

BOOK NOTICE

MISTRETTA, ORLANDO. 2020. **Field Guide to the Flora of the San Gabriel Mountains.** Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden Occasional Publications Number 18. (ISSN: 1094-1398, ISBN-13: 978-0-9605808-5-9, pbk). Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, 1500 North College Ave., Claremont, California 91711-3157, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.calbg.org/research/scientific-publications). \$29.95 US, 340 pp., color photographs, maps, 6" × 9".

Using many previously published and unpublished sources and after forty years of personal inventory of the San Gabriel Mountain flora, Mistretta has compiled a long needed inventory that correlates plant species with vegetative habitat types for that region.

The guide is in the form of a dichotomous key to the flora of the mountains. Within the keys, each species can be referenced for its range, habitat type, abundance, and native plant status. Botanists might find it a useful tool to find individual species in the San Gabriel Mountains, but it might not be especially helpful for those wanting to know which species are in which habitats, because it is arranged by contemporary phylogeny of species, according to Baldwin et al. (2012, *The Jepson Manual. Vascular Plants of California*), rather than by habitat.

Mistretta also provides a very detailed description of the physiographic characteristics of the mountains, enhanced with references to historic botanical explorations of the region. He goes to great lengths to describe how the orientation of the north and south slopes marks a transition zone between moist and dry communities. His friendly narrative is easy to read and his labeled satellite images of the mountains show the range of his study in relation to surrounding geographic locations and clearly mark geographic locations referenced in the flora.

It is more a baseline biodiversity record than a field guide. While there are photos of 9 typical habitats of the region, the reason for their inclusion and placement is not apparent. And, for almost 1,600 taxa, it only provides photos of 9 endemic or endangered species. Species are only described within the identification keys, which are given exclusively in a dichotomous format. It might be a bit tedious to read and use such a key to identify species in the field.

Mistretta assumes readers fully understand botanical and taxonomic terminology used in the keys, referring them to online resources for descriptions of identification terms. That also, may not be practical for a researcher in the field.

—Sheila Strawn, *Author of Lichen Study Guide for Oklahoma and Surrounding States and Lichen Field Guide for Oklahoma and Surrounding States, Midwest City, Oklahoma, U.S.A.*