

Arnoldia Reviews

Trees of Pennsylvania, the Atlantic States and the Lake States. Hui-lin Li. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 276 pp., illustrated. \$17.50.

This extraordinary volume is primarily a reference book but of a special kind — it has both winter and summer keys. The usual leaves, flowers and fruits of trees are described and depicted, but in addition spring and fall leaf color are noted as well as winter bark and bud. There are discussions of habitat, hardiness, cultural needs, and ecological companions for all the trees cited. The geographical distribution of the various species is mentioned.

Everything is in this volume to aid the serious student in finding answers to his questions (by student is meant the amateur tree-lover rather than the academician). Basic botany and taxonomy are included; there is also a very high component of aesthetic pleasure in the trees depicted and the physical make-up of the book itself. The craftsmanship in the drawings by the author's wife is of the highest order, and the artist is obviously a knowledgeable observer. The author's descriptions seem to be accurate and the choice of accompanying photographs is superb. The work itself is on the finest quality paper, exquisitely printed, and no typographical errors were observed! The reviewer has seldom met a volume as admirable.

ELINORE B. TROWBRIDGE

The Enchanted World of Alpine Flowers. Dr. Elfrune Wendelberger, translation by Oscar Konstandt and Gisela Farnworth. Innsbruck, Austria: Pinguin Verlag. 88 pp., illustrated. Austrian S 27.80.

In this small volume the interested reader will find no construction details for rock gardens, no discussion of ventilation systems for the alpine house, and no suggestions for the domestication of even the most docile of the alpine flora. No, this is not a rock gardening book at all, but a song in celebration of the natural beauty of the Alps.

The book is divided into sections that consider the flora of the Alps on the basis of altitude, local habitat and season of bloom. Additional sections briefly deal with the glacial period and local common names and traditions surrounding the plants. Dr. Wendelberger's concern for the delicate balance of life in the mountains is evident throughout the book, periodically surfacing in a description of once-rich meadows despoiled by man's careless use, or in a comment about the tourist's role in the gradual decline of native plant populations.

Although Dr. Wendelberger credits the book's success to its lavish adornment with full-page color illustrations, the real charm of the volume lies in her own love of the mountains and her ability to convey this love to the reader. Her prose is lyrical despite occasional lapses which may be due to difficulties in translation, each phrase as delicately balanced as the mountain flora itself.

This is not a book to which the collector of alpinists will turn again and again for information. There is nothing here for which a more com-

prehensive reference does not already exist. Rather, this is a book for the lover of flowers, offered as a cordial invitation to spend a rainy afternoon visiting, or revisiting, the enchanted world of alpine flowers.

JENNIFER HICKS

The Laurel Book. Richard A. Jaynes. New York: Hafner Press. 180 pp., illustrated. \$10.95.

Subtitled "Rediscovery of the North American Laurels," Jaynes' book on laurels (*Kalmia*) fills a gap in the horticultural literature by bringing together much of the available knowledge on these beautiful plants. His book will doubtless please the growing band of laurel enthusiasts, as well as all horticulturalists interested in shrubs, particularly those who grow rhododendrons.

All aspects of growing laurels are considered, much attention being paid to their genetics, breeding and hybridisation, subjects on which Jaynes himself has carried out much original work. Propagation of laurels, both from seed and vegetatively, is dealt with in detail, as are all aspects of growing the adult plant and of protecting it against pests. J. E. Ebinger contributes two chapters, one on laurels in the wild and the other on their toxicity.

It should perhaps be mentioned that the classification of *Kalmia* proposed by Southall and Hardin (referred to briefly by Ebinger), differs considerably in detail from that adopted by Ebinger himself. Southall and Hardin recognize more species of *Kalmia*, but fewer varieties and forms. Regarding the latter, the wisdom of recognizing forms based on polypetalous and apetalous variants may perhaps be questioned; the "apetala form" mentioned on pp. 26 and 27 is not recognized by Ebinger in his formal revision. It is not clear just what the 25 distinct traits of mountain laurels referred to on pp. 35 and 157 are, the table 13-1 listing many more than 25 variations. A number of illustrations, unfortunately including some of the colored ones, lack clarity; printing errors are pleasantly few.

All in all, this is a useful book which should stimulate more interest in one of the finer groups of shrubs native to North America.

PETER F. STEVENS

One Hundred Great Garden Plants. William H. Frederick, Jr. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. vi + 207 pp., illustrated. \$15.00.

