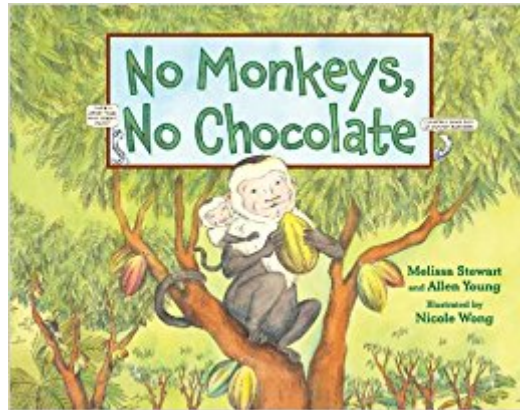


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# No Monkeys, No Chocolate



## Synopsis

Everyone loves chocolate, right? But how many people actually know where chocolate comes from? How it's made? Or that monkeys do their part to help this delicious sweet exist? This delectable dessert comes from cocoa beans, which grow on cocoa trees in tropical rain forests. But those trees couldn't survive without the help of a menagerie of rain forest critters: a pollen-sucking midge, an aphid-munching anole lizard, brain-eating coffin fly maggots—they all pitch in to help the cocoa tree survive. A secondary layer of text delves deeper into statements such as "Cocoa flowers can't bloom without cocoa leaves . . . and maggots," explaining the interdependence of the plants and animals in the tropical rain forests. Two wise-cracking bookworms appear on every page, adding humor and further commentary, making this book accessible to readers of different ages and reading levels. Back matter includes information about cocoa farming and rain forest preservation, as well as an author's note.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 740L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 16 customer reviews

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Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4-6 "Chocolate and monkeys may seem worlds apart, but as Stewart and Young point out in their clear text, it takes monkeys (and other critters) to scatter the cocoa beans (seeds) throughout the rain forest. Munching on the soft, tasty pulp lining the pods as they travel through the trees, the

monkeys discard the not-so-tasty beans, scattering them indiscriminately. In a format slightly reminiscent of the old "This Is the House That Jack Built," the authors present a simply written look at a complex ecosystem encompassed by one tree's life cycle. Flowers, midges, leaves, maggots, ants, lizards, roots, and more all form parts of the process of producing the cocoa beans so essential to our candy bars and brownies. In a lighter note, two "bookworms" provide an amusing counterpoint in a tiny triangle at the bottom of the page. Wong's realistic watercolors stretch across the pages in warm cocoa browns and soft greens, with occasional splashes of rosy pink. Appended is a page pleading for more rain-forest preservation (not much mention of cocoa plantations), another with lists of things to do to make one's life "greener," and still another with an author's note on the origin and development of the book. For slightly older readers, a more traditional look may be found in Adrianna Morganelli's *staid The Biography of Chocolate* (Crabtree, 2006), but Stewart's book has more visual appeal (and then there are those monkeys...).  
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Melissa Stewart is the award-winning author of more than 150 science books for children. She holds degrees in biology and science journalism. Recent books include *UNDER THE SNOW* (Peachtree, 2009) and the *A Place for* series (Peachtree). She lives in Acton, Massachusetts.

It's a great book, explaining how so many things in nature are related. The two little bookworms in the corner are a perfect humorous addition for this age group. It didn't get 5 stars because the monkeys really are a very small part of the book, but I can recommend this without reservation.

it was a little harder than I expected for the students to read. However the information was wonderful. The student who could read it, enjoyed it.

Melissa Stewart is the best and I just love this book! If you are a non-formal or formal environmental educator- you really need this book!

My daughter used the book at school for her 1st grade class. They enjoyed the book and will use it next year.

The story is great but it is a bit long to hold a 4th grader's attention.

This book demonstrates that you can do real science in a way that kids will enjoy. Not only does Stewart tell the story of the cocoa tree, but she deftly conveys the message of an interdependent ecosystem, all in the framework of an entertaining story. The illustrations are beautiful and scientifically accurate, and how many children's authors bother to consult a leading expert on the subject matter in order to tell the story accurately? Although the book is aimed at a young audience, the story of the cocoa tree is one that would interest any chocolate lover!

If you're like most people on earth, you are rather fond of chocolate. And if you're more like I am, you dream about it, crave and frankly, live for it. So why not learn all you can about magical cocoa beans that satisfy your taste buds like no other food can? For starters, cocoa pods are the fruits that grow on cocoa trees, and throughout the pages of *No Monkeys, No Chocolate*, what these beans need to grow and thrive will unfold in a most fascinating fashion. The way the authors wrote this book is very clever. Many of the two-page spreads have headings summarizing what the beans can't live without. For example, *Cocoa Beans Cannot Develop Without Coco Pods*, *Cocoa Pods Can't form Without Cocoa Flowers* and...*Midges and Cocoa Flowers Can't Bloom Without Cocoa Leaves...and Maggots*. We learn intriguing facts about how the plants depend on the ecosystem of the rainforest - from the earth to the animals - to produce the coveted beans. There's even a page about how the trees are protected from damaging leaf-cutter ants, which are close to my heart, as these are incredibly powerful insects I talk about in every author visit I do myself. All the many facts in this story are fascinating, and will educate and entertain, not only children, but also teachers and parents. I read it twice to soak it all in, and I loved every minute of it. I also enjoyed the tiny Smart Aleck cartoon bookworms in the corners of the pages and their humorous, yet educational comments. I'm sure you will too. By now I'm also sure you're wondering about the wonderful title of this book and the role monkeys play in the survival of cocoa trees, but you didn't expect me to give that away, now did you? You'll have to read it yourself. *No Monkeys, No Chocolate* will make readers want to learn all they can to preserve our precious rainforests. The book also introduces them to how an ecosystem works in harmony, and how each part of the process involved plays its own crucial role. The illustrations by Nicole Wang are colorful, entertaining and wonderfully detailed, guiding the reader through the entire growing process. Two incredibly qualified authors penned this book., and their expertise will impress and inspire young readers. And hopefully they too will want to study science. (Be sure to read the Author's Note in the back of the book.)

Who doesn't love monkeys? And who doesn't love chocolate? The title alone is enough to draw readers in, and to discover the fascinating interconnectedness of nature that does indeed link monkeys and chocolate. This multi-layered book begs for repeat readings. First, to enjoy the building-block main text. Then back again, to read the in-depth text that explains the fragile balances in the rain forest habitat that produce cocoa beans. (Gross-out loving kids will love some of these details - no brain-eating maggots, no chocolate!) A third layer of text has spunky bookworms making pun-filled comments as they hang out on the pages while reading the book. Lush, detailed artwork lets readers discover something new each time they open the book. Fascinating back matter shares the latest research on rain forest cocoa groves, what we can do to help, and the author's journey from idea to book. Monkeys and chocolate are a winning combination!

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