees. Schmidt recounts fascinating adventures and encounters of the stinging kind. Expect to be both informed and delighted as you read about his tales from the field and laboratory. This book is a must-read for naturalists, hikers, entomologists, and everyone who enjoys being outdoors." (Stephen Buchmann, author of The Reason for Flowers: Their History, Culture, Biology, and How They Change Our Lives)"It is impossible to read this book without feeling things crawl up your leg or hearing angry buzzing. The world's greatest expert on insect stings describes his experiences with cow-killers, fire ants, yellow jackets, killer bees, giant hornets, and all those other pain-inflicting creatures, while offering an evolutionary account of their defenses." (Frans de Waal, author of Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?)"It's no wonder Justin Schmidt is known as the 'Connoisseur of Pain' and 'The King of Sting.' As an entomologist who has savored the stings of insects from all over the world, from the bullet ant to the yellow jacket, Schmidt serves as the perfect guide to these tiny and exquisitely painful creatures. A fascinating blend of science, storytelling, and adventure, Sting of the Wild is a must-read for anyone who has ever looked at a wasp with wonder, but not dared to get too close. Justin Schmidt dared to get close, and, fortunately for us, he lived to tell the tale." (Amy Stewart, New York Times bestselling author of Wicked Bugs: The Louse that Conquered Napoleon's Army and Other Diabolical Insects)

Justin O. Schmidt is a biologist at Southwestern Biological Institute and is associated with the Department of Entomology at the University of Arizona. He is the coeditor of *Insect Defenses: Adaptive Mechanisms and Strategies of Prey and Predators*.

Very informative and quite thorough covering all our stinging/biting insects. Love the sting scale in the back! Glad it was Justin and not me! Just sayin!

Got stung, got the book, learned more about stings & ratings. If you like Nat'l History, this is good

Full myself it's a hard read, but easy enough to understand and follow along great information

Excellent read! I would recommend it to anyone with some interest in the natural world!

Great book, Great stories of a brave man!

I love this guy!!!

Fascinating and an easy read.

Interesting author

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