

BOOK REVIEW

Aquatic Plants of Pennsylvania: A Complete Reference Guide by
T. A. Block and A. F. Rhoads. 2011. 308 pp. ISBN 978-0-
8122-4306-2 \$59.95 (hardcover). University of Pennsylvania
Press, Philadelphia, PA.

Aquatic plants collectively comprise a group of species uniquely adapted to life in, under, or on watery habitats. With a growing appreciation of their diversity and often peculiar adaptations, and the realization of the unfortunate ecological problems that exotic members of this group can inflict, their proper identification has become increasingly important.

Timothy Block and Ann Rhoads' study of the flora of Pennsylvania has been extensive and fruitful. This book is a more focused treatment, which complements their more comprehensive manual, *The Plants of Pennsylvania* (Rhoads and Block 2007), and represents the state's first aquatic plant identification guide. It covers 192 species in 44 families of truly aquatic angiosperms, ferns, fern-allies, bryophytes, and macroalgae found in freshwater lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers of Pennsylvania.

The book is divided into eight chapters with the first dedicated to evolutionary (morphological variations, variability, rarity, reproduction, and dispersal) and ecological (habitats and management) aspects of the biological group. The second chapter centers on species identification and includes taxonomic keys partitioned by six growth forms (i.e., emergent floating-leaf species, submergent leafy-stemmed species, submergent rosette-forming species, etc.). The remaining six chapters, representing the bulk of the book, are dedicated to descriptions of the species within each growth form. Each species description occupies a page and includes information on form, habitat, geographic range, and hints at identification. The descriptive text is accompanied by a colored dot map, and line drawing and/or color photograph.

A distinct benefit of this manual is its usability to both specialists and nonspecialists. The indented keys are easy to follow and constructed using few technical terms. A few figures are strategically placed adjacent to keys where clarification may be needed. For example, a figure is presented to distinguish between the