Mathematics and Optimal Form (Scientific American Library) by Anthony Tromba

Makes One Think

My Personal Review:
As children we all asked similar questions, "Why doesn't the tree keep on growing", "Why is a whale/fish/snake shaped as it is?"  "Why can't I fly?"
As we grow older we stop asking the questions but at the same time do not know the answers. This book goes a long way not only on explaining why animals, plants, stars, planets and dust have certain shapes. It also is useful in explaining why giraffes don't grow to be 800 feet tall or why a tree isn't as big as a skyscraper.But that is only one part. The other discussion concerns the recurring shapes found in nature (and apparently throughout the Universe), and I am talking about more than the proverbial snow flake. Mathematics is kept to a minimum and pictures, diagrams, illustrations and drawings are plentiful. The author attempts to tell WHY certain shapes seem universal and then migrate that concept from the inantimate to the living world to explain shapes in nature. This is a book that deserves multiple, leisurely readings.

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