Using photographs only for identification can result in a misidentified specimen. In The Macro-
lichens of New England the blend of text and images will enable the user to avoid this error. There are
incredible photos of very rare lichens not typically seen by the average lichenologist. The paired photo exam-
pies of various species showing the upper and lower
urface (Peltigera sp.), wet thallus versus dry thallus
(i.e., Placodium arboretum, Physconia detersa, and
Pyxine sorediata), and macro versus micro features
(i.e., Leptogium, Sterocalon, Usnea) make this book
impressively valuable because some of these species
can only be separated by comparing these features.

The book is 7 1/2 inches wide 10 1/4 inches long and
1 3/4 inches deep. It weighs approximately 2.0 kg. Al-
though the book is by no means light, it is a more
manageable field guide than Brodo et al, which is
roughly twice the size and weight, making this book
a more welcome field companion. I have toted both
into backwoods locations and appreciated the size and
weight difference. It has a hard durable cover with a
small ruler drawn on the last page that could be used
for field measurements. If taken into the field, how-
ever, the glossy covers will inevitably get scratched as
there is no slip cover to protect it.

The authors tout this book as the “the most compre-
ensive work of its kind” and they deliver. This book,
like Brodo et al., will be an instant classic. Those who
read this book will have no choice but to be drawn
into the world of these fascinating organisms.

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Wild Plants of Eastern Canada

By Marilyn Walker. 2008. Nimbus Publishing Ltd., P.O. Box
9166, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 5M8. 202 pages, 24.95
CAD.

Wild Plants of Eastern Canada was not what I ex-
pected. I was looking forward to another wild plant
field guide, a cross-referencing source, a book offering
additional details and visuals to aid in identifying
those hard-to-pin-down native asters and goldenrods.
That’s not what Wild Plants of Eastern Canada is
about.

My first reaction to the book was, consequently, mild
annoyance – which developed into growing curiosity,
then pleasant surprise the further I read. Wild Plants
of Eastern Canada turns out to be more than a wild
plant identification guide. Divided into three parts –
(1) “Plants and People of the Northeast”, (2) “Field
Guide”, (3) “Recipes” – the book is a human and nat-
tural history, an identification tool (of sorts), and a
recipe book.

Part 2, the “Field Guide”, takes up the most pages.
It contains extensive information on each plant pro-
tfiled, including scientific and “other” names, general
information about the plant family, habitat details, a
physical description of the plant, and, depending on the
species, sections on usable parts, common uses, medic-
inal properties, and garden-related particulars. The
accompanying black-and-white photographs are help-
ful while the leaf prints add a subtle artistic touch.

The recipes covering almost 40 pages in Part 3 of
Wild Plants of Eastern Canada are intriguing. They
range from “classics” such as teas and bannock, to
preparations using petals, buds, roots, and berries.
I have not yet had the opportunity to try any of them,
but I am looking forward to trying out goldenrod
crepes, dandelion leaf sandwiches, and clover butter.

Part 1 of the book I found the most interesting and
most trying. It was there, not far into the section, that
I discovered the book’s most frustrating limitation:
its geographical scope. I had assumed the “Eastern
Canada” part of the book’s title to refer to the usual
territory stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the
western end of Ontario. Yet Wild Plants of Eastern
Canada ends up covering the Maritime provinces
only – not a bad thing if that is what the reader is
expecting. But as a Quebec resident, I was hoping my
region was included in the book.

The rest of the information in Part 1 comes as a
pleasant surprise. Rich in historical and anthropolog-
ical detail, it provides a succinct and comprehensive
overview of Atlantic Canada’s paleoenvironment,
European settlement, and Aboriginal history and cul-
ture, including First Nations traditional plant knowl-
edge.

I found the first sub-section, “Like Plants, Like
People” the most intriguing. There, the author writes:
“Like people, plants are great colonizers. They wan-
der about, singly or in “herds”, trying out new condi-
tions until they find somewhere to settle in. If the
environment is not suitable, they go elsewhere out of
necessity, or perhaps out of the same sense of adven-
ture that inspired human migration” — an intriguing,
and for me appealing, perspective.

My main gripe with the book is its main title. Wild
Plants of Eastern Canada is misleading, and the extra
text on the front and back covers does not provide any
clues regarding the geographical scope of the book.
Yet for individuals able to get their hands on it, the
smaller typeface on the front cover — “Identifying,
Harvesting and Using”, “Includes recipes & medici-
nal uses” — provides helpful hints regarding the
book’s content.

Wild Plants of Eastern Canada is a welcome addi-
tion to the wild plants section of my bookshelves,
despite its limitations and frustrations.

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