

## Sizzling Summer Nature Books to Read Outdoors

### **Edition 1: Go Buggy**

For the past 47 years, the National Science Teachers Association has published a spring list of *Outstanding Trade Books* which includes titles on general science content. Appearing below is one that focuses on the natural world, the study of environmental science, and insects galore. Additionally, it demonstrates the historical inequities to the fair access to education and how this system limited the hopes and dreams of a talented individual who ultimately prevailed making weighty contributions along her journey of closed doors.

Included are notes that help make connections to the ongoing ecological work conducted at Duke Farms and additional resources for further dialogue and research.

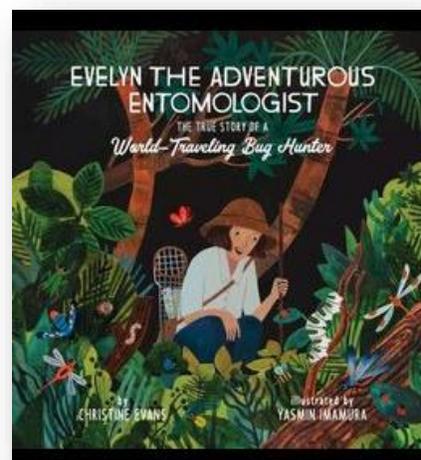
#### **Evelyn, the Adventurous Entomologist**

By Christine Evans, Illustrated by Yasmin Imamura

The book follows Evelyn Cheesman on her relentless and life-long pursuit of knowledge about animals, especially insects. In the early 1920s, women were expected to stay home, but Evelyn embarked on eight solo expeditions to distant islands. She collected over 70,000 insect specimens used for education at the Museum of Natural History in London; discovered new species some of which were named after her; adventured through little known terrain to make significant contributions while functioning in a male-dominated world.

Cheesman was unable to train for a career as a veterinary surgeon due to restrictions on women's education at that time. Instead, she studied entomology and was the first woman to be hired as a curator at Regent's Park Zoo, in London.

(Source: NSTA)



#### **Questions to prompt discussion about this book:**

- An ecologist who focuses on insects and their lives really has their work cut out for them! Why do you think that being a field-based entomologist would be difficult? [This Smithsonian article may help you answer this question.](#)
- Apart from Evelyn Cheesman, can you name some other female environmentalists who love bugs? If you can't think of any, why do you think that is? [The Entomology Society of America has an idea.](#)
- Evelyn Cheesman was prohibited from going to veterinary school based on her gender. What is the current male and female enrollment at US veterinary schools? Have things changed, and if so, why/why not? If you have a pet and have recently visited a vet, you may have your own impressions, but the [American Veterinary Medical Association offers these stats.](#)

### **Who's That Bug Lady?**

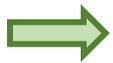
- If you are interested in another career entomologist, Alice Gray was often called the Bug Lady of the American Museum of Natural History in New York! As a talented illustrator, she was responsible for countless renderings while raising all sorts of [spiders and insects at the museum for educational purposes and for exhibits](#).

### **Duke Farms Connection**

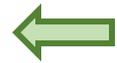
Insects play a critical role in our environment. Just their activities as pollinators, as aerators for soil and as scavengers eating dead and decaying plant material thereby recycling materials back to the earth, confirm their essential place in ecosystems.

Acknowledging the importance of insects and the intrigue of studying them, Duke Farms has offered insect-related classes for children, families, and adults through the *Junior Entomologist* series and sessions such as *Winter Weeds*, *Galls*, and *Insect Identification* and *Moths of NJ*. Currently, there are numerous resources involving insects on the Duke Farms Distance Learning Portal. Check out *The Forgotten Flower Series* to learn about how miner bees are pollination specialists for the spring beauty or how ultraviolet light is involved with the insect pollinators of cutleaf toothwort. On the other hand, you can also read about a very unwanted invasive species in the article, *Spotted Lanternfly: Beat that Bug*.

[Click here for the Duke Farms Distance Learning Portal!](#)



**Remember, books are even better when read outside!**



**Next in the series: Moth Madness**