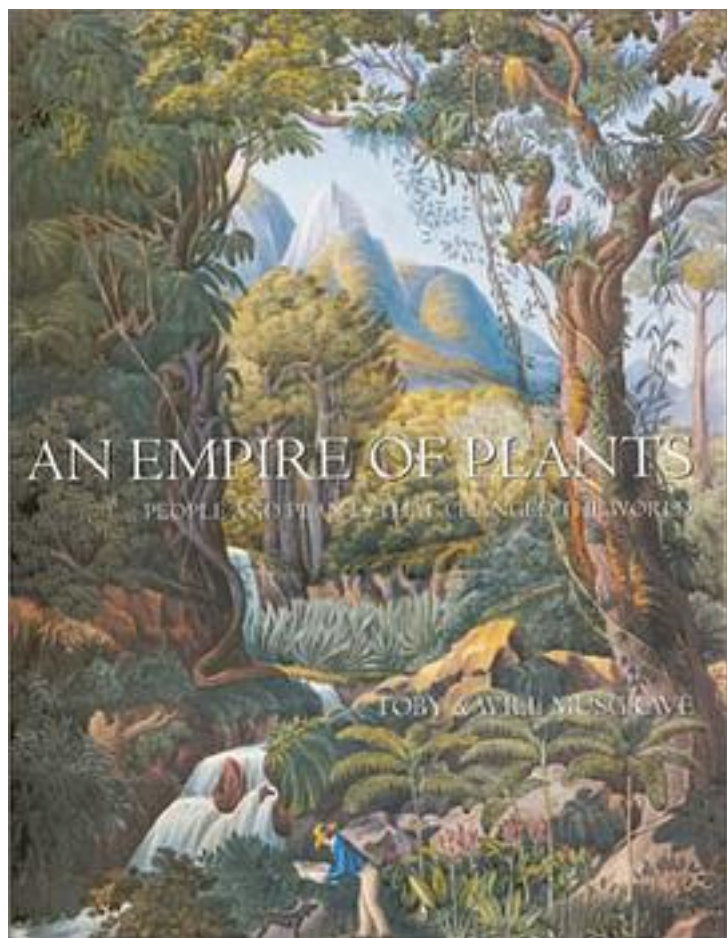


An Empire of Plants



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For centuries, from foodstuffs and fabrics to medicine and industrial materials, plants have dominated trade between countries. Possession of rare spices, sweets, and narcotics could mean enviable wealth and power. In quest of these desired products

and the income they brought, explorers ventured forth, risking death as they traveled unknown seas. Here is the story of seven plants--tobacco, sugar, cotton, tea, poppies, quinine, and rubber--and how Europe's hunger for them led to the Age of Empire...and turned world history upside down. Not only did these crops ensure the commercial success of America and Europe, but they became the catalyst for piracy, smuggling, addiction, and the slave trade--the darker side of the golden profits. With fascinating contemporary illustrations.

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