BOOK REVIEW


This large and beautiful book is sure to become a favorite reference for systematic botany, field botany, and introductory plant biology classes. Based on the author’s very useful and popular Photographic Atlas of Entomology and Guide to Insect Identification, the Photographic Atlas of Botany is a combination illustrated glossary of botanical terminology and reference on vascular plant families. Many students will appreciate the book, since the illustrations are photographs rather than line drawings. Most of the photos were taken specifically for the book, and most in the southeastern United States, although the author acknowledges a few photos contributed by others. Most of the photographs were taken in a studio, with consistent lighting and close-up lenses; then in the close-up photos, the background has been “dropped out” and replaced with a blue or neutral background so that the features being illustrated are easier to distinguish. In those photos where a specific structure is being illustrated, an arrow is used to point out that feature. Thus, for example, a nectar disk and staminodes are pointed out within the context of a carpellate flower. Although there are multiple photos per page, each is sufficiently sized to illustrate a feature or features quite clearly (the smallest, for example, is a 2 × 2 in. photo of a schizocarp of Acer rubrum). The photos are clear and well chosen; probably the only suggestion I would have for a second edition would be to include the magnification for each, although the inclusion of multiple photos usually makes relative size clear.

The Photographic Atlas of Botany is divided into two main parts. The first covers anatomical and morphological features of vascular plants, and the second treats 153 vascular plant families. The 58-page “anatomy” section is organized by major structure: roots, stems, leaves, flowers, and fruits. For each structure, its functions are listed, and then terminology related to that structure, as well as morphological and anatomical features, are illustrated. For example, after listing the functions of roots, types of specialized roots are pictured (e.g., adventitious, haustoria, pneumatophores), and then photos of general morphological and anatomical features of roots and root tissues appear. There are some very helpful inclusions in this book that I haven’t seen in others; for example, there is