

BOOK REVIEWS

Oregon Wild: Endangered Forest Wilderness

by Andy Kerr

2004. 240 pages. 168 color illustrations, 40 maps.
ISBN 0-9623877-8-3 Timber Press, Inc. \$29.95, paper.
(Also available from ONRC 5825 North Greeley Avenue,
Portland, OR 97216; 503-283-6343).

Oregon is blessed with one of the most diverse landscapes in America. Each year thousands of people, both from the state and from afar, flock to places like Mount Hood, Crater Lake, and Eagle Cap to enjoy Oregon's natural beauty. But while visitors flock to well-known places, just off the beaten track are pristine lands and rivers that most Oregonians have never heard of—and all too often these sensitive places are under threat. In his new book, *Oregon Wild: Endangered Forest Wilderness*, veteran Oregon conservationist and author Andy Kerr explores the threatened wild lands of the state, and makes a compelling case for their protection. Part celebration of Oregon's natural heritage, part political commentary, Kerr's book seeks to educate and entertain readers while at the same time building a powerful case for the preservation of Oregon's remaining wild lands as federally protected Wilderness.

Oregon Wild: Endangered Forest Wilderness is a handsome book. Printed in coffee-table format, it uses beautiful photographs and maps to explore awe-inspiring roadless landscapes ranging from the moss-draped rainforests of the Oregon coast to the arid landscapes of Hells Canyon and the world-class biological wonders of the Klamath-Siskiyou region. The heart of the book is a series of detailed profiles of roadless wild lands around Oregon, some within national forests, others managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Grouped by geographic region, the chapters read like a wilderness lover's "must see" list, combining jaw-dropping photographs with detailed explanations of why these lands are ecologically important and worthy of preservation. The book has been carefully researched, and describes native plants found in each area, their ecological values, and in some cases why their presence alone justifies protection of the land.

Beyond the profiles and gorgeous pictures, Kerr offers the natural and political history of Oregon's landscape. He starts with a fascinating look at how Oregon's forests evolved, the major eco-regions and forest types, and the wildlife they support. He details the politics of wilderness in Oregon, from the sad history of clearcut logging that destroyed much of our old-growth forest to the deal-making that led to the creation of our existing wilderness areas.

Andy Kerr's writing is acerbic and entertaining. A veteran of 30 years of work with the Oregon Natural Resources Council (ONRC), Kerr was instrumental in the creation of many of

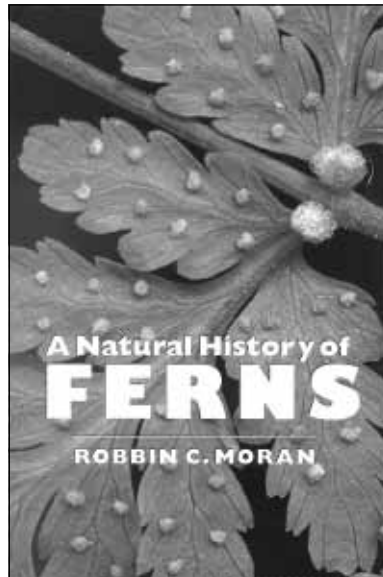
Oregon's wilderness areas. Humorous, sometimes fiery, metaphors enliven descriptions of rare plants and landscapes, and the political wrangling over their fate. The author strives to inspire and motivate the readers, and to build support for preserving these special places, not just to entertain or encourage readers to visit the threatened landscapes. Produced by the Oregon Natural Resources Council, the book is part of ONRC's campaign to add five million acres of additional wildlands to Oregon's current fragments of protected wilderness.

—Candice Guth, Portland Chapter

A Natural History of Ferns

by Robbin C. Moran

2004. 301 pages. Illustrations, photographs, includes bibliographic references and index. ISBN 0-888192-667-1 Timber Press, Inc. \$29.95, hardcover.



Much of my professional career was spent dealing with ferns: looking for ferns, teaching about ferns, reading about ferns, researching ferns. In the systematic botany class I taught at Southern Oregon University for over 30 years, 15 or 20 students who took the course each year studied ferns and fern allies in the early spring before the wildflowers were in full bloom. I spiced up the exercise with fern stories and fabulous facts about the world of spore-producing vascular plants.

