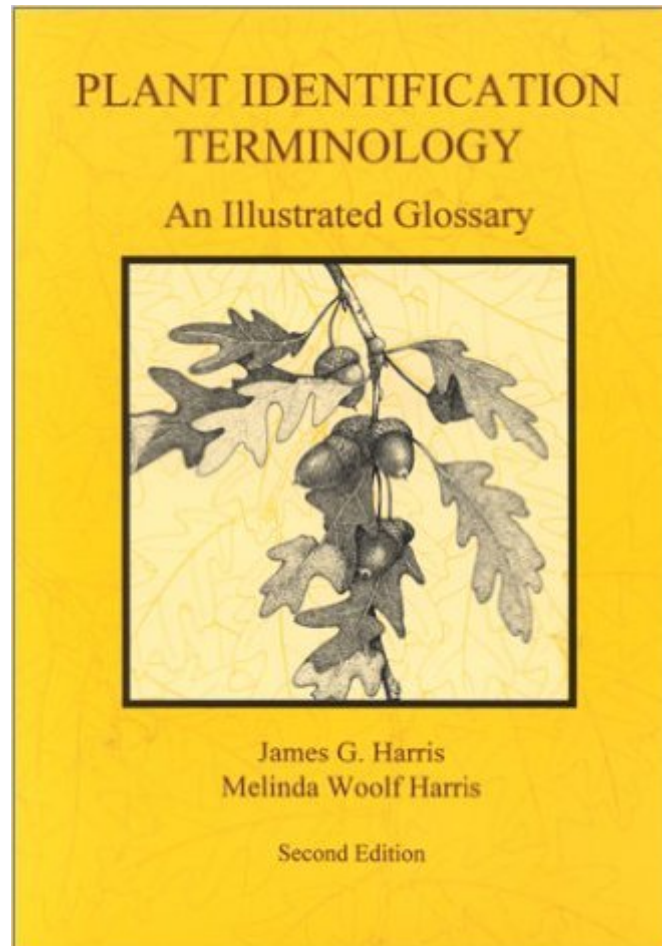


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Plant Identification Terminology: An Illustrated Glossary



Synopsis

Plant identification employs an extensive and complex terminology. Professional botanists often need several years in the field to master this terminology, and it presents a daunting obstacle to the student of botany. The meaning of most botanical terms, however, is immediately apparent when an illustration is available. That is the purpose of this volume. Plant Identification Terminology provides over nineteen hundred clear illustrations of terms used in plant identification keys and descriptions. It also includes definitions for more than twenty-seven hundred taxonomic terms.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The title says it all. This is an illustrated glossary to the terms you may encounter while identifying plants. It is beautifully illustrated and the definitions are clear and concise. The book takes much of the pain out of using an identification key and is tremendously useful for both professionals and students. I disagree with a previous reviewer who characterized this book as "shallow" because it doesn't include detailed information about the terms included. That's kind of like labeling a dictionary as "shallow" because it doesn't provide encyclopedic entries. "Plant Identification Terminology" isn't intended to be a comprehensive guide to plant morphology. This is a wonderful book at a surprisingly reasonable price and for its intended purpose it is the only game in town - nothing else even comes close.

I am a plant community ecologist that prides myself in knowing many of the plants in the Intermountain West. However, myself and students are always finding new plants, especially as we

move into new areas. My primary plant keys are the Intermountain Flora and Plants of the Pacific Northwest. Since I only key a couple months out of the year I forget many of the terms, needing a refresher as I start back out in the spring (my students call it winter death). My students and I find this book very useful and easy to use, particularly for beginning students. It is always with us in the field.

This is a great terminology dictionary. For anyone trying to use the Radford book (manual of the vascular flora of the Carolinas) or any similar book, this is a wonderful aid. Keys are often hard to use without knowing complete plant vocabulary, and this book covers everything I've ever encountered. The diagrams are particularly helpful in this book. For example, if you need to know if a leaf is sagittate or hastate and the book says (and it does) Sagittate: "arrowhead-shaped, with the basal lobes directed downward" and Hastate: "arrowhead-shaped, but with the basal lobes turned outward rather than downward; halberd-shaped" you may not be sure which your plant is, but both have very good diagrams to show the difference. Small things like which way the lobes are turned can make a big difference in keying plants, and sometimes a picture is worth a definition rather than a thousand words.

A comprehensive and beautifully illustrated book, but not one a beginner should pick up and try to read from the beginning. It's possible to figure things out by piecing together the definitions and diagrams, but you have to work at it:page 1 Acarporus. Without carpels; lacking a gynoecium.page 22 Carpel. A megasporophyll. A simple pistil formed from one modified leaf, or the part of a compound pistil formed from one modified leaf. Carpel number of a compound pistil is determined by counting the number of stigmas, styles, locules and placentae. Carpel number is indicated by whichever of these parts is found in the greatest number.page 52 Gynoecium. All of the carpels of a pistil of a flower collectively.page 68 Megasporophyll. A modified leaf which bears one or more megasporangia.

This is the kind of book every beginning botanist ought to have. Directing an herbal medicine school, I teach people how to use a technical key, in our case "Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas." Having this book at hand means that my students don't have to memorize the 30 different ways that a leaf can be hairy -- pubescent, tomentose, scurfy, etc. For those of us who aren't botany majors (and maybe some who are), having this book at your side while keying out a plant is indispensable. Can't think of another book like it.

If you need to identify any plants using a taxonomic key or any other botanical guide, this book helps enormously to clarify the technical terms. It's like learning another language and this book is your dictionary.

Very good visual and textual descriptions of plant parts-essential to working through a plant key. I recommend it for my college plant id lab.

The second edition differs from the first mainly in a revision of the line-drawings which constitute the illustrations. In addition some entries were added and a much brighter cover was adopted. This is a great book for quickly making sure of a not entirely familiar term. This of course is also the big limitation: there is very little background info, which makes it a pretty shallow work. The idea of shallowness is reinforced since it indeed is written purely from a phytographer's point of view: it is limited to morphology only. When I have a real question I turn to Bell's "Plant_Form" which contains much more information. As I said this is a great book for a quick check, but nothing beyond that.

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