

BOOKS AND NEW MEDIA

Plant Life of Kentucky, an Illustrated Guide to the Vascular Flora. Ronald L. Jones. 2005. The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington. 834 pp. \$ 75.00. (hardcover). ISBN 0-8131-2331-3.

Numerous books on the flora of Kentucky, illustrated with color photographs, have been available for more than thirty years. Among the earliest of these books (and still useful) are those by Wharton and Barbour (1971, 1973). More recent ones include those of Barnes and Francis (2004) and Horn et al. (2005).

Plant Life of Kentucky goes far beyond these popular guides. Part 1, "Introduction" (105 pp.) consists of 12 sections, each a storehouse of useful botanical Kentuckiana. Among them: section 2, "Physical Setting", section 3, "Vegetation", section 9, "History of Plant Life", section 10, "Postsettlement Changes", section 11, "History of Floristic Botany", and section 12, "Current Status of Floristic Studies". Part 2, "Taxonomic Treatment", begins with a general key to the vascular plants of the state, followed by Chapter 1, "Pteridophytes", Chapter 2, "Gymnosperms", Chapter 3, "Dicotyledonae", and Chapter 4, "Monocotyledonae". Plant families are listed alphabetically as are genera and species. For major families, there is included a "Family Notes" paragraph giving in each case medicinal and other ethnobotanical uses along with utilization of the plants by wildlife. Information given for each species includes its flowering time, habitat, and distribution/frequency in Kentucky but there are no species descriptions. The 1,984 excellent line drawings were taken from various sources but mostly from Britton and Brown (1913).

Ron Jones, professor of biological sciences and herbarium curator at Eastern Kentucky University, (justifiably) laments the recent trend towards de-emphasizing field studies. Perhaps this publication will help reverse this trend by identifying

opportunities and needs for further field botanical studies in the state.

This is a monumental work and one to be compared to only a few state publications such as that of Steyermark (1963) for Missouri. It is to be desired that there will be forthcoming publications for adjacent states, especially for Tennessee. In the meantime, botanists of the sister state should find *Plant Life of Kentucky* a highly useful reference, especially for use in middle and western Tennessee. In many cases, Tennessee plants (especially cedar glade species) not known to occur in Kentucky, but expected there, are listed and keyed.

LITERATURE CITED

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Thomas E. Hemmerly
Department of Biology
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132