

## Arnoldia Reviews

Wild Flowers of Greece, paintings by Niki Goulandris, text by Constantine N. Goulimis, edited by W. T. Stearn.

Visitors to Greece return to their homes with unforgettable memories of the beauty of the architectural treasures of a past era, and enthusiastic over the natural loveliness of the native wild flowers. This handsome volume indicates clearly that the wild flowers are equally appreciated by some local citizens. Constantine N. Goulimis, a successful lawyer, spent the last twenty years of his life collecting specimens of native plants and compiling notes on them. Mrs. Niki A. Goulandris, an extremely talented artist of Athens, has painted many of the specimens Mr. Goulimis gathered. Life-sized reproductions of 103 species are included within this volume. Dr. William T. Stearn of the British Museum (Natural History) revised and edited the text; and the volume has been issued as the first publication of the Goulandris Botanical Museum, an institution formed to further studies of the Flora of Greece. Sir George Taylor of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, has written an introduction including a brief historical summary of studies of the plants of Greece and of the collaboration of British botanists with local scholars. The multiple collaboration resulted in a splendid reference volume sure to charm the browser, offer botanical information to the professional botanist, and direct the tourist to the right time and the right place to see the wild flowers of Greece at their best.

The decision to prepare a series of illustrated volumes on the flora of Greece was made in 1954. During the next nine years the collector worked closely with the artist to coordinate botanical notes with paintings of living plant materials. The accuracy and beauty of the illustrations reveal that a mutual understanding was achieved. The text was unfinished at the time of Dr. Goulimis' death, and Dr. Stearn explains his role as editor in his preface to the volume. The author decided that formal descriptions were not necessary since the paintings were life size, and as references would be given to standard floras published through 1934. For the new species described from Dr. Goulimis' collections, or published subsequent to 1934, the editor has republished the original description, in Latin, so that Wild Flowers



of Greece is in a sense an illustrated supplement to the basic botanical description.

A paragraph on the distribution of each species offers not only the location and altitude but the flowering period as well. The text accompanying the plates commonly makes reference to monographs or the pertinent comments of other authors. The nomenclature and arrangement of the *Flora Europea* has been adopted for families already treated. Many of the plants illustrated are in cultivation in Europe and in the United States, and the reference to Gardener's Chronicle and the Botanical Magazine are welcome as these often supply cultural information.

In a work of this excellent visual appeal the author's opening statements are often read quickly if at all. In this volume they form a major contribution. This is not only a personal account of some 220 expeditions representing journeys of over 200,000 miles and the ascent of over 70 mountains on the mainland and the islands of Greece, but an excellent phytogeographic account of the area where many of these unusual species occur. Dr. Goulimis calls them "botanical paradises" and his enthusiasm is contagious.

Greek history and mythology play a role in the origin of plant names and the uses of plants. The author frequently includes such information in the introduction or the commentaries on species.

For those individuals interested in the preservation of wild flowers Dr. Goulimis offers pertinent observations on the results of their protection in Greece. The area around Mt. Athos, where 20 endemic species occur, received its initial protection from grazing animals in a ruling of the Emperor of Byzantium, Vasilios the Macedonian, who ruled from 866 to 886 A.D. This may be therefore the world's oldest established wild flower sanctuary.

*Wild Flowers of Greece* is a folio volume not convenient for transport in the field. Perhaps someday the Goulandris Botanical Museum or the distributors will consider a volume of reduced page size which could be enjoyed in the field and used for identification.

R.A.H.

Goulimis, Constantine N., and Goulandris, Niki A., edited by W. T. Stearn, *Wild Flowers of Greece*. Kifissia, Greece, The Goulandris Botanical Museum, 1970. Distributed by Academic Press, New York. xxxii + 214 pages, 103 plates in color (un-numbered), folio, index. \$40.00.



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