

BOOK REVIEW

Tracing what America eats to 'food spies'

'Food Explorer' uncovers our exotic-food origins

Ashley Day
USA TODAY

When the realization sinks in that avocados, hummus, even Egyptian cotton exist in America because of crafty botanical espionage, one naturally questions who's responsible — and how he landed the job. The country's first and most prominent plant spy earned the opportunity through expertise and luck, and lucky for us, he took notes.

Author Daniel Stone

In *The Food Explorer: The True Adventures of a Globe-Trotting Botanist Who Transformed What America Eats* (Dutton, 416 pp., ★★☆☆), Daniel Stone transforms seemingly endless journals, letters and records into a meticulous retelling of how David Fairchild transported thousands of plants to American soil from 1894 to 1904.

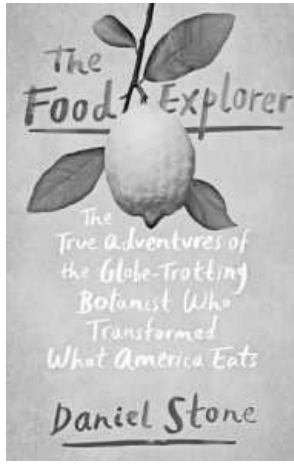
Not only did Fairchild have the agricultural know-how to uncover exotic

plant species unknown to the young United States — he discovered a reason to travel the world when "crossing the Atlantic even once qualified as the rarest treat of a person's life." The budding botanist left Kansas at age 20 for a position as a junior scientist fighting plant fungus for the Department of Agriculture.

Fairchild's itch to travel was initially a desire to explore the tropical botany and biodiversity of Java. He offered to bring his fungus experience to the Indonesian island's botanical garden, and his success visiting the tropics sprouted into a quest covering Italy, South America, Egypt, China and eventually Africa.

His mission to try foreign fruits and ship seeds and cuttings would revolutionize farming, and the arrival of new kinds of citrus, mangoes and potatoes ignited entire industries.

This agricultural infusion into America's economy was financed by Barbour Lathrop, a wealthy private citizen whom



Fairchild met on an ocean liner. The "forty-seven-year-old millionaire who financed his pleasure for travel on his father's real estate fortune" insisted on paying for Fairchild's travels when the government wouldn't.

While we may not realize that the sweetest mangoes originally came from the Philippines and nectarines from Pakistan, most of us have tasted the success of German hops and kale — all a result of

Fairchild and his sponsor's missions. Their agricultural adventures wind through world fairs and world wars, and they cross paths with the likes of Alexander Graham Bell and the Wright Brothers.

As traveling "spies," the pair's inevitable misadventures range from danger and disease to the importation of cocaine in plant form to the red tape of bureaucracy. (The U.S. government didn't officially consider Fairchild and subsequent plant explorers spies, but the unregulated mission of collecting

crops required discretion to ensure safety, particularly in areas with unrest, such as China at the time, or where a plant was prized and protected, as with hops in Germany.)

After four years of travel for "seed and plant introduction," Fairchild's inventory of imports exceeded 4,000 plants from 11 fellow plant explorers, a career he pioneered. He started the office of seed and plant introduction for the Department of Agriculture, and by age 34 had settled in Washington to direct the department.

His commitment to American agriculture proves noble, but the pace of this final third of the story slows significantly as Fairfield stays home. Fortunately, his role in bringing Japanese cherry blossom trees to D.C. makes this section worth the read (and reason enough for his fame).

The botanist ultimately became "one of the country's most senior food experts," and his work proved plants' economic and geopolitical value during America's rise on the world stage.

More than a century later, we can indulge in overpriced avocado toast and know that someone before us planted the seed.

