

fers was published in 1933. This excellent manual, like Bailey's the result of work done at Cornell University, is, therefore, doubly welcome.

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***Rocky Mountain Alpines: The International Alpines Conference 1986***, edited by Jean Williams. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 1986. 300 pages. \$35.00.

JUDY GLATTSTEIN

When wildflowers are mentioned, people tend to think first of the ephemerals of the spring woods—trilliums, violets, bloodroot—then, perhaps, of "meadow gardening" pursued as an alternative to keeping a lawn. Rock gardening, for some reason, they distinguish from wildflower gardening. But ever since Reginald Farrer of England began writing on the virtues and shortcomings of alpine plants in the early years of this century, interest in them has grown. In the decades since, plants have been brought into cultivation from the mountain ranges of Europe and Asia. In 1934, the American Rock Garden Society was formed. At long last, wildflowers from the mountains of America are taking their rightful place as desirable plants for rock, or alpine, gardens both in the United States and abroad.

The Second Interim International Rock Garden Conference was held in Boulder Colorado, from June 28 through

July 3, 1986, its theme being "The Rocky Mountains, Backbone of the Continent." A book, *Rocky Mountain Alpines*, was prepared in advance of the Conference, like the Conference the shared responsibility of the American Rock Garden Society, the Denver Botanic Garden, and the Rock Mountain Chapter of the American Rock Garden Society. Over forty authorities on various aspects of the Rockies contributed material about their specialties. Hardbound and three hundred pages long, this hefty (8½ by 11 inches) book is no pocket guide for slipping into your pack as you scramble about above ten thousand feet. It is too big and heavy for that.

*Rocky Mountain Alpines* is definitely a book for the advanced amateur—rather than novice—in rock, or alpine, gardening. The Latin names of plants are used, as they should be, and familiarity with many of the plants is tacitly expected. Most chapters conclude with a list of references; there is also a bibliography of books and periodicals.

The book is divided into three parts: "The Roots of the Rockies," "Wild Rock Gardens of the Rockies," and "Rocky Mountain Plants in Cultivation." Black-and-white illustrations of plants and scenery and excellent four-page color sections scattered throughout the book enhance the text. "The Roots of the Rockies" covers the geology, climate, and early botanizing and rock gardening in the Rockies. Maps and charts give clear information on hardiness zones, solar radiation, and precipitation. "Wild Rock Gardens of the Rockies" is divided into five sections. Since it stretches some three thousand miles, from Canada into Mexico, there are regional differences in



the Rocky Mountain chain. The five sections deal with "Northern Rockies: Glacier and Muskeg," "Middle Rockies: Sagebrush and Scree," "Southern Rockies: Peaks and Parklands," "Colorado Plateau: Canyons and Color," and "Western Drylands: Plains and Plateaus." Chapters within each section describe a particular area, "walking" the reader onto a trail and describing plants to be found along the way. A map of the area to be discussed precedes each chapter.

For the rock gardener, Part Three (on Rocky Mountain plants in cultivation) is the most valuable part of the book. It, in turn, is divided into three sections. The first deals with Denver Botanic Gardens's experience with these plants in cultivation in the Rocky Mountains. It has six pages of valuable information on seed propagation. In my opinion, Denver Botanic Gardens have an excellent, world-class rock garden. The second section, "In the Garden: Adapting to Microclimates," is probably the most uneven portion of the book. I find it to be more of an eclectic grouping of information on the cultivation of plants than a discussion about adapting to microclimates. It deals with cultivation under lights and in troughs (containers), commercial production, cultivation in a rare-plant nursery and in dry sand, cultivation on hummocks, and the overall design of private gardens. The information on culture is good and should be helpful to gardeners attempting to cultivate plants from the drylands of the West in more humid climates. The third section, "Around the World: Adapting to Different Climates," has chapters on the cultivation of Rocky Mountain alpine plants in the Northeast, the Midwest, and the Northwest regions

of the United States; Great Britain; Iceland; Czechoslovakia; and Japan. This section, too, is uneven in quality. The information about climatic conditions and on providing proper growing conditions in the various countries or regions is helpful. Brief, one- or two-line items about individual plants are sometimes useful, often cryptic.

*Rocky Mountain Alpines* provides a guide to areas worth visiting for the sake of their floras, whetting the reader's appetite. Its discussions of propagation and cultivation lend hope to the lowland gardener. Most importantly, it focusses attention at last on the fascinating flora of the Rocky Mountains. Growers of exhibition dahlias probably will find little of interest in the book. Rock gardeners will love it.

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**Azaleas**, by Fred Galle. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 1985. 438 pages. \$65.00.

C. J. PATTERSON

There has been a need for a comprehensive book on azaleas for a long time, a situation aggravated by the avalanche of new information and registered cultivars over the last ten years. Dr. Fred C. Galle, retired director of Callaway Gardens in



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