

Book Review

Hugh Nourse and Carol Nourse. 2007. *Favorite Wildflower Walks in Georgia*. The University of Georgia Press, Athens, Georgia. \$19.95. 190 pages. ISBN 10:0-8203-2841-3.

This soft cover book is a field guide to 20 outstanding wildflower trails on public lands in Georgia. All regions of the state are featured from the mountains through the piedmont to the coastal barrier islands. Trails were chosen that offer unusual habitats, easy to moderate walks (generally under 2 mi), and abundant wildflowers. No two trails are alike and habitats vary from limestone glades, sand dunes, pitcher plant bogs, mountain coves, and river bluffs. Detailed trail maps with accompanying text, as well as a scenic photo of the dominant habitat are presented. Directions to trailheads, mileage, and difficulty ratings are given. There are some trails where alternative or longer routes may be chosen and these are pointed out. A summary chart suggests the best months to visit for peak blooming periods. General descriptions of the habitats with conspicuous wildflowers highlighted are discussed sequentially as you would walk through them in the field.

For each of the trails, a total of five typical wildflowers are given special treatment with descriptive notes and photos. This results in 100 color portraits and makes for an excellent beginner's guide to the more characteristic plants of each area. A useful and practical index features common names and scientific names, but for each scientific name there is a parenthetical common name. This is a user friendly way of presenting scientific names

for those in need of identification accuracy. The plant descriptions avoid technical language for the most part, but occasionally some terms have crept into the descriptions – such as raceme.

This reviewer feels that a few introductory pages on plant identification explaining basic flower parts, samples of leaf shapes, leaf arrangements, and inflorescence types - perhaps making use of the inside of the front and back covers - would make the book more useful. The authors recommend using other field guides for explanations of technical terms, concepts of family characters, and as the next step in becoming an expert in plant identification.

This booklet was clearly written to enhance an appreciation of wildflowers and to fill a need to provide guidance on accessible places to do so. The authors have succeeded in this goal and provide a botanically sound little volume. I especially like the strong conservation ethics exhibited throughout the text – no trampling, stay on the trail, no picking, no digging. The need to preserve natural areas for future generations to enjoy is an underlying theme. I strongly recommend this guide as a primer for teachers and leaders of walks and for anyone interested in observing the wildflowers of Georgia. Along some of these trails, unusual and sometimes rare species may be encountered. The authors are steadfast in educating readers about the sensitivity of these sites and their fragility.

—Thomas S. Patrick, Nongame Conservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Social Circle, Georgia 30025.