MARKETPLACE TODAY

To view more Classified listings, visit: www.classifieds.usatoday.com

For advertising information: 1.800.397.0070 www.russelljohns.com/usat

<p>NOTICES</p> <p>IN SEARCH OF</p> <p>INVOKANA MEDICATION WARNING</p> <p>ATTENTION THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR ANYONE THAT HAS TAKEN THE PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION INVOKANA, INVOKOMED OR INVOKOMED XR FOR THEIR DIABETES. IN MAY 2017, BASED ON THE FACTS OF TWO CLINICAL TRIALS, THE FDA ISSUED A HEALTH ADVISORY WARNING THAT THESE DIABETES MEDICATIONS INCREASE THE RISK OF AMPUTATION OF THE LEGS AND TOES. IF YOU OR YOUR LOVED ONE HAVE TAKEN THE PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION INVOKANA, INVOKOMED OR INVOKOMED XR FOR YOUR DIABETES.</p> <p>YOU MUST CALL US NOW: 800-804-8248</p>	<p>IN SEARCH OF</p> <p>IVC FILTER WARNING</p> <p>THE FDA HAS ISSUED A WARNING TO ALL IVC FILTER PATIENTS. THESE IVC FILTERS MAY CAUSE SERIOUS INJURIES. IF YOU OR YOUR LOVED ONE HAD AN IVC FILTER IMPLANTED YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO FINANCIAL COMPENSATION. THERE ARE NO FEES UNLESS YOU GET A SETTLEMENT. CALL NOW FOR A FREE LEGAL CONSULTATION.</p> <p>Call now: 800-340-1530 (24/7)</p>	<p>CAREERS</p> <p>EMPLOYMENT</p> <p>Targeted Medical Recruitment</p> <p>The Family Medicine Career Center is the official online job board of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM), and your number one online resource for recruiting medical professionals!</p> <p>www.familymedicinecareers.com</p>	<p>HEALTH / FITNESS</p> <p>50% SAVINGS</p> <p>★ FDA APPROVED ★ GENERIC VIAGRA</p> <p>PRESCRIPTION INCLUDED</p> <p>USA Licensed Physicians and Pharmacies</p> <p>VIA MEDIC</p> <p>SAFE • SECURE • DISCREET</p> <p>OVERNIGHT SHIPPING AVAILABLE</p> <p>800-551-0352</p> <p>Visit Viamedic.com/USA for special offers</p>	<p>FOR THE HOME</p> <p>Custom Made Table Pads & Linen</p> <p>Blowout Sale \$69</p> <p>Compare to \$200! Limited Time Offer!</p> <p>50% Off Custom Linen Sale!</p> <p>Protect Your Treasured Table From Scratches, Spills, Stains, Heat, Burns, Dents, Knicks. We can make any size, any shape!</p> <p><i>Berger's</i> Proudly Made in the USA</p> <p>(800) 737-1532</p> <p>MAKING THE WORLD'S FINEST QUALITY CUSTOM TABLE PADS</p>	<p>NOTICES</p> <p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>MISSING</p> <p>ZETH BLALOCK</p>  <p>DOB: Jan 11, 2001 Sex: Male Race: White Missioning: Sep 18, 2017 Hair: Brown Age Now: 17 Eyes: Brown</p> <p>From: Stone Mountain, GA NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN</p> <p>1-800-THE-LOST</p>
<p>Put your brand in front of millions of readers around the U.S.!</p> <p>Advertise Today! 1-800-397-0070</p>	<p>TALCUM POWDER WARNING</p> <p>Users of Johnson and Johnson's Baby Powder and Shower to Shower may be at a higher risk of developing ovarian cancer.</p> <p>If you or a loved one used talcum powder and were diagnosed with ovarian cancer, you may be entitled to financial compensation.</p> <p>Call to see if you qualify NOW: 800-208-3526 (24hrs)</p>	<p>MARKETPLACE</p> <p>HEALTH / FITNESS</p> <p>Macular Degeneration, Cataract, Glaucoma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to heal without injections! Just released FREE guide that reveals why Macular Degeneration continues to increase at an alarming rate. Discover how STEM CELLS can help your vision. <p>1-800-430-9328 www.USAEyeReport.com Edward Kondrot, MD Board Certified Ophthalmologist</p>	<p>Now available, FDA approved Generic Viagra for 50% less</p> <p>Call 800-551-0352 7 days/week</p> <p>Visit Viamedic.com/USA Serving Customer since 1998</p> <p>To advertise, call: 1-800-397-0070</p>	<p>BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS</p> <p>STUDY THE BIBLE</p> <p>For FREE 8-lesson course</p> <p>Church of Christ, Box 8453, Falls Church, VA 22041 888-949-2176 www.gracewords.org</p>	

PUZZLES

Report puzzle problems to us at feedback@usatoday.com or 1-800-872-7073

CROSSWORD

EDITED Fred Piscop
BY Fred Piscop

UPSTAIRS/ DOWNSTAIRS

ACROSS

- Muscles near lats
- Uncle Remus term of address
- "Ivanhoe" novelist Sir Walter
- Remove to a MASH, briefly
- Pervasive glow
- Caveman-style, as a diet
- Its depth is checked in an auto inspection
- Flared dress style
- Interlocking pavers
- "___ semper tyrannis"
- Brings to a screeching halt
- Exude, as charm
- Pioneering deejay Freed
- Tense moment for a pilot
- Takes too much, for short
- Home to most of us
- Provo native
- Playmates of antelopes, in song
- Confined, like some 1-Down
- Tomato in tomato paste
- When glaciers advanced
- Like the Mojave's climate
- Bench with hymnals
- Way to work, for many suburbanites
- Fit of temper
- Ravens' cries
- Speed-of-sound word
- Salary limit
- Sheep prized for its wool
- Brass or bronze
- Night owl, usually
- Chapel topper
- Mineral in hemoglobin