When I read Robbin Moran's book I was very pleased to find the stories that I had told retold by the author in much the same way and to discover new stories about the ferny world, previously unknown to me, that were based on Robbin's vast experience and travels. There are stories about the "Pteridomania" that swept Victorian England, the Vegetable Lamb of Tartary, the Potato Fern of South

America, and why eating bracken fern fiddle heads is a very bad idea. You probably have no idea what the consumption of Nardoo, an Australian *Marsilea* and survival food, will do to your digestive tract.

The book is written in an engaging, humorous style and is nicely illustrated with line drawings (some by the author), black and white and color photographs (most by the author), maps, and graphs. The book's forward was written Oliver Sachs, a neurologist, best known as the author of *Awakening*, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, and *Oaxaca Journal*. As it turns out, Sachs is also a "Pteridomaniac." His *Oaxaca Journal*, is an account of his adventures in Mexico with fern notables, like John Mickle of the New York Botanical Garden and others like Robbin Moran. Sachs likes Robbin's book, so do I, and so will anyone else interested in the plant kingdom.

—Frank Lang, Siskiyou Chapter

Columbines *Aquilegia*, *Paraquilegia* and *Semiaquilegia*

by Robert Nold

2003. 158 pages, 41 color photos, 6 color illustrations, bibliography, index. ISBN 0-88192-588-8 Timber Press, Inc. \$24.95, hardcover.

This beautiful book will appeal to both gardeners and botanists. The author's detailed and humorous style makes such topics as the etymology of *Aquilegia*, its taxonomy, and pests and diseases into enjoyable reading, while still providing all the facts. Robert Nold's 1999 award winning monograph on *Penstemons* is a favorite of mine; his new book appeals to my inner gardener. He includes practical chapters about propagation and cultivation to guide gardeners through horticultural questions about these frequently misunderstood groups of plants. He examines in detail 65 species of *Aquilegia* with a complete summary of cultivation needs, biology, and history.

Nold also describes plants of the genera *Semiaquilegia* and *Paraquilegia*, by creating a clear and useful overview of these "columbine cousins." In addition to striking color photographs of columbines in wild settings and in gardens, exquisite watercolor illustrations by the author's wife, Cindy Nold, further brighten the text.

Nold's enthusiasm for growing columbines is contagious from the reading. His approach to gardening is low maintenance and natural. He urges the reader to give columbines a chance in their garden since they are so easy to grow: "Here the mysteries of growing columbines are fully revealed for the first time. Buy a plant, dig a hole in any old soil in full sun or dappled shade, put that plant in the hole, push dirt around the plant, and water it."

Columbines offer the gardener a wide choice of color, from buttery yellow to the most divine purple, for the enhancement of any garden space. For the botanist, there are simple taxonomic keys divided into Asian, European, and North American species.

—Lusetta Nelson, *Siskiyou Chapter*

Alpine and Subalpine Vegetation of the Wallowa, Seven Devils and Blue Mountains

by Charles Grier Johnson, Jr.

2004. 632 pages, keys, color photos, line drawings, glossary, bibliography. Publication R6-NR-ECOL-TP-03-04 USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, Oregon, soft cover.

Unlike other government publications, this book is a labor of love. It is Charlie Johnson's career capstone, the culmination of his years spent at the highest elevations in northeastern Oregon between 1964 when he became one of the first wilderness guards in the Eagle Cap Wilderness and his retirement as Wallowa-Whitman Forest Ecologist in 2004. His aim was to "assist managers in

maintaining and enhancing the fragile ecosystems" and to help visitors "better understand and appreciate the magnificent diversity of plants and plant communities... in these high altitude landscapes." The first half of the book describes the plant communities, starting with an introduction to the mountain ranges: Wallowa, Seven Devils, Elkhorn, Greenhorn, Strawberry, and Aldrich, giving an overview of the vegetation, geology, and climate of each. He defines the ecological terminology and presents management considerations for each of the forest, shrubland and grassland community types. Following the key to the series and associations are the descriptions for each, including a photo of a typical stand, distribution, environmental features, soils, vegetation composition, successional relationships, disturbance ecology, and a data table. The second half of the book contains descriptions for all the plant species used as indicators for the vegetation types: 14 trees, 24 shrubs, 19 grasses, 10 sedges and rushes, and 87 forbs, each illustrated with a color photo and line drawings. Unfortunately, the nomenclature has not been updated, but until Hitchcock and Cronquist's *Flora of the Pacific Northwest* is replaced by a new *Oregon Flora*, this may be more practical for field work. I find only one negative comment to make concerning this book and it has nothing to do with the content. It is the weight. Stash this book in your backpack for a climb into the alpine and subalpine

landscapes and you'll wish you had one of the packstrings pictured in the introductory pages. How can you acquire a copy? At press time, it was available in limited quantities from the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Headquarters in Baker City (PO Box 907, Baker City, OR 97814). The future plan is to also sell the book at bookstores in the Pacific Northwest.

