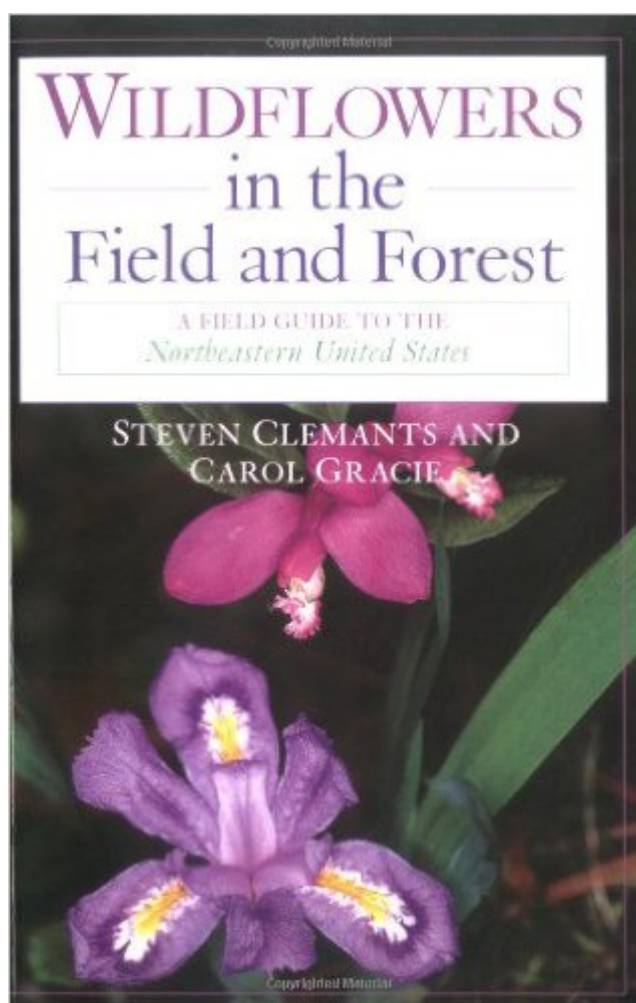


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Wildflowers In The Field And Forest: A Field Guide To The Northeastern United States (Jeffrey Glassberg Field Guide Series)



Synopsis

Many of us have stopped to pick bunches of wildflowers or have admired them as they flourished in fields, hiking trails, and roads. Always appreciated but not always recognized, now these beauties can easily be identified with *Wildflowers in the Field and Forest*, the most inclusive field guide available to the wildflowers of the northeastern United States. Designed for easy use, the book features two-page spreads with descriptive text and range maps on one side facing pages of color photos on the other. The descriptions are concise, but thorough, and the range maps show both where the plant grows and what time of year it is likely to be in bloom. Plants are grouped by flower color, usually the feature first noticed by the observer. The species are subsequently grouped by petal arrangement, type of leaves, and number of flower parts as indicated in the "quick characters" box at the top of each page. There is also a simple key in the beginning of the book that allows one to quickly narrow the search to a few pages. In addition to the more common and conspicuous wildflowers, many of the lesser known, and often overlooked, species are also depicted. Full-color photos generally show the flowers of the plant, and while insets of leaves (and occasionally fruits) are often included to help in identification. A bar on each photo allows users to accurately judge the actual size of each flower. Both serious botanists and casual nature observers will welcome this beautifully illustrated and expertly detailed guide. The most comprehensive field guide for the northeastern United States, including New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, with additional coverage of adjacent areas in eastern Canada. Over 1,400 species are described; nearly all are illustrated by beautiful color photographs. Photographs accurately depict the flowers; insets show details of leaves and other features. Photos, descriptions, and maps on facing pages make the book simple to use. Color-coded maps indicate both the range of the species and the time when it is in bloom.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The first thing that strikes you about this book is the quality of the photographs of the plants. Instead of the line drawings so often used, here are beautifully printed full color pictures of the blooms of the flowers. Note: FLOWERS, this is not a random guide to plants, but to flowers. Next comes the identification procedure that they have developed. Over a couple or three pages they provide a guide to identifying the plant. Here's an example: Flowers Yellow Leaves Opposite Leaves Simple Petals 4 - 6 Pages 140 to 153. The book covers the Northeastern United States from about Washington DC to Chicago, and up past Maine a little ways into Canada. Beautiful book.

