

(with the exception of *Platanthera ciliaris*, which is probably extirpated in Ontario). This is particularly true of some of our most abundant species, such as *Platanthera hyperborea*. Why was a photograph taken in Newfoundland included for this species? Non-Ontario photographs are also included for *Platanthera clavellata*, *P. dilatata*, and *P. grandiflora*. Several other photographs lack locality data.

The keys included throughout the book, for genera, species, and varieties, are easily understood, and the characters used are reliable. In only one case was the usual dichotomous arrangement of leads not used. A trichotomy is used to deal with a hybrid between *Listera auriculata* and *L. convallarioides*. Some of the species treatments, especially for some of the less common species, contain a great deal of interesting historical information in addition to the biological data that is routinely included.

A few inconsistencies appear here and there in the text. In some places, authorities for infraspecific taxa are omitted. There are also a few literature citations that appear in the text but not in the *Literature Cited* section. The citation of a basionym for a nomenclatural combination that had been published previously is probably a

holdover from an earlier draft of the manuscript. One problem which will make this book less easy to use is the lack of cross-referencing between species accounts and their distribution maps (which are all placed together at the end of the main text). Field botanists will want to refer to these maps continuously, but they will have to do their own cross-referencing. There are a few mapping errors and omissions in areas where I have some field experience, but the overall patterns of distribution reflect the current state of our knowledge.

All in all, my impression of this book is extremely favorable. I consider it to be a thorough, interesting, and useful account of the orchid family in Ontario. The fact that it is a paperback, and is reasonably priced, means that virtually anyone can own a copy, but it also means that it will become tattered in the field pretty quickly. Nevertheless, it will serve as a valuable reference for all field botanists and other orchid enthusiasts in Ontario, and throughout northeastern North America.

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Toronto Islands: Plant Communities and Noteworthy Species

By Steve Varga. 1987. Toronto Field Naturalists, Toronto. ii + 22 pp., illus. \$2 plus \$0.25 postage.

This small booklet about one of Toronto's most significant botanical sites is presumably intended to increase the public's awareness of the natural values of the Toronto Islands. These islands are heavily used for recreational activities during the summer months. There are also permanent homes, an airport, a filtration plant, etc., on these islands at the mouth of Toronto's harbor.

There are chapters on the history of the islands, and on their plant communities. Six communities (wet meadows, lagoon edges, beach strands, dunes, cottonwood woodlands, and sand prairies) are briefly described, and some of the common or unusual species of vascular plants are discussed and illustrated. The illustrations are generally good.

This is not a technical publication, nor is it a glossy booklet that might attract the attention of the recreational public. Although some interesting

species and plant associations are discussed, this is not a complete flora, nor a vegetation analysis, of the islands. There are a few technical errors in the booklet, but I won't dwell on those. If the booklet was intended as a guide for visitors to the islands, then I would have placed the notice to stay on the trails, avoid collecting, and carry away garbage, on the inside front cover. As it is, this notice is on the inside back cover, following an appendix which is probably the last thing that a casual visitor would read.

To be honest, I am at a loss to define the niche of this publication. Even the illustrations (or most of them) have appeared elsewhere (in the Toronto Field Naturalist's newsletter).

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