DOWN

- Garfield and Odie, to Jon
- Online party reminder
- Billiard ball's rebound
- Like postcard pictures
- Soap units
- Feel remorse about
- Time spans named for monarchs
- Michelin offering
- Place for a body scrub
- Page-A-Day publication
- "This Is Us" director Ken
- Mind, as a store
- Stocking parts
- Neon ___ (aquarium fish)
- Supermodel Schiffer
- Aardvark's victim
- Self-denying one
- "Cheap Thrills" singer
- "Horrible" Viking of comics
- Confined, like some 1-Down
- Flapjack-serving chain
- Word with stage or pen
- Chew like a rat
- Like Pindar's poetry
- Chrysler Building style, informally
- Appear to be
- It's blown on Yom Kippur
- Overthrow a base, say
- Paintball weapon
- Food-cubing gadget
- "And others," in citations
- Steer snagger
- Thin, like cirrus clouds
- Grinch's look
- One of a ketch's two
- Gravy Train competitor
- Advertiser's award
- Pal on the ranch
- YMCA part
- Guesstimate phrase
- "I'd love to!"
- Stubbed body part

© Andrews McMeel 3/20

WORD ROUNDUP

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek 3/20

Find and Circle:

- Movies: "___ Man"
- Four words with FF in the middle
- Three two-syllable rodents
- Two flowing bodies of water
- Two evergreen trees

Monday's answer: TRUNK SKUNK SUNK HUNK BUNK / GRAFFITI DIMINISH IDENTITY SPACIOUS / RIGA LIMA OSLO KIEV / MUSEUM AUTUMN GURU / MARK TWAIN

QUICKCROSS

By John Wilmes 3/20

Hemorrhaged
German for "one"
Helper
Smooch
Bird bill
2019 Super Bowl number
Concludes
Gordon and Snider

Monday's Answer
KICK
NOON
ONCE
WAKE

© Andrews McMeel 3/19

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 (no repeats).

6	5	9	7	2				
						6		
	4		5	2	3		7	
			4	7	5			
1			6				2	
3	1		9					
4	7	5	3				2	
	5							
			8	1	6	5		4

© Andrews McMeel 3/20

SUDOKU FUSION

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x2 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 (no repeats).

6	5	1	3		
1	4				
	1	2	4		
		6	2	5	
			3	5	
2	3	6		4	

DIFFICULTY RATING ★★☆☆☆

Monday's Answers

2	3	7	1	9	6	8	4	5
6	5	8	4	7	2	3	1	9
9	4	1	8	5	3	2	7	6
8	1	9	7	3	5	6	2	4
5	2	6	9	4	1	7	3	8
4	7	3	2	6	8	9	5	1
3	9	2	5	8	4	1	6	7
1	8	4	6	2	7	5	9	3
7	6	5	3	1	9	4	8	2

© Andrews McMeel 3/19

UP & DOWN WORDS

By David L. Hoyt and Russell L. Hoyt 3/20

1. GANGSTER

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

GENERAL

Clues:

- 1. "Goodfellas" or "Casino"
- 2. Hollywood presentation
- 3. Contribute
- 4. Trendy
- 5. Clothing-industry hub
- 6. Prosecutor
- 7. Chief law official

Monday's Answer

- DWARF
- PLANET
- EARTH
- SCIENCE
- SCIENCE
- CLASS
- CLASS
- ACT
- UP
- UP
- AGAINST

PLAY ONLINE

PUZZLES.USATODAY.COM

© Andrews McMeel

TXTPERT

Across

- 1.26774367
- 5.383
- 7.769
- 9.45623
- 10.8378

Down

- 1.227
- 2.7323
- 3.46837638
- 4.7853
- 6.2355
- 8.278

© USA TODAY and Rich Coulter 3/20

Today's theme Classroom

Use the phone keypad to decode the clues.

For example: 2 could be A, B or C, and 5678 could be LOST

Yesterday's solution

DON'T QUOTE ME

Author Ruth Stout talks about spring.

Rearrange the words to complete the quote.

ALWAYS BUT CHOOSE GARDEN GREET IN SPRING

I LOVE _____ ANYWHERE, _____ IF I COULD _____

I WOULD _____ IT _____ A _____

Monday's Answer: "Look for the woman in the dress. If there is no woman, there is no dress." - Coco Chanel

© WIGGLES 3D GAMES 3/20