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Amazing Maize

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Galápagos: Discovery on Darwin's Islands

By David W. Steadman & Steven Zousmer

Steadman's modern voyage of discovery begins with a description of the natural and human history of the islands, including early speculation on their formation and the mystery of the islands' colonizers, from giant tortoises and the prehistoric-seeming iguana, to the oddly "flightless" cormorants. How did these and other species arrive on these barren islands, 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador, and manage to survive? In this lively, firsthand account of scientific sleuthwork in action, a richer picture of Darwin's legendary "laboratory of nature" emerges as the reader is invited to track missing links in the evolutionary chain of extinct and living species. Written for the general reader interested in these mysterious islands and the conservation of their unique wildlife, the book is handsomely illustrated and features fifty-one color plates of original watercolors by Lee Steadman. The detailed and colorful plates depict all resident mammals, reptiles and birds, and constitute the first comprehensive "fieldguide" to Galápagos wildlife. Captions accompanying each color plate provide a thorough account of the evolution of represented species, their habitats and striking aspects of their behavior.

—from the publisher

Smithsonian Inst. Press, 1988, 208 pages, 8¾″ x 11″, hardcover, $24.95. ISBN 0-87474-882-8.

Science News Books, 1719 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

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By Allen Bragdon

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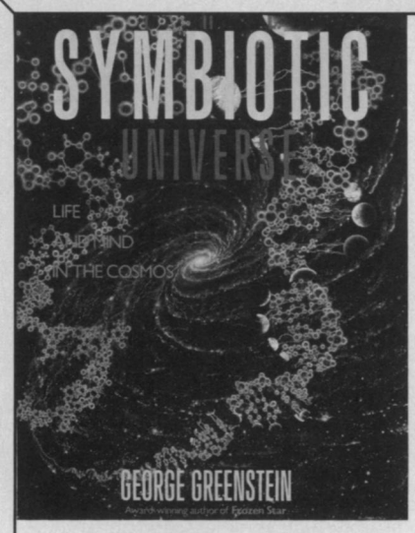

Greenstein, professor of astronomy at Amherst College, believes we are faced with a mystery, and one of immense significance. In The Symbiotic Universe, he argues that our existence, and indeed that of every other form of life, is an utterly astonishing thing. The deeper one looks, the more surprising it becomes that life ever arose in the cosmos. For in fact our existence depends on a network of unlikely circumstances, a remarkable series of coincidences. That they occurred at all is testimony that ours is fundamentally a universe of life. In looking for an explanation, Greenstein proposes that in the fitness of the cosmos for life, we are witnessing the effects of a gigantic symbiosis—a symbiosis between the physical universe on the one hand and life on the other. Between these two there is a union, a great metaphysical dance by which each supports the other. How did it come to pass that against all odds the cosmos succeeded in bringing forth life? It had to — in order to exist.

— from the publisher

"The author is a good storyteller and a natural teacher..."
— Kirkus Reviews

Morrow, 1988, 271 pages,
6¼" x 9½", hardcover, $18.95
ISBN 0-688-07604-1

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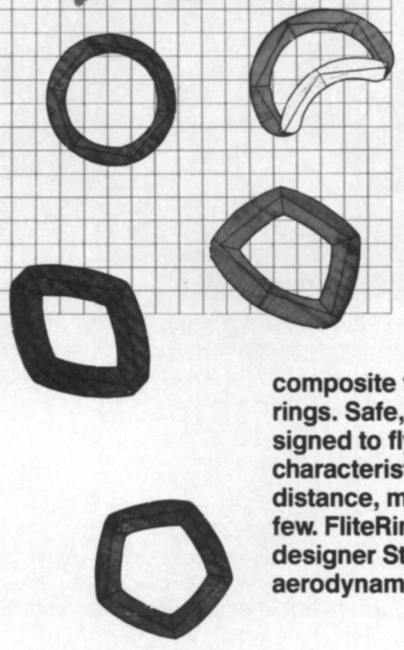

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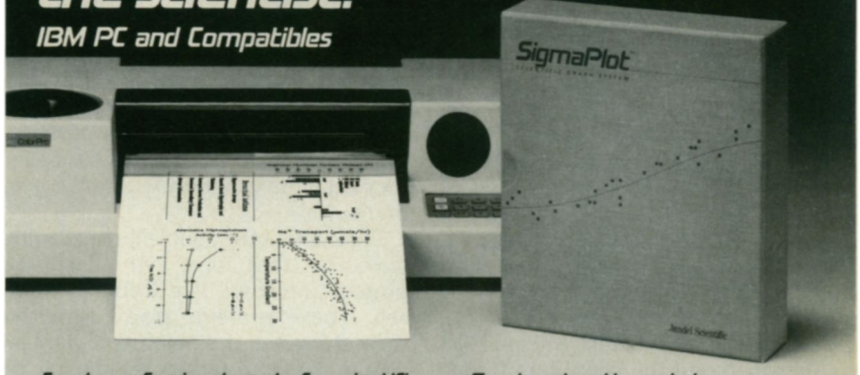

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