

Learning to tap into the wonder of the natural world

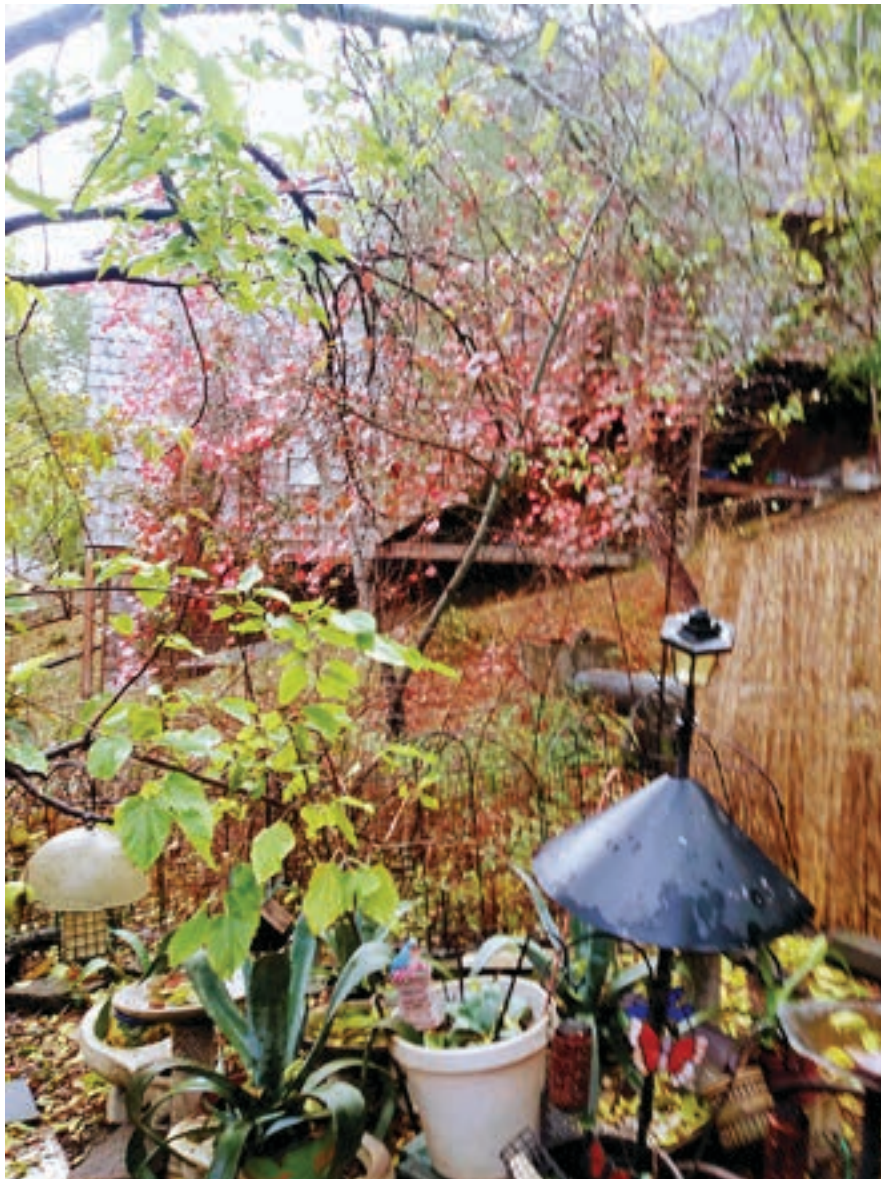


Photo Toris Jaeger

By Toris Jaeger

The Indigenous people of the Earth have learned to live in harmony with nature. This means following nature's lead. They developed technologies for finding plants and animals to benefit their lives but always made sure there was plenty for the future.

They lived in nature and nature provided all.

Other cultures viewed nature differently. It was seen as something to use and change to meet their demands. They cut down the forests filled in the wetlands and sucked up the water to plant crops.

This was the beginning of Climate Change.

From a very early age I valued being outside in nature. I made the birds, insects, mice, rats and rattle snakes my friends. I have always found it difficult to express this connection in words.

Recently, two high school students gave me the book, "The Invention of Nature, Alexander Von Humboldt's New World," by Andrea Wulf. Humboldt was born in 1769 and died in 1859.

Humboldt and his contemporaries – Goethe, Thomas Jefferson, Darwin, Thoreau, March, Haeckel and Muir – and those who were inspired by him and his books, "A Personal Narrative" and his final work, "Cosmos," were some that went on to create great works themselves. They viewed nature as very powerful and connected everything that is a part of nature.

My humble summary of Humboldt's works is that he spoke the language of nature, which speaks through all that is in nature. Humboldt spoke against the poor treatment of the Indigenous people and spoke against slavery of any people. He traveled to all the continents and climbed all the Earth's mountains in his lifetime. He discovered more connections than differences.

These naturalists have much to teach us about how to live in harmony with nature.

While we may not have time or resources to travel the Earth to climb each mountain top, we can step into the natural world just outside our door, and revel in all its wonder.