

The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California

James C. Hickman (ed.) University of California Press, pp 1400, \$65

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By now most of you have already seen, heard about, or own a copy of *The Jepson Manual*. You may know that the University of California Press badly underestimated the demand. The book was out of print by June, two months or so after publication, but still available from some book stores. Hopefully, it will be reprinted by the time you read this review.

There have been some excellent comments and reviews on the book: Rhoda Love (Bull. Native Plant Society Oregon 26(5):48-1149. 1993) and Rudolf Schmid (Taxon 42(2):508-510. 1993.). A spring season of use by my systematic botany students is the basis of this review.

We found the manual to be user friendly and to have many fine features starting with the alphabetical arrangement of taxa. It would have been even better if page numbers were printed after the name in the family key and if a list of families with page numbers graced the inside pages of the front and back covers. Students who used such a list found family descriptions twice as fast as those who did not.

We like the telephone book headings on the pages, the family and the first and last genus on the page. We liked the etymology of generic names, the instant identification of aliens by the different type style of their names, and, of course, the illustrations. As always, we wished for more, but were grateful for those we had.

The illustrations are well executed and for the most part well chosen. Only when the plant we were working on wasn't illustrated did we think otherwise. The artists are to be commended for their skill and draftsmanship.

Students liked the glossary, even without a definition of "glabrous." They found the illustrations very helpful. The simplification of terms, no fronds, alas, may be commendable at one level, but not learning them now makes using older literature more difficult.

One student questioned the inclusion of horticultural information at the expense of other details. Perhaps blooming times and special features like odor would better suit most users. The latter certainly would not encourage, despite bold-faced exhortations against the practice, the taking of wild plants for garden use.

There were some things that surprised us, like the Papaveraceae-Fumariaceae or *Chamaecyparis-Cupressus* lumpings. "Recent detailed studies" are mentioned but not cited when justi-

fying the decision to combine the poppies and the bleeding hearts in one big family. Wolfe (the New World Cypresses. *Aliso* 1(1):1-250. 1948.) is cited, but Wolfe concerned himself with the traditional cypress species and mentioned *Chamaecyparis* only briefly. Why were these taxa combined? One student considered the marriage of *Chamaecyparis* and *Cupressus* "unforgivable."

Some new keys are excellent, particularly to larger groups like *Carex* or *Salix*. For willows, for example, there is a vegetative key, a key to pistillate plants and a key to staminate plants.

Some keys are less than excellent with vague references, "larger" vs. "smaller," and overlapping characters. "Lf margin wavy, gen \pm entire (less often \pm serrate)" vs "Lf margin faintly or not wavy, entire to serrate" is a couplet that makes one wonder if you will ever identify your unknown species.

Botanists not brought up on Hitchcock and Cronquist (*Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest*, University of Washington Press, 1973) might have trouble with the space-saving abbreviations. For the most part, *The Jepson Manual's* abbreviations are obvious and need no explanation, only practice.

The quality of the printing and the paper is excellent and should stand years of heavy use. Although every effort was made to contain the size, the volume is hardly a field manual. If you are concerned about the covers withstanding the abuse of field use, try plastic covers like Crystal Shield Book Savers, available at some large bookstores or library supply companies.

The Jepson Manual has set the standard for floras of the future. The taxonomic treatment of the taxa, their nomenclature and delineation will have influence beyond the political boundaries of California. If you are any kind of botanist you have to own it.

Sadly, James Hickman, chief editor of the Manual, passed away shortly after its completion. Hickman received his BS degree from Oberlin College and a PhD from the University of Oregon. He worked at Washington State University and Swarthmore College before taking a research position at the University Herbarium at Berkeley in 1978. In 1980 he moved to the Jepson Herbarium and in 1982 accepted the responsibility for the new *Jepson Manual*. We are grateful for his energy and vision. We hope he took pride in the important role he played in the completion of this monumental undertaking before his death.