—Cindy Roché, *Siskiyou Chapter*

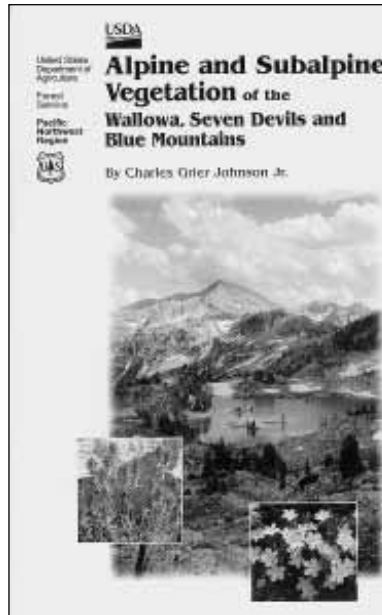
Field Guide to the Cascades and Olympics, 2nd Edition

by Stephen R. Whitney and Rob Sandelin.

2003. 320 pages, color photographs and illustrations, index. ISBN 0-89886-808-4 The Mountaineers Books, \$19.95, paper.

Interested in the natural history of the Cascade and Olympic Mountains of the Pacific Northwest? Want to be able to identify the creatures, plant and animal, you might encounter on your wildland ramblings? This might be the book for you.

This basic picture-book manual identifies some of the plants and animals you might encounter in the Cascade Mountains in Oregon. The authors discuss various plant communities, geology, fungi (39 taxa), ferns (32), flowering plants (260), shrubs (93), trees (42), insects (43) including butterflies (54), trout and salmon (11), amphibians (21), reptiles (22), birds (135), and mammals (58). These approximate numbers reflect mention of the taxa. There are fewer illustrations. Bryophytes and lichens are not covered. Grasses and grass-like are only mentioned in the



discussion of wetlands. Color photographs illustrate the biotic communities and rock types. The organisms are illustrated by color paintings. Unfortunately, the printing does not do justice to the artwork. Light colored flowers vanish into the white background of the pages and fine detail is lost.

Among its innovations is the color index on the cover that corresponds to exposed colored sections visible on the closed page of the book opposite the binding: brown for mushrooms, gray for butterflies, black for mammals, and red for flowers, flowers of any color. It is a quick efficient way to get to an organism of interest.

Once you are among the flowers, you will find them arranged by flower color, then by family, genus and species, with a common name. They use the term “flowering plant” to include the gymnosperms and angiosperms (page 78). This does not build confidence in the quality of their work. Also, the illustration of *Polypodium hesperium* is probably the blunt segment version of *P. glycyrrhiza*. *Polypodium hesperium* has larger oval sori. The illustration and discussion of meadowrue flower color are incorrect. The main illustration clearly shows stamens. The inset might be female flowers with akenes, not male flowers as labeled.

Flowering plant families seem to be arranged in the order of Engler and Prantl (an older, common, system of plant classification), used in many older floras. It starts with the monocot families like lilies and orchids, and then proceeds to dicot families without petals, to those with separate petals ending with the sunflower family. This system is repeated for each flower color group. The quickest way to locate a flower color is to leaf through the pages until the color is found or look in the Contents under Chapter 5.

On second thought, you might want to take a close look at Daniel Mathews’ 1999 Cascade-Olympic Natural History, (2nd ed., Raven Editions) for \$24.00. Although it costs a little more and there is not as much color, it features a wealth of natural history information, nice line drawings, and phonetic pronunciation of scientific names. Best of all, Daniels does not consider the conifers (gymnosperms) flowering plants (discussed on pages 15-16 and 577).

