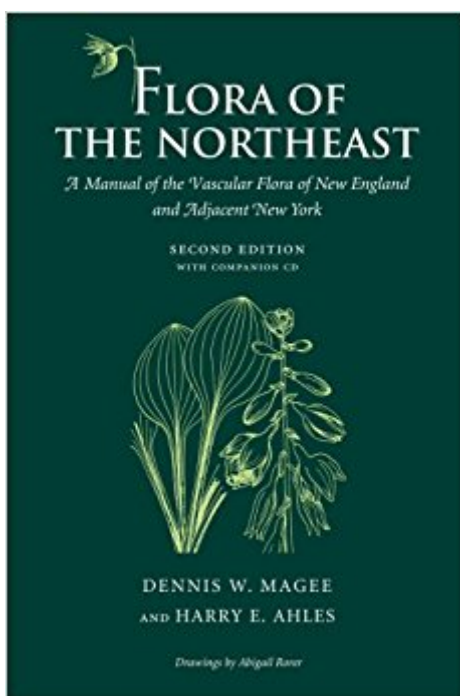


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Flora Of The Northeast: A Manual Of The Vascular Flora Of New England And Adjacent New York



Synopsis

Designed as both a reference work and a year-round field manual, this volume contains more than 2,400 range maps and 995 line drawings, designed to clarify descriptions used in the keys. For botanists, naturalists, and students interested in an up-to-date treatment of the vascular flora of greater New England, it has proved to be an invaluable resource. The geographic scope of the work extends from the Canadian border south through Long Island and west to the Hudson River. The "General Keys" section contains fourteen keys that include such groups as aquatic plants, vines, and woody plants in winter condition. For both woody and herbaceous families, the keys cover flowering as well as fruiting conditions and rely heavily on the use of vegetative features to extend the utility of the book beyond the reproductive period. The "Descriptive Flora" section includes keys to all of the genera and species, descriptions of the families and genera, and accounts of the individual species. The latter incorporates information on wetland site index, rare status, wildlife food value, food and medicinal value for humans, and poisonous or hallucinogenic properties. This revised edition includes an updating of plant scientific names that changed since the first edition and an alphabetized list of plant families with page numbers on the inside front cover for easy reference. This edition also includes a new CD-ROM with a multiple-entry identification guide, hundreds of accompanying photographic images of genera, an illustrated glossary, and page reference numbers to genus descriptions in the manual. Presenting a wealth of scientifically accurate information in a precise and clear format, this volume serves as a reference work, as a textbook for classes in plant identification, and as a field manual.

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Customer Reviews

"Belongs on every public and academic library shelf in the Northeast, and will be a valuable reference for years to come." *— American Reference Books Annual* "Comprehensive and fascinating" *— even for readers far outside this manual's targeted region. Many plants discussed can be found throughout North America, and the flora's notes on food value for humans and wildlife and on medicinal and poisonous properties plus an index that includes proper plant names extend the readership beyond a professional audience.* *— American Scientist* "Flora of the Northeast, in all an exceptionally well done flora, is a good example of a scholarly botanical product that will be both enjoyed and used by a wide audience, including not only motivated amateurs, but also hikers, wildflower enthusiasts, and gardeners." *— Taxon* "A useful feature in this edition is a random access identification key in CD-ROM format that includes color photographs of all genera in the text. This easy-to-use key likely will be a good resource for anyone preferring to identify plants using electronic aids." *— Choice* "This flora will be a valuable addition to the shelf of any New England botanist" *— for use both in the field and as a reference work.* *— Plant Science Bulletin*

Dennis W. Magee serves as a vice president at Normandeau Associates Environmental Consultants. The late Harry E. Ahles was curator of the Herbarium at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

This Flora, though technical, is exceptionally useful. Drawings are great and uncommon terms are defined. A must have for anyone serious about northeastern flora.

As far as printing and binding are concerned this is an extremely well-produced book that is a pleasure to handle. On initial examination the book appears to be a valuable technical guide to the vascular plants of the northeast of the United States, with keys using features that are visible with the naked eye (or at most a 10x or 20x lens), many decent line drawings, and maps for most species. However, a review of the first edition (1997) by Dr. Richard S. Mitchell (then botanist of the New York State Museum) in the New York Flora Association Newsletter (2000) was highly critical of the book. Users of the Magee and Ahles book should perhaps double-check the information in it and especially any identifications made using its keys against a standard work such as Gleason and Cronquist. In my view the biggest shortcoming of the book is that identification of species is entirely based on the keys as there are no species descriptions. What this means is that if you want to

check your identification using a feature that is not used in the keys you have no means of doing so. For example, you might know the flower color of a plant you are trying to identify and would like to know if this feature is consistent with the identification you made using the keys based on other features. If the book contained descriptions of the species (including flower color) you could at least determine if the flower color feature corroborates your identification based on the features used in the key. Without such species descriptions this is obviously not possible. I can understand the omission of species descriptions if it was motivated by a pressing need to keep the book concise. However, keeping the book concise does not appear to be a high priority because the author includes information that is not essential for identification. For example, for most genera and species a translation or explanation is given (within parentheses) for the scientific name, hardly an important piece of information for identification. Curiously, in most cases the translations or explanations of scientific names are those given by Fernald in his editions of Gray's Manual of Botany! What seems even more pointless than the explanations of scientific names is the inclusion of information such as 'Food Value for Humans', 'Wildlife Food Value', 'Medicinal Value', etc. In a book such as this which must have identification of taxa as its main purpose the inclusion of such non-essential information (the validity of which in some cases must be questionable, e.g. medicinal values) at the cost of species descriptions makes little sense to me. I am not particularly happy making these comments because I have used this book constantly since purchasing it and found it quite useful, but the decision to omit even brief species descriptions seems so shortsighted that I feel compelled to draw attention to this. (This is an expanded version of my original review.)

This book is indispensable if you are interested in the native flora of New England and New York. It is an up-to-date and comprehensive list of all known species in the region, and their status. The range maps are helpful. A fine companion to Newcomb.

I have only dipped into this comprehensive new publication but am pleased to have done so. It will become a valued volume in my library.

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