

Pictorial Guide to the Mammals of North America

By Leonard Lee Rue III. 1967. Apollo Editions, Crowell, New York. 299 pp., illus. \$9.95.

This attractive book is more than a pictorial guide; it has two or three pages of text devoted to each of the 66 species discussed, so that besides being interesting to read, it should be useful as a reference source for laymen. It is written in the easy style made popular in the author's series *The World of the Beaver*, *The World of the Red Fox*, *The World of the Raccoon*, etc.

Rue's choice of mammals for this book is practical. He concentrates on large common species, including small mammals to round out the collection. If one is limited to one shrew, the short-tailed shrew *Blarina brevicauda* is the best-known example; if there are to be only two bats, the little brown (as a hibernating species) and the red (as a migrating one) are suitable representatives. It is odd, however, to have all marine mammals represented by Californian sea lions. Of the mammals discussed, only 13 are not found in Canada.

The many illustrations in this book will make it especially appealing to children. The photographs, most of them excellent, are all by the author, who has obviously traveled widely in North America. The small maps of North America suffer the problems of

all greatly reduced maps — the extent of the distribution of some species is underdone, and of others seemingly overdone. The badger and the cottontail are missing from Ontario, while the wolverine is represented in eastern Canada by a wide sweep of gray that belies its almost endangered status. The footprints are detailed but their arrangement into tracks is disappointing. Unless the gait an animal used to make the track is noted, it is usually impossible to tell which feet are which. For the black bear the forefeet are obviously different than the hind feet, but there is no legend indicating which is which, or how big either is.

The appendices include a brief mention of what mammals may be seen in the many federal, state, and provincial parks on this continent; a compilation with addresses of the bureaus, departments, and agencies that deal with wildlife; and a list by family of all the mammals present in North America together with their scientific names. The reference list is short with the most recent item 1964, underlining that this printing of the 1967 edition has not been updated.

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BOTANY

Plant Names

By T. S. Lindsay. 1976. Facsimile of 1923 edition. Gale Research Co., Boston, Massachusetts. vii + 93 pp. \$8.

This small book, designed for gardeners and naturalists, deals with two topics: the principles of botanical nomenclature, and the origins and meanings of plant names.

The International Code of Botanical Nomenclature did not exist when this book was first published. Some parts of Lindsay's discussion of the rules of nomenclature, based on the Vienna Rules of 1905, still apply, but other parts are no longer correct, e.g., "There is no accepted law as to names of varieties (i.e., cultivars). But botanists heed them not." In 1923, the Primulales could correctly be designated by the now-obsolete term "cohort," but even then the Primulaceae should not have been called a "division," nor was the recognition of botanical varieties considered to violate the principle of binary nomenclature. Those

seeking an introduction to botanical nomenclature must look to more authoritatively written and more modern works.

The names of plant genera, whether Latin or English, for which derivations are given are few, and appear to have been selected almost at random. Indexed under G, for example, there are only 21 Latin and 9 English names. Derivations of 10 of the Latin and 6 of the English names are scattered through the text; the others are merely classified as "commemorative" or according to their linguistic origins. The chances are, therefore, that a generic or common name which one might wish to look up will not be included. Fortunately, several books that provide more extensive lists of meanings and derivations for botanical and common names are now available. Even a dictionary is a superior reference for this purpose.

The definitions of specific epithets are more numerous, although in this area, too, this book falls far short of more recent works. There are, moreover, many inaccurate or vague definitions, e.g., "*oxycanthus* (sic), with sharp flowers"; "*racemosus*, full of clusters"; "*repens*, sudden, unexpected." There are no illustrations.

If no better works were available in 1923, this book

may then have been a useful addition to the popular literature of botany, but I see no reason to acquire it today.

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Wildflowers across the Prairies

By F. R. Vance, J. R. Jowsey, and J. S. McLean. 1977. Western Producer Prairie Books, Saskatoon. 214 pp., illus. Cloth \$14.95; paper \$8.95.

In the words of the second author, "This book on wildflowers is, in general, a book to 'open the eyes' of people of all ages as they look at the flowers of this region of North America. It is for travellers who come here from far lands, and for those who have lived on the prairies. It is a book for farmers and summer cottage residents, for those who visit our parks, and for those who walk or drive in cities and along the roads of Saskatchewan and neighboring areas. It is a book for all students of the natural world." There is no doubt that the over 400 excellent color photographs will help serve this purpose in the prairies of Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, Montana, the Dakotas, and to a lesser extent beyond these limits.

An informative text describes the plants and gives interesting notes on the habitats and areas where 186 species are found in Saskatchewan. Line drawings of flowers, seeds, or fruit accompany many of the species treated. These are of mixed quality, and indeed some might best have been omitted. Color photographs of related species are found throughout. These, although as good as those of the species being discussed, were

found to be confusing by their presence on the page, even though they were mentioned in the text, and it seemed that they had been introduced because there was a picture available. It would have been better if these pictures had been given a page of their own, with their own descriptive text.

Included in the volume are five pages of line drawings depicting various types of leaves, inflorescences, and flowers, which were reproduced from *Wild Plants of the Canadian Prairies* by A.C. Budd and K.F. Best. This is a most useful inclusion. Also to be found are a map depicting the area covered, a glossary, a short bibliography, an index to common and scientific names of species and families, and a color index which classifies the plants into four main flower color groups: red-pink, purple-blue, white, and greenish-yellow-cream.

Fenton R. Vance took most of the photographs, but photo credits are given to some 30 additional individuals. The line drawings were executed by J. S. McLean, and the text written by J. R. Jowsey.

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Spring Flora of Wisconsin

By Norman C. Fassett. 1976. 4th ed. (revised). University of Wisconsin Press, Madison. 413 pp., illus. Paper \$3.95; cloth \$8.50.

Previous editions of this little book which treats plants growing without cultivation and flowering before June 15th in Wisconsin, have proven to be immensely popular. This fourth edition is a greatly enlarged and revised version which has been prepared by Olive S. Thomson. In it, new species that represent recent introductions to the state have been added, descriptions have been enlarged, habitat and distribution data have been revised, over 100 new illustra-

tions have been added, and some illustrations from previous editions have been redrawn.

This most useful book will be welcomed in class and in the field by students not only in Wisconsin, but in the adjacent states and nearby parts of Canada. Naturalists in this region will also find this pocket-sized book a useful addition to their libraries even if they already possess an earlier edition.

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Pringle, James S. 1977. "Plant names, by T. S. Lindsay [Review]." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 91(3), 333–334. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.345436>.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.345436>

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