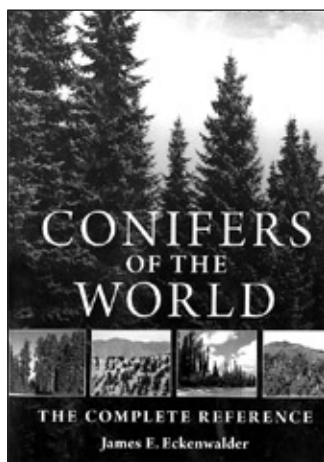


## Book Reviews

### *Conifers of the World: the complete reference*

Eckenwalder, J.E. 2009. Portland (OR): Timber Press. 720 pp. 67 color photos, 295 b/w photos, 240 line drawings, 67 distribution maps. ISBN 13:978-0-88192-974-4 \$59.95 hardcover.



From the frontispiece photo of Port Orford cedar (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) onward, you can tell that James Eckenwalder has roots in Oregon, having earned his undergraduate degree at Reed College in Portland. For his senior thesis there, he investigated the relationships of Alaska yellow cedar, Port Orford cedar, and other cypresses with redwood trees and their relatives; he proposed a classification that placed all of them in a single family.

His proposal was subsequently tested and generally adopted, thus becoming one of many factors that precipitated a cascade of name changes in conifers. That the author has been researching conifers for more than three decades also becomes apparent in his empathy for readers who lament the loss of familiar botanical names of conifers commonly used by gardeners, botanists and foresters.

The first seven chapters (76 pages) are more-or-less introductory material, including conifer classification, nomenclature, where the various genera and species were discovered, conifers in nature and in the garden, morphology, paleobotany and evolution, and conifer identification. There are 67 plates of color photos following chapter 5; the remainder of the illustrations in the book are line drawings or black/white photos. The bulk of the book (555 pages) is an encyclopedic reference to conifers around the world, from *Abies* to *Wollemia*. In his attempt to give equal emphasis to all taxa, conifers of western North America necessarily receive sparser coverage than in regional treatments. At the back of the book, there are four appendices (conversion tables, authorities for scientific names, lists of conifers with distinctive features, and new names), an extensive glossary of terms, a bibliography, and a comprehensive index. For the most part, one won't need the glossary because the author avoids technical jargon. Even though he is clearly passionate about conifers, this doesn't blind him. About Leyland cypress, he writes, "They are so widely planted...and often in such inappropriate places considering their stature, that they border on pest status and have sparked many neighborly disputes."

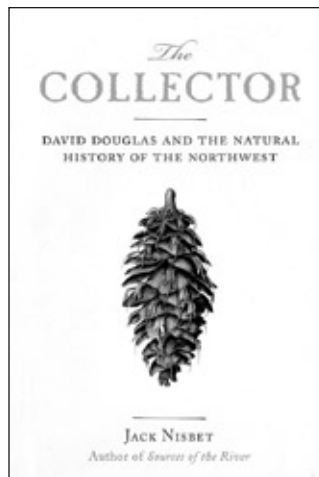
This book provides a major fix for conifer junkies, whether they're planning some international travel or exploring a local arboretum or nursery, there is something here on everything. It is impressive that Eckenwalder fit all of it into a single volume. From the visual standpoint, my only suggestion is that more illustrations and photographs be included to provide the reader with a more comprehensive view of all of the conifers, especially the rare taxa. A complementary book, *Conifers Around the World*, a two-volume set by Zsolt Debreczy and István Rácz will cover all of the 520 conifer species with three to five color shots per plant. The major

difference in the conifer books is price; the latter book, still in press, is slated to cost about \$259. I can only congratulate the author for a passionately written, authoritatively organized book, and suggest it is a best buy. Order yours today from Timber Press for a plethora of conifer knowledge and some interesting insights from the author.

—Frank Callahan, *Siskiyou Chapter*.

### *The Collector: David Douglas and the Natural History of the Northwest*

Nisbet, J. 2009. Seattle (WA): Sasquatch Books. 290 pp. ISBN 978-1-57061-613-6 \$23.95 hardcover.



