

BOOK REVIEW

Botany for Gardeners: An Introduction and Guide. Brian Capon. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press. 1990. Pp. 220. \$29.95. ISBN 0-88192-163-7.

In this small book, written to further the botanical knowledge and understanding of gardeners, the essentials of all aspects of general botany are lucidly and accurately presented, using a minimum of technical terminology. The clarity of presentation is further enhanced by accurate, aesthetically pleasing line drawings, executed by the author himself. In addition, there is a generous selection of color plates that, although very instructive, all but jump off the page in their beauty.

One may wonder why a book with gardeners as a targeted readership should be reviewed in the *Journal of Ethnobiology*. The reason, to me at least, is obvious. Many ethnobiologists, indeed many ethnobotanists, have had limited training in basic botany, with the result that their botanical knowledge is flawed, sometimes inaccurate, and often sadly deficient. (In all fairness, many ethnobiologists who are well trained in biology have had limited training in anthropology and archaeology.) I recommend this book designed for gardeners to those ethnobiologists with limited background in botany as a means of obtaining an integrated picture of general botany, and as a first step in developing the language and concepts to be conversant in the subject.

Although it is not possible to point out all the areas of botany surveyed in this slender volume, I would like to mention these: the nature of plant growth; organization of roots, stems, and leaves; adaptations to internal and external forces; environmental control of growth and development; plant water relations and mineral uptake; the morphology and physiology of reproduction; inheritance; etc. An organizational feature of the book which I like and which I think will be most useful to a novice is the Glossary-Index. If, for example, you would like to know the difference between a bulb, corm, and a rhizome, turn to the Glossary-Index to learn that a bulb is "a short, flattened stem bearing fleshy, food-storage leaves, pp. 108, 137, 197;" a corm is "a short, swollen underground stem in which food is stored, pp. 109, 197;" and a rhizome is "an underground, horizontal stem, pp. 101, 110, 197." The definitions may serve your immediate purposes very well in which case there is no need to turn to the pages referred to for additional discussion.

I reiterate that although this book will be of limited value to ethnobiologists with a fair to extensive background in botany, I recommend it to those who have picked up their knowledge of botany in a piece-meal fashion.

—W.V.