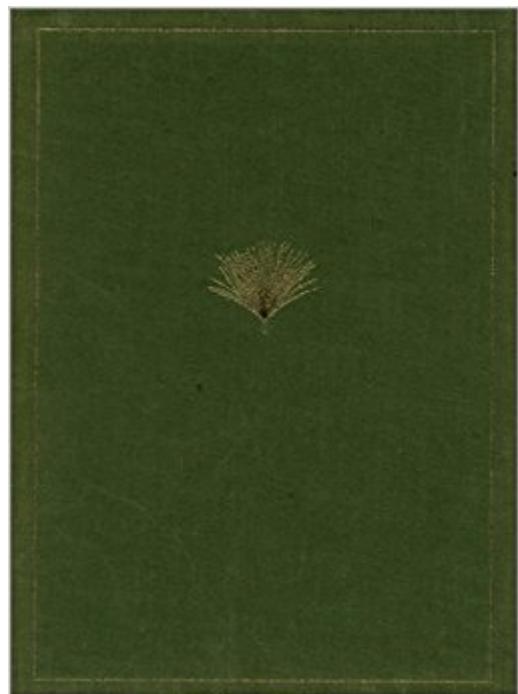


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# Faith In A Seed (Limited Edition): The Dispersion Of Seeds And Other Late Natural History Writings (A Shearwater Book)



## Synopsis

Faith in a Seed contains the hitherto unpublished work The Dispersion of Seeds, one of Henry D. Thoreau's last important research and writing projects, and now his first new book to appear in 125 years. With the remarkable clarity and grace that characterize all of his writings, Thoreau describes the ecological succession of plant species through seed dispersal. The Dispersion of Seeds, which draws on Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection, refutes the then widely accepted theory that some plants spring spontaneously to life, independent of roots, cuttings, or seeds. As Thoreau wrote: Though I do not believe a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders. Henry D. Thoreau's Faith in a Seed, was first published in hardcover in 1993 by Island Press under the Shearwater Books imprint, which unifies scientific views of nature with humanistic ones. This important work, the first publication of Thoreau's last manuscript, is now available in paperback. Faith in a Seed contains Thoreau's last important research and writing project, The Dispersion of Seeds, along with other natural history writings from late in his life. Edited by Bradley P. Dean, professor of English at East Carolina University and editor of the Thoreau Society Bulletin, these writings demonstrate how a major American author at the height of his career succeeded in making science and literature mutually enriching.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Faith in a Seed, a collection of Henry David Thoreau's late nature writings, deserves a place on the

bookshelf of anyone interested in the plant sciences or Thoreau's life and work. This volume consists of four previously-unpublished manuscripts, which the author left uncompleted when he died in 1862. Although compiled of rough drafts, *Faith in a Seed* is still very readable and enjoyable. Thoreau's last major project, *The Dispersion of Seeds*, fills most of this book. In it, he describes the seeds of various New England plants, as well as how they are disseminated by way of animals and the elements. The philosopher of *Walden Pond* roams the woods, fields, and swamps of "a world that is already planted, but is also still being planted as at first." Although this is a scientific work, Thoreau's wonderful voice and way with metaphor permeates every page, making for a very pleasurable read. Of historical interest, Thoreau was one of the first American scientists to embrace Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. The idea of an ever-changing earth coincided with Thoreau's own beliefs. He felt that "the development theory implies a greater vital force in Nature, because it is more flexible and accommodating, and equivalent to a sort of constant new creation." In addition to the cornerstone of this book, *The Dispersion of Seeds*, three shorter selections are included. In *Wild Fruits*, Thoreau writes about the joys of hunting for wild berries, and teaches that "the value of any experience is measured, not by the amount of money, but the amount of development we get out of it." *Weeds and Grasses* and *Forest Trees* elaborate on the ideas of plant propagation and forest succession illustrated in *The Dispersion of Seeds*.

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