

BOOK REVIEW

A Guide to the Algae of New England as Reported in the Literature from 1829–1984, Parts I and II (in 2 volumes), by LeBaron C. Colt, Jr. 1999. vi+1019 pp. maps. \$100.00 plus shipping (softbound). Available from L. C. Colt, 61 Philip St., Medfield, MA 02052.

The two volume compilation by Barry Colt represents an exhaustive and important documentation of New England's algal flora, covering both microalgae and seaweeds. The value of such work is priceless, providing critical information regarding historical records, biodiversity patterns, biogeographic comparisons, potential environmental impacts, etc. The compendium represents a "labor of love" from a very talented and committed phycologist. Its dedication to Hannah T. Croasdale and the late Gerald W. Prescott is particularly fitting, as they both produced analogous and exhaustive publications on freshwater microalgae. Having followed the author's progress for more than a decade I can only imagine the difficulties, frustrations, effort, and many, many years involved! Certainly he is to be commended for finalizing such a major synopsis on New England algae.

The two-volume compendium contains a general Introduction (3 pages) describing the total project, plus four other major sections. The first section (the New England Region, 3 pages) describes the area, including all of the counties where collections have been made; some special geographical areas (e.g. Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island) are designated when individual counties are not easily ascribed. Generally the format follows that of a vascular plant flora, with listings of algal taxa given by counties and a standardized format utilized for authors, dates, etc. Two maps describe specific site identifications and locations within the region. The second section (The Algae of New England 1829–1984, 775 pages) gives a detailed listing of all known algae (i.e. freshwater and marine microalgae, plus seaweeds) from New England during this 155 year period; it is by far the largest part of the compendium, being approximately three-quarters of the entire text. A standardized format is used for the listings of algal taxa, being initially arranged alphabetically by genus and then by descending hierarchy (i.e. species, variety, forma, or other taxonomic levels as appropriate). Collection data for each taxon is

also reported alphabetically by state and then chronologically by date of publication. A series of fourteen examples is given, using a uniform set of abbreviations for different states and counties. A third section (Authors and Contributors, 43 pages) gives a synopsis of author name(s), plus dates of publication(s) and pages on which the listed species are reported. Three levels of author citations are given: (1) individual, (2) coauthored, and (3) contributed material cited by other authors; all of these listings are arranged chronologically according to publication dates. The fourth section (Literature Cited, 175 pages) gives an exhaustive synopsis of supporting literature that is arranged alphabetically. It is also annotated to provide a variety of specific information: (1) site(s) of collections (i.e. state, county, or specific geographical area); (2) habitat (brackish, freshwater, marine, and terrestrial); (3) the presence of maps; (4) the presence or absence of descriptive materials; (5) the occurrence of figures and plates; and (6) the numbers of genera, species, varieties, forma, etc.

Barry Colt has synthesized an exhaustive set of information, providing direct citations to diverse taxa, authors, and the potentials for detailed cross-referencing. I've already found it very helpful in identifying several references and geographical data; the volumes also provide a logical tool for diverse searches, etc. While I am genuinely impressed with the author's efforts, no work of such a magnitude can be finalized without minor errors. For example, some typos and grammatical errors are evident within the text, including a few sentences that are incomplete or have mixed tenses. I assume that the term alpha really means alphabetical, but it is not clarified in several places. A few of the descriptive sections seem to have been run-on, while some handwritten parts also seem to be present. Lastly, the second part (i.e. Volume II) might be improved by a brief transitional paragraph showing its context and interrelationships to the first part (Volume I). No doubt these minor points can be rectified if there are future revisions or updates of literature. In summary, my few constructive comments should in no sense take away from the importance and value of this compendium. Congratulations to the author for a fine job!

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