With few exceptions, this book admirably fulfills its self-avowed purpose — to introduce the author's personal choices of the 100 best trees, shrubs and groundcovers for use in the home landscape. One might, of course, take issue with his selection, for everyone has favorites; but one can hardly find fault with his presentation. There is an unmistakable impression that the author is on intimate terms with each and every one of the 100 plants mentioned; this is borne out when one learns that each specimen included is cultivated by Mr. Frederick on his own 25-acre property. It is, no doubt, from daily contact such as this that the author is able to write with such feeling about his choices.

Each specimen is presented in a one- or two-page essay and is accompanied by a color photograph that very effectively captures the nature of the individual plant. In addition to plant descriptions, the essays include observations on care and intriguing historical vignettes. The author is not content to merely offer descriptive paragraphs on the plant material; there is a multitude of good advice on how best to fit the specific plant into the home landscape. He discusses color, texture and structural form, and freely dispenses advice on companion plantings to further enhance the appeal of the various plants he has chosen.

The essays alone are sufficient reason to purchase this volume, but there are other reasons as well. The print is easily readable, and a very pleasant balance, both visually and content-wise, exists between the written words and the photographs, which are exceedingly lovely and capture subtle nuances of most of the plants mentioned. Indeed, it is hard to find much fault at all with this very pleasing little book. It would make a lovely housewarming gift for the new homeowner.

MARGO W. REYNOLDS

How to Grow Wildflowers and Wild Shrubs and Trees in Your Own Garden. Hal Bruce. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 294 pp. + v., illustrated. \$12.95.

Harold Bruce is one of that small but very fortunate band of people who are born with eyes that see and with hearts made to sing by the beauty of the world about us. He lives in Delaware which he has explored quite thoroughly, but he also has made many excursions to the north, south and west. He writes with much charm and with a great deal of knowledge. Nearly every page contains useful advice and bits of information new even to the fairly knowledgeable reader. The book makes no pretense of being a botanical textbook, but Bruce discusses some subjects in considerable detail: the trilliums, the hardy hollies, the pine tree tribe and others.

He describes many trips to the seashore, the barrens and the piedmont, and the reader feels himself included in these explorations and is delighted with the companionship offered and the very interesting information given. I was very pleased to find properly extolled the many virtues of the hobblebush (*Viburnum alnifolium*), — perhaps the most beautiful of our deciduous, flowering shrubs — which grows well in quite deep shade. In describing trees that contribute to autumn color, the author, however, makes only passing reference to the sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) as one that turns a good yellow. (Perhaps sugar maples do not thrive in the latitude of Delaware.)

The book contains some 28 beautiful colored plates and the rather wide margins are adorned with very good line drawings and also with short synoptic sentences such as students often scribble on the margins of their textbooks. This book is warmly recommended both for the pleasure of its reading and for the information contained.

ALLEN BRAILEY

Ornamental Conifers. Charles R. Harrison. New York: Hafner Press. 1975. 224 pp., illustrated. \$17.95.

"This book was designed to fill the long felt need for a popular all-colour guide to garden conifers, written and compiled in such a way as to be easily used and understood by the average home gardener." This introductory statement is well executed by the author in the production of a handsome volume featuring 516 superb illustrations of garden conifers, mostly cultivars, ranging from *Abies* to *Widdringtonia*; another 38 colored illustrations of conifers in garden use follow. No other volume approaches the excellent color reproduction so essential in distinguishing horticultural varieties in conifers. The vast majority of the photos were from New Zealand locations, the author's home country, and are of young plants. The author knows his plants and the descriptions often indicate this familiarity, as "an irregular, dumpy little heap of cheerful, dark-green foliage bearing little resemblance to its towering forest parent."

The general descriptions and suggestions on cultural methods are good, and a helpful glossary is supplied. Only the few paragraphs on diseases seem inadequate for United States readers.

RICHARD A. HOWARD

* AN AFTERNOON WITH NURSERY CATALOGS

This session will be devoted to studying various catalogs offering seeds and plants for both indoors and outdoors. Common and unusual material will be reviewed. A remarkable opportunity to share your experiences with others and get an early start on your spring gardening.

Tuesday, March 8

1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m.

Fee: \$3.00; Friends \$2.00

Instructors: George Pride, Assoc. Horticulturist, and Richard Weaver, Taxonomist

* AN EVENING WITH NURSERY CATALOGS

The content of this course is identical to the one above. Fees and instructors are also the same.

Tuesday, March 15

7:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.

Meet at the Red Schoolhouse, Case Estates, 133 Wellesley St., Weston

** (These events are not offered in conjunction with the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.)*



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