

## BOOK REVIEW

CAROL GRACIE. 2019. **Summer Wildflowers of the Northeast**. (ISBN-13: 9780691199344, pbk). Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540, U.S.A. (**Orders:** press.princeton.edu). \$29.95 US/£25.00, 384 pp., 693 color illustrations, 7½" × 10".

To begin this review it must be remarked that in combining her talents as a naturalist and writer with her skills as a photographer, Gracie creates a truly beautiful volume. She does not seek to give us a complete flora of the Northeast, but chooses an array of 35 summer blooming plants, and their kin, some familiar and some very little known, most native but some naturalized, and all from a wide variety of habitats. This book will be appreciated by anyone who lives in or visits the Northeast and has opportunity get into the out-of-doors in summertime, by geologists, entomologists, ethnobotanists, nature photographers, historians, and many more.

The professional botanist will find the use of scientific lexicon in Gracie's plant descriptions familiar and replete. Nevertheless, the avocational botanist or amateur naturalist will not be daunted, as she follows with more vernacular explanations. As an example, she explains that the unfamiliar, ghostly Indian Pipe flower is a mycoheterotroph, (myco, meaning fungus, hetero, meaning different, troph, relating to food—a plant without chlorophyll deriving its nourishment from fungi that in turn receives sustenance from nearby conifers and hardwoods). Photographs at various scales and their captions further elucidate the meanings of scientific terms.

Descriptions of plants and their behaviors are only a starting place for the information Gracie gives for each wildflower. She provides rich discussions of habitats, range, means of pollination (providing photographs of many insects), ethnobotany, cultural history, and even includes poetry written about several flowers. Gracie betrays her enthusiasm of her subject matter by writing herself into the text using the first person singular. She tells us of dawning chest-high waders and plunging into a bog to photograph a particular orchid, the rose pogonia, or getting up well before daybreak, the only time to catch the deep blue color of a chicory blossom revealed in the first rays of light and, as the morning continues to brighten, watching the flower fade to a dull white then close forever.

Gracie's volume can be read from cover to cover, but as the chapters are in alphabetical order by common plant name rather than by any botanical grouping, it would be just as enjoyable to choose each chapter at random and delve into the insights to be obtained there. Going on a field trip, the book is too large to fit comfortably into a backpack, but take it off the shelf and peruse the chapters about plants in the environment you will be visiting, be it wetlands and bogs, mountain tops, forests, or meadows. Then it might be wise to leave the book in the car so it will be at hand to check any observations made. For botanists and naturalists, amateur or professional, a worthy goal would be to add each of the summer wildflowers Gracie carefully describes to their life lists.—*Grace Lloyd Bascopé, Resident Research Associate, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.*