

BOOK REVIEW

NOEL H. HOLMGREN, PATRICIA K. HOLMGREN, JAMES L. REVEAL, AND COLLABORATORS. 2012. **Intermountain Flora, Vascular Plants of the Intermountain West, U.S.A. Volume Two, Part A: Subclasses Magnoliidae–Caryophyllidae.** (ISBN: 978-0-89327-520-4, hbk.). New York Botanical Garden Press, 2900 Southern Blvd., Bronx, New York 10458-5126, U.S.A. (**Orders:** <http://www.nybgpress.org>, 718-817-8721, fax 718-817-8842). \$150.00, 731 pp, color frontispiece, grayscale epilogue, line drawings throughout, 7½" × 10½".

With publication of Volume 2A, the Intermountain Flora Team brings to a successful close a decades-long, multigenerational effort to document the plant life of the colder drylands occupying the large region in the western United States more or less bounded by the Sierra Nevada to the west, the Rocky Mountains to the east, and stretching from central Idaho south to northwestern Arizona. Originally conceived by Bassett Maguire around 1940, the ensuing research became a driving force in the careers of Arthur Holmgren and Arthur Cronquist, as well as the botanists who authored this final volume. Publication of the six volumes in eight big books (most floristicians have difficulty estimating space requirements for their works) took forty years, but time alone is a poor estimate of the scope of the exploration and research that went into the project. The full series treats 3,847 species in 898 genera. For those who do not own these wonderful books, the publisher is currently offering the whole set for \$520 (a \$640 value). There also are rumors of a planned ninth volume with a comprehensive index and a set of updates and errata.

Volume 2A of the work, which includes the beginning of the dicots in the Cronquistian classification system, treats 147 genera, 611 species, and 301 additional infrataxa in 31 families, including such regionally diverse important groups as the Papaveraceae, Ranunculaceae, Polygonaceae, Caryophyllaceae, Chenopodiaceae, Amaranthaceae, Nyctaginaceae, Montiaceae, and Cactaceae. The presentation is identical to that in earlier volumes, with indented keys and detailed descriptions followed by range/ecology statements and very useful critical notes on taxonomic and other issues (along with copious literature citations). The treatments also include extensive synonyms, with complete citations of types. The numerous plates of line drawings (by several artists), which cover varying numbers of taxa per genus, are uniformly excellent in composition and detail. The drawings of Cactaceae are particularly beautiful. A useful addendum summarizes the 6 new combinations, 34 new typifications, and 1 new cytological report included in the volume. Throughout, the contents are encyclopedic and the treatment of any family or genus provides a marvelous introduction to the taxonomy, nomenclature, ecology, and uses for that group.

There is little to criticize in this enormous work. Perhaps some of the more recent volumes are a bit pricey, but sadly that has become the nature of the printed page. The lack of a comprehensive key to dicot families (such keys exist for the remaining major plant groups in other volumes) might be addressed in the proposed follow-up volume, as might a more detailed taxonomic summary of the plants in the series or a discussion of plants of conservation concern in the region (a 70-year study surely can offer a unique perspective on regional patterns of plant endangerment). However, such potential additions in no way diminish the present utility of the volumes. Between the burnt-orange covers of these volumes lies a treasure-trove of information and insights on the vascular plants unequaled for most other regions of the country. The authors, past and present, are to be congratulated on their persistence in seeing this project through to successful completion.—George Yatskievych, Missouri Botanical Garden, P.O. Box 299, St. Louis, Missouri 63166-0299, U.S.A.



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