

REVIEWS OF BOOKS AND NEW MEDIA

Rare Wildflowers of Kentucky. Thomas G. Barnes, Deborah White, and Marc Evans. 2008. The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington. 190 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 978-0-8131-2496-4 (cloth).

Kentucky, much like Tennessee, is positioned in central-eastern US, resulting in an abundant overlapping of many of the same northern and southern plant species and a considerable plant biodiversity. The two states also have many of the same ecosystems, including forests, prairies, glades, wetlands, and others. Thus, this book should be of interest to Tennesseans as well as to Kentuckians.

The "Introduction" includes several short, but well-written, essays on various aspects of conservation biology: causes of species decline and why native species should be protected; also an overview of natural communities of the state. The major section of the book, "The Rare Plants," treats Kentucky plants of special concern, arranged according to habitat, and with outstanding photographs. The habitat headings are "Forests," "Prairies and Glades," "In and Along Rivers," "Wetlands," and "Cliff Lines and Rock Houses." Common names of the plants are used in the text and with the photos, but the scientific names are given (along with their status: endangered, threatened, special concern, or historic) in

a section near the back of the book.

The title is somewhat misleading in that a sizeable number of plant species featured are non-flowering; included are sixteen species of mosses (and even one lichen). Information pertaining to the plants is sketchy and follows no consistent pattern. For those who would like more detailed information about the plants included, the reader is referred to the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission Web page.

In my opinion the most outstanding feature of *Rare Wildflowers of Kentucky* is the superb photographs; they illustrate both habitats and portraits of individual species. The images are very attractive without being "artsy." The book, 10 ½ × 8 ½ in., is not quite large enough to be considered a "coffee-table book," but too large to be used in the field. It should serve as a stimulus for additional study by both amateur and professional botanists rather than as a source of detailed information. In spite of the shortcomings mentioned above, the book is a pleasure to behold and well worth the modest price.

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