–Frank Lang, Siskiyou Chapter

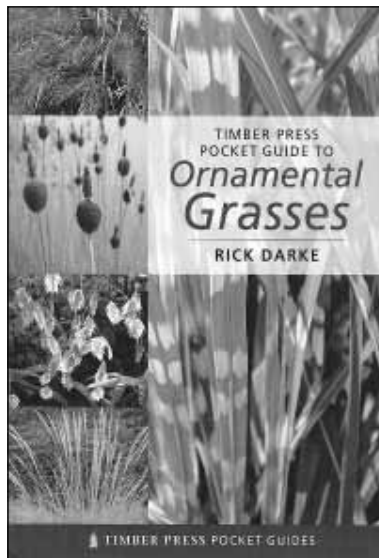
Pocket Guide to Ornamental Grasses

by Rick Darke.

2004. 226 pages, color photographs, index.

ISBN 0-88192-653-1 Timber Press, Inc., \$19.95, flexibind.

This pocket guide was developed as a portable complement to the author’s *Color Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses*. The grasses (and more than a few other taxa that serve similar purposes in the garden) are arranged alphabetically by scientific name. Darke recommends that readers who are a few years behind in their



grass nomenclature use the index in the back for a cross reference to the new names. Unfortunately, his cross-referencing could be better. For example, under *Stipa* the index directs you to *Austrostipa* on page 43, *Hesperostipa* on page 108 and *Stipa* on page 196. It does not clue you to *Achnatherum* on page 29 or *Nassella* on page 150. For those you have to look under “needlegrass,” even though they formerly bore the name *Stipa*. Genera from other families (sedges, rushes, restios and cat-tails) include *Carex*, *Chondropetalum*, *Cymophyllus*, *Cyperus*, *Dulichium*, *Elegia*, *Eleocharis*, *Isolepis*, *Juncus*, *Luzula*, *Rhynchospora*, *Schoenoplectus*, *Scirpus*, *Typha*, and *Uncinia*.

My interest in this book stems from a fascination with grasses, both native and naturalized. Knowing that many of our weedy species started as ornamentals, I was curious about the range of grasses in cultivation and whether the author cautions against planting those with records of invasiveness. He warns gardeners of the weedy nature of *Phalaris arundinacea* (“a major threat to marshes and other native wetlands”), as well as *Holcus lanatus* (“self-sows readily”) and *H. mollis* (tendency for “aggressive spread”). However, he fails to mention that *Cortaderia* (pampas grass) escapes cultivation in California and western Oregon, and that few means short of a backhoe can remove well-established plants.

While the book is filled with color photos, I don’t find it particularly helpful for identifying or learning new grasses. To be fair, the purpose of the book is a horticultural guide, and there are some that I suspect I could recognize in a heartbeat, maybe from the name alone: fiber-optics plant or mop-sedge (*Isolepis cernua*), for example. The introductory chapter discusses selection and management of grasses for cultural settings, including running and clumping growth habits, warm and cool growing seasons, sun and shade, soils, fertilization, moisture, diseases and pests, planting and mulching, weeding, cutting back and burning, dividing and transplanting. This discussion is followed by lists of ornamental grasses suited to specific purposes or effects.

In addition to describing horticultural zones appropriate for each cultivar, the author tells where each is native. Darke’s compilation includes 21 Oregon natives that have entered the horticultural trade, including *Achnatherum hymenoides*, *Aristida purpurea*, *Calamagrostis canadensis*, *C. nutkaensis*, *Carex nudata*, *C. tumulicola*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Eleocharis acicularis*, *Elymus glaucus*, *Festuca californica*, *F. idahoensis*, *F. rubra*, *Hierochloë occidentalis*, *H. odorata*, *Hordeum jubatum*, *Juncus effusus*, *J. patens*, *Koeleria macrantha*, *Leymus cinereus*, *L. mollis*, and *Spartina pectinata*. However, because many of these have wide native ranges, the integrity of our native systems might be better maintained by using seed from local populations rather than introducing genotypes from distant locations.

–Cindy Roché, Siskiyou Chapter

Botanical Latin, Fourth Edition

by William T. Stearn.

2004. 546 pages, 42 line drawings, index.

ISBN 0-88192-627-2 Timber Press, Inc.

\$29.95, paper.