The publication of a new field guide to the wildflowers of the northeastern United States and adjacent Canada is a major botanical event. When Oxford Press is the source of the publication we must be doubly impressed because of the high quality of Oxford field guides in general. I am happy to say that the Clemants and Gracie book has delivered an updated treatment of our herbaceous flora. Both authors have long experience in their respective major disciplines of plant taxonomy and botanical photography, Clemants as the Vice President of Science at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and formerly its Director of the New York Metropolitan Flora Project. (Disclosure: we have co-authored a few papers and we serve together on the council of the Torrey Botanical Society.) Gracie has long been a tropical botanist and illustrator, contributing to our knowledge of the flora and forest ecology of French Guiana, in tandem with her husband Scott Mori. The book displays 1450 species of the estimated 2000 in the region. The authors incorporate the latest taxonomic treatments of important groups. They provide for the very first time, in any flora or field guide, northeastern range maps of all their wildflowers. These maps are color-coded to display season of flowering. The book is meant for botanically untrained observers so that botanical jargon is kept to an absolute minimum. While the flowers are arranged by color, there is also a key ("outline guide") to illustrated flowers so that one can more easily find the correct page. On each page there are references to leaf form, leaf arrangement, and petal number. The photographs are extremely sharp and show fine detail of stamen number, pistil morphology and perianth features. And the photos are

beautiful, revealing features of tiny flowers that are overlooked in casual observation. That was the case with the *Lamium amplexicaule* photo. I have always liked that little weedy plant, but the revelation of the intricate pattern of spots on the lip of the lower petal made me realize just how beautiful it was. On the negative side, some photos are nearly indecipherable, such as the one of *Aconitum noveboracense*. Most wildflower guides have used colored line drawings for illustration. One exception is the National Audubon Society Field Guide to the Wildflowers: Eastern Region. Here we find 638 photographs, three to a page. In contrast, the 1450 photographs in the Clements/Gracie guide are arranged with 5-8 pictures to a page. Inevitably, something has got to suffer. In the present case it is the size of the illustrated flowers and, often, the loss of the plant's form. Leaf form is an important character for distinguishing closely related species. Where this is crucial to the identification, the picture of the flower contains an inset of the leaf, often from herbarium material. Without a flower present the book loses its usefulness. Having taught the subject of field botany for over 30 years, I know how important a good guide is to short-cutting the journey through keys for the entire northeastern flora. Some instant gratification goes a long way to making students life-long devotees of wildflowers. (I would suggest that instructors do as I did, provide hardcover classroom copies of a field guide, and then encourage the students to purchase soft cover copies for their future enjoyment.) I recommend this book for field botany classes. It has been authored by one of the foremost taxonomists of our region's flora. The book is beautiful from the cover illustration to the last page of plates. It is printed on high quality paper and has the feel of a magazine. For experienced field botanists, this book has an important place in any collection of field guides because of the up-to-date nomenclature, the maps and the detailed flower illustrations. Andrew M. Greller, Professor of Biology Emeritus, Queens College, CUNY, Flushing, New York 11791

"Wildflowers in the Field and Forest", by Clements and Gracie, is the most recent in the Glassberg series of field guides, which is so well known for its popular "Butterflies through Binoculars" series of books. The authors' treatment of northeastern wildflowers in this publication is nothing less than masterful! This field guide will be useful to the novice as well as the professional naturalist and botanist. With Glassberg's assistance, the authors have adopted his characteristic and user-friendly quick reference system. All photos, maps, text, etc., are conveniently arranged on facing pages. The photographic plates are exquisite. Species accounts are sorted first by color and then by leaf arrangement. Most convenient are the size bars placed as insets on all plates, showing the reader the exact size of the subject's flowers. Clements and Gracie describe almost 1,500 species of

wildflowers with emphasis on range, plant and flower structure, and size. There are only brief comments on habitat and ecology. The latter two subjects are left for treatment by other references, which are undoubtedly better stored on one's library shelf than taking up room in your daypack. Without a doubt, this publication is a must for anyone interested in the natural world.

This book has been a tremendous help in my efforts to identify the myriad wildflowers in our area. With only a couple of exceptions I have easily found a match for all my 'specimens'. I've learned the lesson that one needs a book that specializes in the area of search, NOT a general wildflower guide. The pictures are beautiful and the descriptions and seasonal maps also aid in the hunt.

This is a wonderful field book to ID BLOOMING plants and where they grow. The pictures of blooms are great, they provide an excellent guide to identification. It is well organized with a thorough index. I use this book every time I go out to hike or birdwatch and can honestly say it has increased knowledge of wild plants by 30 times. Super for the novice. Other people borrow it to look through while I am standing around. Problems: 1) BLOOMING ONLY, hit and miss with non-blooming plants, which is most of the lifecycle of a plant, really lacking in good pictures/drawing of leaves or the whole plant 2) No scientific description, no growth pattern, etc.

The wait has been long for a first-rate photographic field guide to eastern wildflowers, but it's here at last. Steven Clemants and Carol Gracie have clearly done years of leg work to produce this thorough and beautiful book. It's a gem. Everyone interested in the wildflowers of the Northeast will want to own it. Bravo to the authors and Oxford for this fine new addition to the outstanding and rapidly expanding Jeff Glassberg field guide series.

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