



# Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics (Studies in Moral, Political, and Legal Philosophy)

By Paul W. Taylor

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What rational justification is there for conceiving of all living things as possessing inherent worth? In *Respect for Nature*, Paul Taylor draws on biology, moral philosophy, and environmental science to defend a biocentric environmental ethic in which all life has value. Without making claims for the moral rights of plants and animals, he offers a reasoned alternative to the prevailing anthropocentric view--that the natural environment and its wildlife are valued only as objects for human use or enjoyment. *Respect for Nature* provides both a full account of the biological conditions for life--human or otherwise--and a comprehensive view of the complex relationship between human beings and the whole of nature.

This classic book remains a valuable resource for philosophers, biologists, and environmentalists alike--along with all those who care about the future of life on Earth. A new foreword by Dale Jamieson looks at how the original 1986 edition of *Respect for Nature* has shaped the study of environmental ethics, and shows why the work remains relevant to debates today.

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### Editorial Review

#### From Library Journal

Some environmental philosophers stress our duty to prevent environmental deterioration because of our obligations to future generations of human inhabitants of the earth (cf. H. J. McCloskey's Ecological Ethics and Politics , LJ 10/1/82). In this book Taylor stresses our duties toward nature itself. Taylor lays out an intricate but powerful argument according to which all life, including individual plants, have equal inherent worth. Although some attention is paid to practical applications, the book is rigorously philosophical and its appeal will be mainly to philosophers and other scholars. Sidney Gendin, Philosophy Dept., Eastern Michigan Univ., Ypsilanti

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#### Review

From the previous edition: "Taylor's environmental ethic is a substantial and significant one which, among other things, requires that there be harmony between human civilisation and living nature. -- *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*

From the previous edition: "This is a useful book that raises important questions. -- *Ethics*

#### From the Back Cover

"When it first appeared, *Respect for Nature* was at once recognized for the important, groundbreaking work it was. It was deservedly a major influence in the then newly developing field of environmental ethics. Time has only confirmed this first opinion and it is good to have the book back before us."--**Michael Ruse, editor of *Philosophy after Darwin***

"Paul Taylor notes that just as we would not ask 'What is a human being good for?', so also should we not ask 'What is nature good for?' This is surely right. His *Respect for Nature* is a systematic working out of the consequences of this observation. It is even more relevant today than when it first appeared twenty-five years ago."--**Stephen Darwall, Yale University**

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**Chad West:**

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