

Nature's Best Hope: Book Discussion Questions

- If you have your own yard, how much time do you spend caring for it? What are some of your normal tasks?
- What kinds of birds, bees, butterflies, insects and other wildlife do you typically see in your yard or neighborhood? What might be missing?
- Why do you think turf lawns are the default landscapes for American homes, apartments, schools, parks and businesses?
- What are the benefits of turf lawns? Why do people like them?
- What does Tallamy say is the problem with turf grass? Does he convince you that we need to shrink our lawns?
- How can we tell if a home or other property is well cared for? Why is this important to us?
- What are some obstacles to turning traditional turf lawns into more natural areas that support wildlife?
- Do you think adding plants and shrinking your lawn would result in more yard work, less yard work, or about the same amount of yard work? Why?
- If you are a homeowner, how do you usually decide what to plant in your yard?
- Do you think Tallamy's plan to create wildlife corridors through urban and suburban areas is achievable? What are the pros and cons of focusing on a grassroots movement of private land owners to alter their small plots of land?
- Much of *Nature's Best Hope* is dedicated to educating the reader on how ecological systems work, how humans have unknowingly devastated our ecosystems, and how people can intentionally work to support biodiversity to rebalance ecosystems. What did you learn that you didn't know before reading the book?
- Can people who are not property owners contribute to the Homegrown National Park movement? If so, how?
- Tallamy responds to critics who say *learning to garden with native plants is too hard* by pointing out that in the past 40 years people have adapted to home computers, email, the internet, and smart phones. What do you think it will take for us to make a similar adaptation to a new kind of landscaping?
- Do you agree with Tallamy that even small landowners have a personal responsibility for good earth stewardship? Why or Why not?
- Can you think of ways to make it easier for homeowners to shrink their lawn?
- Are you inspired by *Natures' Best Hope* to take any action? If so, what?
- What might a wildlife corridor look like in local cities and towns? Your Region? Your State? The Country? The World?



Also Consider:

- Where do you live? Describe the landscape outside your home.
- How much did you interact with nature as a child and what is your relationship with nature now?
- Is there anything you remember experiencing in the landscape of your youth that is missing today?
- What does Tallamy say is the problem with decreasing biodiversity of plants and animals?
- In what ways are humans dependent on the natural world?
- Why do you think Tallamy shares the story about his adult son wanting to remove a fox and her litter from beneath his porch in a crowded Washington D.C. suburb? What would you do if you were in the same situation?
- Can you identify the plants in your own yard or those you encounter in your daily life? What about insects, birds, and other animal life?
- Many ornamental yard plants are imported alien species that are beautiful but don't support native insects and bees. Do you think humans need to change our standards of natural beauty? Why or why not?
- Respond to this quote by E.O. Wilson "If all mankind were to disappear, the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed ten thousand years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos."
- Tallamy addresses our fear of nature (overreacting to Lyme disease and Zika threats for example) and many people's total disconnect from the natural world. Why do you think we are so afraid and disconnected?
- What are the benefits of connecting with nature? What are some ways for us to connect to the natural world around us?