Time after time this year, the name David Douglas kept reappearing in my life. I was first attracted to the book cover adorned with a single cone of Douglas fir in a bookstore display as I was passing through the Seattle-Tacoma airport in January. I recognized the author's name, having previously read his biography of David Thompson (*Sources of the River*). Within a month, Jim Locklear sent his Plant of the Year article on Columbia phlox (*Phlox douglasii*). Soon after my

mother gave me a clipping from her local newspaper about a book signing by Jack Nisbet, Kathleen Sayce's Swala-lahos article arrived, listing David Douglas among the early botanical explorers. By this time, I knew I had to read *The Collector*.

Of some authors, one might ask, "Sure, he's a historian, but can he tell a story?" Not Jack Nisbet. This story of David Douglas's life reads like a novel, flowing seamlessly from narrative into quote back into narrative without jarring the reader into noticing that Nisbet has woven a story from fragments of history recorded in letters and journals. The author appears to have transported himself back in time to see our world as this intrepid explorer saw it. This is not a coincidence. During his last two years of research for the book, Nisbet used Douglas's journal to revisit numerous sites during the same week of the year that Douglas had visited them. He was astonished to find that many places still had characteristics that Douglas described in his journal.

There are only a few illustrations: the single professional portrait of David Douglas (by artist Daniel Mcnee), a short-horned lizard and a sagebrush buttercup; five maps help the reader trace Douglas's journeys from 1824 through 1834. But the book doesn't need illustrations. The author paints with words so vividly that you picture each adventure and plant as if you were there yourself.

As the author is a naturalist and historian, the slant in this biography is not the plants that David Douglas was sent to collect for Britain's horticultural elite, but about the explorer's fascination with all the wonders he encountered in this new world. He tells how Douglas must have learned the details of the various ways the Indigenous people used the native plants, and about the biology

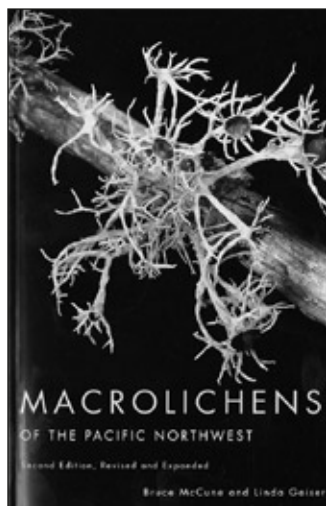
of condors, lizards and grouse, among other creatures. There is the story revealed slowly, in tiny clues, of Douglas's fascination with gigantic pine cones traded north to the Willamette Valley, which he eventually traced to their source in the Umpqua country. And, there is the speculation of Douglas's love child from his time in the Colville Valley, backed by recipes for lichen cakes and baked *Missouii*.

This year Jack Nisbet was honored with the Pacific Northwest Book Award for *The Collector*, as one of the top books of 2009 written by a Northwest author. *The Collector* is due out in paperback this fall. Either version, this is a book you will want to own and read. If you loan it to your friends, first write your name on it, in ink.

—Cindy Roché, *Siskiyou Chapter*

### ***Macrolichens of the Pacific Northwest, Second Edition***

McCune, B. and Geiser, L. 2009. Corvallis (OR): Oregon State University Press. 504 pp. ISBN 978-0-87071-565-5, color photos, bibliography, illustrated glossary, index. \$30, paperback.



The appearance of the first edition (1997) of Bruce McCune and Linda Geiser's *Macrolichens of the Pacific Northwest* made it possible for the average botanist to identify most of our regional lichens confidently for the first time. Prior to its publication it was necessary to maintain a large shelf of literature to do this kind of task and, even then, it was still necessary to turn to experts for guidance and verification.

For people like me, *Macrolichens of the Pacific Northwest* was a life-changing book.

