

Librería
Bonilla y Asociados
desde 1950



Título: People And Plans In Ancient Eastern North America

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Precio: \$560.00

Editorial:

Año: 2010

Tema:

Edición: 1ª

Sinopsis

ISBN: 9780816529131

The environmental diversity of North America is astounding—from circumpolar tundra with a small number of plants more than a few centimeters tall to the lush semitropical forests of the southeastern United States and the Caribbean Basin. No less remarkable is the record of plant usage by the various indigenous peoples who have been living here for more than 12,000 years. For the vast majority of this time, their livelihood—food, shelter, fuel, and medicine—depended on their knowledge and use of the plants that surrounded them.

The most comprehensive overview in more than half a century on the interconnectedness of people and plants, this book and its companion volume, *People and Plants in Ancient Western North America*, present the latest information on three major topics: the uses of native plants, the history of crops and their uses, and the impact of humans on their environment. They not only contribute to our understanding of the lives of prehistoric people but also serve as guides for designing sustainable living today. **INSIDEFLAP:** The most comprehensive overview in more than half a century on the interconnectedness of people and plants, this book and its companion *People and Plants in Ancient Western North America* presents the latest information on three major topics: the use of native plants; the history of crops and their uses; and the impact of humans on their environment. It contributes not only to our understanding of the lives of prehistoric people but also serves as a guide for designing environmentally sustainable lives today.