

Rock Spot Resurfaces

The invasive species didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*), a.k.a. “rock spot,” has recently been found in the



Tim Daley, PA DEP

Kayaderosseras Creek in Saratoga County. Didymo, a single-cell algae, may produce dense mats along the bottom of waters, altering water conditions and crowding out many organisms that live there. Containing it has been problematic as it can easily spread to other water bodies by clinging to waders, boots, boats, paddles, clothing and fishing gear. Once a water body is infected with didymo, there is no known method for eradicating it. The best known defense is to prevent its spread by following the “Check, Clean and Dry” method—check items, thoroughly clean equipment, and let items dry completely before using them in another waterway. For more information, including a list of waters where didymo has been found, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/54244.html.

Green Your Yard

When caring for your yard this fall and next spring, consider choosing a landscape business participating in DEC’s new Be Green Organic Yards NY program. Businesses participating

in Be Green will agree not to use conventional pesticides and synthetic fertilizers when they take care of your lawn, plants and trees organically. The organic approach focuses on preventing problems before they occur, and building a sustainable landscape healthy for people, pets, plants and wildlife. Be Green services range from mulching and pruning to plant and tree selection, and soil health. For additional information on Be Green Organic Yards NY, visit www.dec.ny.gov/public/65071.html. A list of trained Be Green businesses is expected to be available at that website this fall. For tips about greening your lawn, visit DEC’s website at www.dec.ny.gov/public/44290.html.

EAB Spotted Again

DEC foresters have discovered the invasive emerald ash borer (EAB) in additional trees in the Randolph quarantine area (Cattaraugus County). The tree-killing beetle was first confirmed in New York last year. A native of Asia, EAB was discovered in Michigan in 2002 and has since spread to 13 states and two Canadian provinces. It is responsible for the destruction of 70 million trees in the U.S. Foresters and other researchers recently commenced a thorough survey of trees and will deploy a more intensive trapping effort in the surrounding area to assess the extent of the infestation. The survey’s information will help determine the response strategy, which could range from removing trees, to using pesticides selectively, to girdling ash to create “trap trees” that attract the beetles. The quarantine remains in effect and DEC reminds everyone, “Don’t Move Firewood!” If you think you have found EAB, call the EAB hotline at 1-866-640-0652. For more information, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html.

Met Swajkos/Aurora



Coastal Cleanup turns 25

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Ocean Conservancy’s International Coastal Cleanup—a massive event that invites individuals across the globe to remove trash from beaches and waterways. The cleanup also helps identify the sources of debris collected and encourages changes in behavior to help prevent ocean litter. Last year, nearly 400,000 volunteers removed an estimated 6.8 million pounds of trash from the world’s oceans and beaches. Though organizations and individuals participate all year, the signature event takes place on September 25. To find out how you can participate, visit www.signuptocleanup.org.

Recycling E-Waste

In May, Governor Paterson signed the New York State Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act into law, ensuring that every New Yorker will have the opportunity to recycle their electronic waste in an environmentally responsible manner. Beginning on April 1, 2011, the law will require manufacturers to offer free and convenient systems for collecting, handling and recycling or reusing electronic waste, including computers, televisions, DVD players, cameras, VCRs and other electronic equipment. For more information, visit www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/65583.html.



REVIEW by Andrew Guglielmi

This Borrowed Earth by Robert Hernan

256 pages; soft cover \$17.00

Palgrave Macmillan

<http://us.macmillan.com>; 646-307-5151

There were times while reading Robert Hernan's *This Borrowed Earth* when my jaw dropped. I simply could not believe what I was reading: dioxin's health effects on residents in Seveso, Italy—a country with a 90% Roman Catholic population—were so severe that local doctors advised pregnant women to consider having abortions; children playing in the Love Canal neighborhood threw toxic “fire rocks” that exploded when they hit other objects; when asked about the gas released in Bhopal, India, Union Carbide officials claimed it was not toxic and only an irritant, despite thousands of dead animals and people throughout the city.

This Borrowed Earth moves through 15 distinct, yet noticeably similar, environmental disasters around the world, beginning with a mercury-laden bay in 1950s Japan, and ending with the current hot topic (no pun intended) of global climate change. Some of these stories were familiar and some, as a member of Generation X, I had never heard.

It is the similarities of these stories which are the most compelling. More often than not, the companies responsible, and the government entities responding to the disasters, were in damage-control mode—at times hiding damning

information and downplaying the gravity of situations. Another similarity is the passion, anger and even violence required of the citizens affected by these disasters before clean-up and justice were achieved.

Hernan's style is straightforward and simple. One of his best attributes is the ability to convey complex processes in an easily understandable manner; be it how dioxin forms when hexachlorophene is overheated, or how petroleum can destroy the insulation penguins need to hunt in cold waters.

This Borrowed Earth is first and foremost a compilation of environmental history. Hernan's objective is to “know the past so we don't repeat it in the future.” At a time when society is experimenting with genetically modified food, mixing chemical cocktails to develop new pharmaceuticals, and commencing off-shore oil drilling, I remain skeptical that we will avoid future environmental disasters. Hopefully, the lessons from the stories Hernan tells will help us all to respond openly and quickly to minimize the damage.

Senior Attorney **Andrew Guglielmi** works for DEC's Office of General Counsel.

Editor's note: In light of the current disaster unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico, this book makes for timely reading indeed.

