**Review: *Flora of North America North of Mexico***
Edited by Flora of North America Editorial Committee

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*Flora of North American North of Mexico: V.3: Magnoliophyta: Magnoliidae and Hamamelidae, ed. Flora of North America Editorial Committee. Oxford, 1997. 3v. 590pp. US $85.00. ISBN 0-19-511246-6.*

Conceived nearly 30 years ago, the *Flora of North America* series is intended as a guide for identification, and a systematic conspectus, of the North American flora. So far, one can see that both goals are very nicely being met. The third volume, of an expected 30 volumes, maintains the high standards for flora descriptions begun in volume 2, The Pteridophytes and Gymnosperms. Volume 1 is a set of essays by recognized authorities on plants in their physical, ecological, systematic, and historical settings. The success of a series such as this depends upon a clear mission, consistency of structure, maintenance of high standards, and reviewing each issue for needed alterations and additions. In keeping with the mission of the Flora editorial board, this third volume has maintained the mission with a thoroughly referenced treatment of a plant Division.

This volume treats the Magnoliophyta, including 15 Orders, 32 families, 128 genera, and 741 species. These include plants such as the buttercup, walnut, beech, and nettle. As with all the treatments, local flora publications will still be necessary. This, of course, is understandable; no series, even 30 volumes, can properly treat all geographic areas and the local flora. (Volume 22, The Butomaceae to Haemadoraceae, has just been sent to the publisher and is due in 1999. As with most floristic series, the volumes will be published out of order, when the experts have finished writing and editing.) As with the previous volumes, experts have reviewed the literature and examined herbarium specimens when possible. Important for botanists, students, or biodiversity specialists, are the features for each species. The geographic range is listed and maps are included along with the accepted names, descriptions, habitat summaries, and (unlike most flora publications) the chromosome number and phenologies. The literature citations are listed within each volume. Volume 30 will be a comprehensive, consolidated bibliography. The illustrated species, beautifully done, are regrettably

too few in numbers. However, illustrations of representative morphologies are well placed.

The depth of treatments of each taxa varies depending upon their frequency, naturalization, economic importance, or date of record. Specialized or Latin terminology has been replaced whenever possible. Specialized or Latin terminology has been replaced whenever possible. Any specialized terms are defined in the generic or family descriptions and are occasionally illustrated.

The Flora is also available on the Internet maintained at the Missouri Botanical Garden and the bibliography at the Hunt Institute. The URL is http://www.cbi.mobot.org/FNA/Portal/ The Internet version is confusing and not easy to use. The Flora of North America committee or FNA have plans to improve the Web site. Despite the problems with using the online version, one must consider the potential for this format. Corrections can be made more easily and quickly. However, I recommend the print version for its ease of use. The print version is probably preferable for ready reference and the online Web version for double checking species lists.

This series is an important addition to any academic and large public library. It is useful for students, teachers, researchers, and interested lay people. It is highly recommended for any institution with botanical or biodiversity interests.

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