

## BOOK REVIEW

KELLY KINDSCHER, LOREN YELLOW BIRD, MICHAEL YELLOW BIRD, AND LOGAN SUTTON. 2020. **Sahnish (Arikara) Ethnobotany. Contributions in Ethnobiology.** (ISBN-13: 978-0-9990759-2-0, pbk). Society of Ethnobiology, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Puget Sound, 1500 North Warner St., CMB#1092, Tacoma, Washington 98416, U.S.A. (**Orders:** amazon.com). \$46.00 US, 223 pp., color maps and photographs throughout, appendix, references, 7" x 10".

The four authors undertook the project of compiling the contents of this book for several reasons. They wished to create written documentation of plant use (for nutrition, medicine, utilitarian, and crafts purposes) by the Shanish, an important indigenous group of the Northern Great Plains. They hoped this work will stimulate interest in the use of these plants by present day Shalish, especially, as many of them, like many other Native Americans, suffers from various health issues related to poverty and contemporary lifestyle—that it might inspire some to contemplate incorporation of more healthful plant-based elements used by their forebears. They wished to publish the works of Melvin Gilmore, the ethnobotanist who carried out fieldwork and compiled the bulk of the Shanish (then called Arikara) data in the early 1920s. Unfortunately, Gilmore was struck by Parkinson's disease and died before he could organize and publish his meticulous notes. The person to whom they were bequeathed did not follow through with the project. Gilmore's notes and manuscripts were deposited at several universities and museums, and one of the reasons why the authors took on this project was to compile them in one easily retrievable form. The authors also sought to add data from other original sources, such as journals from the Lewis and Clark Expedition and from other Great Plains explorers who had first-hand knowledge of the Shanish. Finally, one of the authors, Sutton, a linguist, had the goal of revising Gilmore's Shanish nomenclature into modern orthography and adding Shanish words Gilmore had not found. So, the book expands not only ethnobotanical knowledge, but also linguist knowledge for this group.

The book is a true treasure for the Shanish. To have such a thorough documentation of plant use by one's ancestors is not common, but the benefits do not stop with them. Other groups of the Northern Great Plains—the Pawnee, Dakota, Lakota, Mandan, Cheyenne, as examples—live in much the same environment and can also benefit from the plant knowledge documented here. The book's value reaches far beyond these groups, however. As the Great Plains are homogeneous in some respects, others, even as far south as Oklahoma and the northern reaches of Texas, will find almost all these plants to be native to these areas, as well. No doubt, Native Americans, plant nutrition enthusiasts, naturalists, among others all throughout the Great Plains and beyond, will want to avail themselves of the knowledge compiled within this work.

The book is beautifully composed with clear, recognizable photographs of each of the 106 plants from 31 families, and including a map of the US counties in which each plant has been collected. The ethnographic information written for each is informative and interesting. Because of the value of the book, and the respect I hold for the authors, I hardly believe I have the temerity to make one small suggestion. The narratives in the first section of the book are separated into small, short chapters that seem somewhat disjointed. In a subsequent edition, many of these might be combined into a story, a through line, centered on the unfolding of the material through time.—*Grace Lloyd Bascopé, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.*