

Wild Plants and Native Peoples of the Four Corners. William W. Dunmire and Gail D. Tierney. Museum of New Mexico Press, Santa Fe, 1997. Pp. 313. \$22.50 (paper). ISBN: 0-89013-319-0.

Wild Plants and Native Peoples of the Four Corners is the second book by Dunmire and Tierney to explore native plant uses in the American Southwest. (*Wild Plants of the Pueblo Province* was published in 1994 and reviewed in the *Journal of Ethnobiology* 17:290-291). The intended audiences are those with no formal training in botany and anthropology, but it should prove a handy reference for trained ethnobiologists as well. Dunmire and Tierney present a good balance of linking prehistoric evidence of plant-people relationships with that of contemporary cultures and a welcome change from books that so often emphasize only one or the other. They focus first on the reconstructed and present-day flora(s) of five parks within the U.S. National Park System — Chaco Canyon, Aztec Ruins, Mesa Verde, Hovenweep, and Canyon de Chelly — and the peoples who inhabited these areas in the past. This information is tied to the present via the Hopi, who represent a direct cultural link with pre-Puebloan people, and by the relatively recently arrived Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute, and Jicarilla Apache.

The first ten chapters cover various aspects of Four Corners ethnobotany: the land, the earliest people, ancestral Puebloans, the four featured contemporary tribes, weedy gardens (agriculture, including semi-domesticates), wild plant use (arranged by food and beverage, medicine, construction and fuel, implements and ceremonial objects, baskets and cordage, textile, paint and dyes), and Four Corners ethnobotany (research methodology). Each chapter has its own list of suggested readings and, when reference is made to a plant treated in depth later in the text, it and its page number are noted in the margin. The bulk of the text (Chapter 11) is devoted to two- to four-page profiles of fifty of the wild plants that were, and continue to be, common and the most culturally important to the native peoples of the Four Corners region. Six trees, 18 shrubs, 24 herbs and two grasses are featured, arranged phylogenetically within each lifeform. Their natural history and past and present uses are summarized, and line drawings and color photographs are included for easy field identification. An annotated list of 515 useful plants provides helpful summary data organized by major use categories, with tribe(s) and reference(s) indicated.

Aside from occasional ambiguous wording and one case of poor editing (i.e., the wild plant use categories in the chapter by that title do not match exactly those found in the annotated list), my biggest concern is with the chapter entitled "Four Corners Ethnobotany." It sets out to inform the reader on how ethnobotanical research is done. While it does an admirable job of addressing various aspects of archaeobotany, palynology, dendrology, and such, it falls short in its coverage of modern ethnographic, linguistic, and ecological techniques. All in all, however, *Wild Plants and Native Peoples of the Four Corners* will be a valuable addition to the library of anyone who needs a practical readable reference to this corner of the world.

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