Originally published in 1966, this is the fourth edition of a classic reference. Botanical Latin has, over the course of scientific use for 250 years, become distinct from classical Latin, and incorporates many Greek terms. In addition to summarizing grammar and syntax, this handbook covers the origins of Latin and latinized geographical names, color terms, symbols and abbreviations, diagnoses and descriptions, the formation of names and epithets, and more. The vocabulary chapter comprises 170 pages of both English and Latin terms in alphabetical order; one could spend days browsing through the lists, muttering “So that’s what that means!” Plant names that were just names before will ring with meanings, e.g., *botry-* or *botrys* for bunch, and *botryoïdes*, like a bunch of grapes. Perhaps the most practical advice from Stearn, the Dean of botanical Latin scholars, is on pronunciation: “How they [scientific names] are pronounced really matters little provided they sound pleasant and are understood by all concerned.” If you have published a description of a new species or consulted earlier literature written in botanical Latin, you probably already know that this internationally renowned masterpiece is indispensable. It is also a valuable reference for anyone curious about plant names; you don’t have to be describing new species or doing research in systematics to find this book useful.

—Cindy Roché, *Siskiyou Chapter*

Guide to the Common *Potentilla* Species of the Blue Mountains Ecoregion

by Marti Aitken and Catherine Gray Parks.

2004. 50 pages, key, illustrations, glossary.

General Technical Report PNW-GTR-603 USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, Oregon, spiral-bound, water-resistant paper.

Are you the kind of person who, when looking at a cinquefoil, cannot be satisfied with leaving the identification to rest at *Potentilla* sp.? Have you ever been confounded by the nuance in interpretation called for in technical keys? Is that style truly “slenderly fusiform” and is its point of attachment really on the lower half of the ovary? What if, as in late season, the style has long severed its relationship with the ovary? This predicament has now been overcome, at least when one pursues potentillas in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon and southeastern Washington. Marti Aitken and Catherine Gray Parks, both of the Pacific Northwest Research Station Forestry and Range Sciences Laboratory (the research arm of the Forest

Service), have crafted a nifty guide to *Potentilla* species found throughout the entire Blue Mountain region, including the Ochoco and Willowa Mountains. The strength of this guide is a well-conceived dichotomous key that relies almost entirely on vegetative features. Though the reader may occasionally be requested to examine a flower’s calyx, which fortunately in *Potentilla* is persistent season-long, he or she will never be asked to fathom a style’s gross morphology or determine its relative point of attachment to the ovary.

Following the key, each species is briefly described alongside an illustration (borrowed from volume 3 of *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest*) with one full page devoted to each of the 26 species covered. The descriptions include features of each species’ habit, leaf morphology, pubescence, floral anatomy and habitat along with useful notes and taxonomic synonymy. Because the guide was prepared largely for an audience lacking a formal botanical education, technical botanical jargon is toned down, particularly with terms that describe patterns of pubescence. For those technical terms that simply could not be avoided, a glossary, illustrated where necessary, is included. Even with its less technical presentation, this guide should appeal to those with a stronger background in plant identification. Nomenclature follows

the USDA NRCS *PLANTS Database*; however, the guide does include familiar species once classified by other authors under *Potentilla*, such as *Comarum palustre* (*P. palustris*), *Dasiflora floribunda* (*P. fruticosa*), and *Argentina anserina* (*P. anserina*). Preceding the key, the guide has a fascinating introduction to the genus *Potentilla*. Were you aware, for instance, that cinquefoil was reportedly an ingredient in medieval “love divinations” and fishing bait?

The need for this guide began as an exercise to help people distinguish native *Potentilla* species from the invasive exotic sulfur cinquefoil (*Potentilla recta*), a weed that often grows amidst and is believed to displace native potentillas. *Potentilla recta* can be easily confused with varieties of *P. gracilis* and to help avoid this confusion the dichotomous key treats the relevant varieties of *P. gracilis*.

The *Guide to the Common Potentilla Species of the Blue Mountains Ecoregion* is available free of charge from the Pacific Northwest Research Station in electronic and print format. A portable document file (pdf format) can be downloaded at <http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/gtr603.pdf> and print copies may be ordered on line at <http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/publications/order.shtml> or by calling (503) 808-2138. On your next trip to the Blue Mountains don’t forget to bring a copy.

—Gene Yates, *William Cusick Chapter*