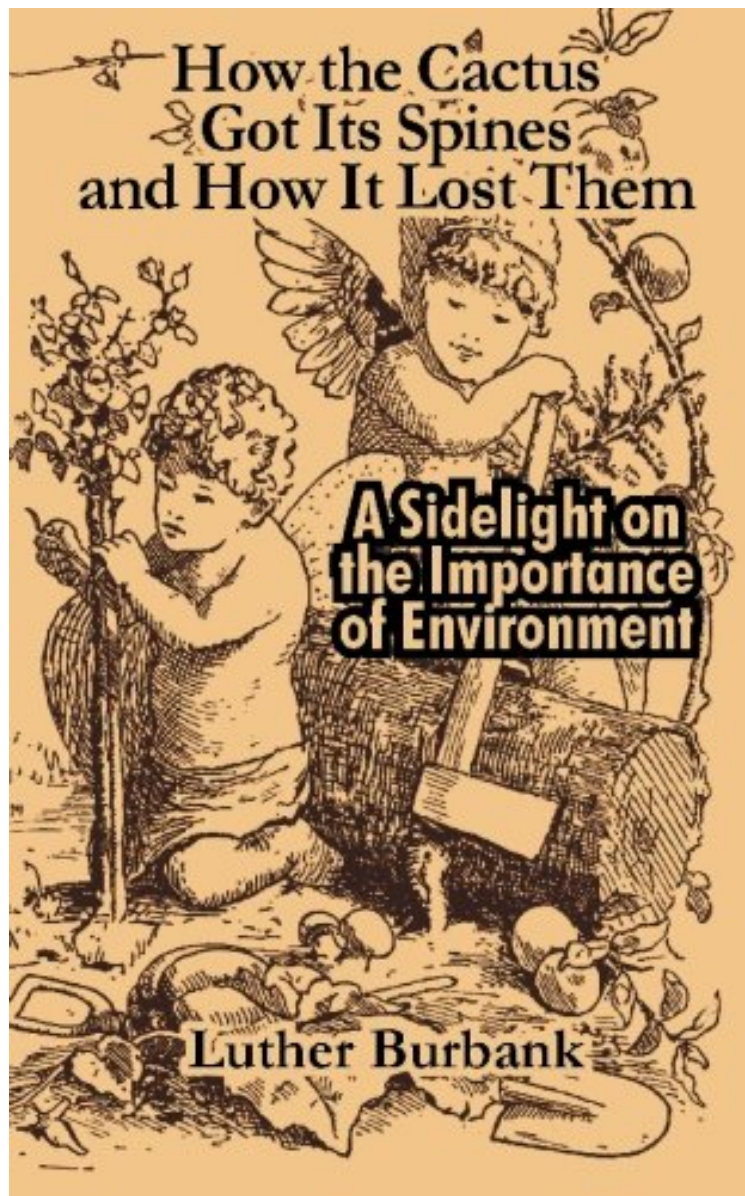


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How the Cactus Got Its Spines and How It Lost Them: A Sidelight on the Importance of Environment

Luther Burbank

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About the Author Luther Burbank (1849-1926) was a friend of Jack London, Helen Keller, Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. During his working lifetime he probably contributed or introduced more plants than any other single American in our history. Many of his productions have been of great importance to horticulture, past and present. Besides the Burbank potato, he produced new tomato, corn, squash, pea, and asparagus forms; a spineless cactus useful in cattle feeding; and many new flowers, especially lilies and the famous Shasta daisy. Burbank was not connected with a learned institution and indeed had little scientific training. Starting his professional life as a market gardener in Massachusetts about 1870, he attempted to improve his vegetables by crossing varieties.