

## BOOK NOTICE

BILL VAUGHN. 2015. **Hawthorn: The Tree That Has Nourished, Healed, and Inspired Through the Ages.** (ISBN-13: 978-0-300-20349-3, hbk). Yale University Press, 302 Temple Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511-8909, U.S.A. (**Orders:** <http://yalebooks.yale.edu>, 1-800-405-1619). \$30.00 US, 272 pp., 9 b/w illustrations, 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ "  $\times$  9 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".

Featuring an award-winning landscape photograph of a hawthorn tree, James Osmond's photo on the book cover is an engaging introduction to the ancient tree and its roles in human history. This photograph, along with a quote by John Milton—"and every shepherd tells his tale under the hawthorn in the dale"—creates the ambience for Bill Vaughn's book, *Hawthorn: The Tree That Nourished, Healed, and Inspired Through the Ages*.

Humans throughout history used the hawthorn tree in many ways. Some were intended to show the way on a trail—perhaps, it was the early-day "Google Maps"!

The book is not a scientific treatise about the hawthorn tree, but it is a good read about the folklore and ethnobotany around the genus *Crataegus*. The book is padded with interesting diversions from the main topic, such as tales of the author's life in Montana. The presence of *C. douglasii* on his property led him on an exploration to research the hawthorn and its political, cultural, and natural history.

Vaughn shows us with precise detail the hawthorn tree has had a root or two stuck into just about every era of human history. The book almost reads like a collection of twelve essays; though the topics vary, the hawthorn tree is the overreaching theme connecting all.

While Vaughn shines light on the full scope of the hawthorn tree's influence over human events, he also explores the medicinal value of the hawthorn tree, the use of the fruit in the world's first wine, and the symbolic role its spikes and flowers played in pagan beliefs and Christian iconography. As entertaining as it is illuminating, this book is the first full appreciation of the hawthorn tree's abundant connections with humanity.

In addition, Mr. Vaughn has a diagram demonstrating the Art of Hedge Laying in his chapter discussing The Hedge Layers. He also includes extensive notes and a detailed index. After reading Mr. Vaughn's book, I wonder...will the hawthorn tree be the first plant to be found on Mars?—*Kay M. Stansbery, Ph.D., Library Research Volunteer, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.*

About the Author: **Bill Vaughn** writes for many publications about topics ranging from sports to the paper industry, fashion to Jesse James. Also as a graphic artist, he has designed and composed more than 400 books. He lives outside Missoula, MT, with his wife, dogs, and horses.