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Peer reviewed

Review: Field Guide to the Rare Plants of Washington
Pamela Camp and John G. Gamon (Eds.)

Reviewed by Ryder W. Miller
San Francisco, CA, USA

Camp, Pamela and Gamon, John G., eds. *Field Guide to the Rare Plants of Washington*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2011. 408pp. Illustrated. ISBN 9780295990927 US \$39.95. Paperback.

Ten percent of Washington State's 3600 vascular plants, 600 mosses, and 1000-1500 lichens are considered "at risk." In the book *Field Guide to the Rare Plants of Washington*, Pamela Camp and John G. Gamon have compiled information, photographs, and drawings of the rare plants that can be found in Washington State. As Camp, a private consultant in field biology and restoration ecology, and Gamon, a Natural Heritage Program Manager with the Department of Natural Resources, point out: "Photographic guides for native plants typically focus on the more common species, including few, if any, rare species. Perhaps by "putting faces to the names" of our rare plants, we will increase efforts to conserve them" (p.3).

This reference book seeks to rectify the fact that 150 rare plants were missing from the earlier *Flora of the Pacific Northwest*. Programs and agencies assisting with this project include: the Washington Natural Heritage Program, the Washington Native Plant Society, the Bureau of Land Management, and the University of Washington Herbarium at the Burke Museum.

Washington has a diversity of habitat zones, nine in all, ranging from seashores to lake shores, mountains, rainforests and deserts. This field guide describes these habitat zones and the rare plants found within them. Showcased as advertised are roughly 317 vascular plants, six mosses, and one lichen. Some of these rare plants can be found in other states and are not widely found in Washington.

This book succeeds as a current reference for the plants across Washington State. It provides full color photographs, line drawings, distribution maps, identification tips, and conservation statuses for each plant. It also includes a reference section and a glossary.

Though there is a beautiful picture of an Alaska Harebell on the cover, most of the pictures in the text are too small to see many of the attributes of the plants referenced. The drawings are also small. Sadly, trees are missing from this book as well. The habitat descriptions, while informative, would benefit from more details. The book is larger than other field guides and may be too big and bulky for some to carry; it is something that one would need a day pack to carry around.

This book has the potential to raise awareness about the endangered plants that can be found across the state. It is a useful reference for those who seek to identify endangered plants in the west, and every botanist in Washington State and the Northwest is likely to want a copy of or access to this book. It serves more as a field guide rather than an instructional book covering a lot of territory nonetheless. It is something that has not existed before in such depth, but it may not find as many plant enthusiasts interested in the subject in the Northwest as necessary. Professionals in the environmental field will need to know what it contains.

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