



Mesquite

An Arboreal Love Affair

Gary Paul Nabhan

foreword by *Petey Mesquitey*

\$22.50 • Hardcover

5.5 × 8.5 • 224 pages

ISBN 978-1-60358-830-0

Pub Date: **September 21, 2018**

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“A marvelous mesquite journey filled with stories that will sometimes have you belly laughing . . . or maybe even striking a chord that makes you quietly weep.”

—**PETEY MESQUITEY**, from the foreword

After a profound life experience in the Sonoran Desert, Gary Paul Nabhan takes an intimate look at the mesquite tree and combines cutting-edge science, humor, folk wisdom, and lyrical prose to explore arboreality—the experience of being mesquite.

Mesquites are an ecological, cultural, and nutritional keystone species. As Nabhan intimately introduces us to this tree, we suddenly realize that our normal view of the world has been turned on its head: where we once saw scarcity in the arid Southwest, there is abundance; where we once perceived severity, there is whimsy. Cultures that we once assumed lived in “food deserts” are secretly savoring a most delicious world.

Who better to reveal the hidden life of the mesquite than Gary Paul Nabhan—an internationally celebrated nature writer, agrarian activist, ethnobotanist, MacArthur “genius” award winner, and author of more than twenty books. He has been recognized by national media like *The New York Times*, *Outside*, *Orion*, and NPR, and frequently lectures across the country. Considered a pioneer in the local food and heirloom seed saving movements, Nabhan’s work focuses on conserving the links between biodiversity and cultural diversity.

From his mesquite-slab writing desk looking out on his mesquite-filled orchard near Tucson, AZ, Gary’s view of the world is framed by this sacred tree. He describes it as a “sensitive, discerning, responsive, and creative being.” One that dynamically responds to its environment “structurally, behaviorally, intelligently, and caringly, just as lovers do to one another.”

“To love a tree is not an offense,” he notes, “it is little practiced expression of affection and respect for the wildness and woodiness of the world.” Embark on this deep exploration of the mesquite tree with Gary and you might just find yourself falling in love too.



Gary Paul Nabhan is an award-winning nature writer. He holds the W.K. Kellogg Endowed Chair in Sustainable Food Systems at the University of Arizona Southwest Center, where he works with students, faculty, and non-profits to build a more just, nutritious, sustainable, and climate-resilient foodshed spanning the US/Mexico border. He’s the author of numerous books, including *Growing Food in a Hotter, Drier Land*, *Renewing America’s Food Traditions*, and *Chasing Chiles*. Learn more at garynabhan.com.

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