Having it at hand meant I could realistically undertake inventory projects that included lichens along with bryophytes. Regional coverage was complete, the keys well written, the descriptions clear and thorough. What made this book special was the extensive use of the macro-photographs by Sylvia and Steve Sharnoff. Because of the variety of distinctive form and color, lichens are better suited to visual identification with quality photographs than most plants. The Sharnoff pictures have become world renowned for their high standard of quality. Only the 2001 book, *Lichens of North America* by I. Brodo and the Sharnoffs, has more of their pictures.



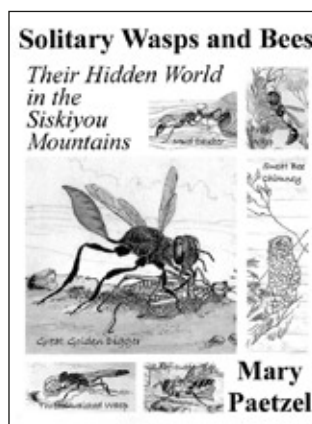
The second edition builds on the excellence of the first edition. All the wonderful Sharnoff pictures are present, with additional images supplied by local botanists. These photos are supplemented by high magnification pictures of critical structures, contributed mainly by Bruce McCune. Thanks in large part to these images, the number of illustrations in the second edition increased from 236 to 417. The scale bar in these pictures is not indicated; it is 1 millimeter unless otherwise noted. Close up pictures clarify the difficult genera *Peltigera*, *Umbilicaria*, and *Usnea*. The treatment of the latter genus is especially welcome as it has always been agonizingly difficult for

everybody. It is still a difficult group to work with but, as a friend has said, at least now it seems worth trying to key out an *Usnea*.

The total coverage has increased by the addition of 117 species to the nearly 500 covered previously, many newly described. As before, only the most common or prominent have full descriptions and illustrations. The selection of these is admirably done. The taxonomy is fairly conservative, with only a half dozen or so generic segregates not recognized in the previous edition. One of my few complaints is that it is necessary to refer to the "Nomenclature" section in the back of the book to get the authors of names. I will be thumb indexing this edition, just as I did the previous one, because it will get that much use. —David Wagner, *Emerald Chapter*

### ***Solitary Wasps and Bees: their Hidden World in the Siskiyou Mountains***

Paetzel, M. 2010. Lulu books, Lulu.com. (published posthumously; edited by J. Levinson and L. Webb) 173 pp. ISBN 978-0-557-36970-6. \$56.20 paper.



At long last, Mary Paetzel's book about solitary wasps and bees in the Siskiyou Mountains has been published. Janet Levinson worked with Mary for over a year to get the manuscript in shape, and we have gone through several edits in the years since Mary died in 2007. We published Mary's book through Lulu.com, an on-demand printing operation that is accessed through the internet.

Dr. Neal Evenhuis, an entomologist at the Bishop Natural History Museum in Honolulu, HI, received a copy of Mary's book from his sister Kitty, who lives in Grants Pass. Neal wrote to his sister: "What a great surprise! That is a GREAT book! I have told so many people that if I had all the time and money, I'd just lie on my belly and watch biology and write about it. Mary DID IT! I am so jealous. What a truly marvelous book to read and I love the drawings and paintings. The book would not be half as good without them. Thank you SO much! I will not put it down until I've finished reading it. So many of those little bees and wasps have been the subjects of my own observations when in the field, so I will be thrilled to read what she concluded when I could only guess at what they were doing."

This book is a fascinating collection of Mary's anecdotes of the wild Siskiyou Mountains, her meticulous field notes, wonderful drawings, and observations of the tiny creatures we so often overlook. If you enjoyed *Spirit of the Siskiyou: The Journals of a Mountain Naturalist*, you will want this book, too. Although not inexpensive (\$56), the book is filled with Mary's colorful drawings from nature, and its contents are well worth the cost. Order Mary's book through Lulu.com, under ID#8501673. As an alternative to the paper copy, the book can also be downloaded as a PDF (portable document file) from Lulu.com for \$10. If you are not internet-savvy, give me a call at 541-479-6859, and I will ship you a copy.

—Lee Webb, *Siskiyou Chapter*