

Using photographs only for identification can result in a misidentified specimen. In *The Macrolichens of New England* the blend of text and images will enable the user to avoid this error. There are incredible photos of very rare lichens not typically seen by the average lichenologist. The paired photo examples of various species showing the upper and lower surface (*Peltigera* sp.), wet thallus versus dry thallus (i.e., *Placidium arboretum*, *Physconia detersa*, and *Pyxine soreliata*), and macro versus micro features (i.e., *Leptogium*, *Sterocaulon*, *Usnea*) make this book incredibly valuable because some of these species can only be separated by comparing these features.

The book is 7 ½ inches wide 10 ¼ inches long and 1 ¼ inches deep. It weighs approximately 2.0 kg. Although the book is by no means light, it is a more manageable field guide than Brodo et al, which is

roughly twice the size and weight, making this book a more welcome field companion. I have toted both into backwoods locations and appreciated the size and weight difference. It has a hard durable cover with a small ruler drawn on the last page that could be used for field measurements. If taken into the field, however, the glossy covers will inevitably get scratched as there is no slip cover to protect it.

The authors tout this book as the “the most comprehensive work of its kind” and they deliver. This book, like Brodo et al., will be an instant classic. Those who read this book will have no choice but to be drawn into the world of these fascinating organisms.

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Wild Plants of Eastern Canada

By Marilyn Walker. 2008. Nimbus Publishing Ltd., P.O. Box 9166, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 5M8. 202 pages, 24.95 CAD.

Wild Plants of Eastern Canada was not what I expected. I was looking forward to another wild plant field guide, a cross-referencing source, a book offering additional details and visuals to aid in identifying those hard-to-pin-down native asters and goldenrods. That’s not what *Wild Plants of Eastern Canada* is about.

My first reaction to the book was, consequently, mild annoyance – which developed into growing curiosity, then pleasant surprise the further I read. *Wild Plants of Eastern Canada* turns out to be more than a wild plant identification guide. Divided into three parts – (1) “Plants and People of the Northeast”, (2) “Field Guide”, (3) “Recipes” – the book is a human and natural history, an identification tool (of sorts), and a recipe book.

Part 2, the “Field Guide”, takes up the most pages. It contains extensive information on each plant profiled, including scientific and “other” names, general information about the plant family, habitat details, a physical description of the plant, and, depending on the species, sections on usable parts, common uses, medicinal properties, and garden-related particulars. The accompanying black-and-white photographs are helpful, while the leaf prints add a subtle artistic touch.

The recipes covering almost 40 pages in Part 3 of *Wild Plants of Eastern Canada* are intriguing. They range from “classics” such as teas and bannock, to preparations using petals, buds, roots, and berries. I have not yet had the opportunity to test any of them, but I am looking forward to trying out goldenrod crepes, dandelion leaf sandwiches, and clover butter.

Part 1 of the book I found the most interesting and most trying. It was there, not far into the section, that I discovered the book’s most frustrating limitation: its geographical scope. I had assumed the “Eastern

Canada” part of the book’s title to refer to the usual territory stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the western end of Ontario. Yet *Wild Plants of Eastern Canada* ends up covering the Maritime provinces only — not a bad thing if that is what the reader is expecting. But as a Quebec resident, I was hoping my region was included in the book.

The rest of the information in Part 1 comes as a pleasant surprise. Rich in historical and anthropological detail, it provides a succinct and comprehensive overview of Atlantic Canada’s paleoenvironment, European settlement, and Aboriginal history and culture, including First Nations traditional plant knowledge.

I found the first sub-section, “Like Plants, Like People” the most intriguing. There, the author writes: “Like people, plants are great colonizers. They wander about, singly or in “herds”, trying out new conditions until they find somewhere to settle in. If the environment is not suitable, they go elsewhere out of necessity, or perhaps out of the same sense of adventure that inspired human migration” — an intriguing, and for me appealing, perspective.

My main gripe with the book is its main title. *Wild Plants of Eastern Canada* is misleading, and the extra text on the front and back covers does not provide any clues regarding the geographical scope of the book. Yet for individuals able to get their hands on it, the smaller typeface on the front cover — “Identifying, Harvesting and Using”, “Includes recipes & medicinal uses” — provides helpful hints regarding the book’s content.

Wild Plants of Eastern Canada is a welcome addition to the wild plants section of my bookshelves, despite its limitations and frustrations.

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