

CALIFORNIA PLANT GUIDES

California has a remarkably diverse flora and there are many guides available to help you identify species when you are analyzing allotment vegetation.

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDES:

- Abrams, L. 1923. Illustrated Flora of the Pacific States, Vol. 1; Vol. 2, 1944; Vol 3, 1951. Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, CA
Each species has a small illustration with a focus on identification features.
- Abrams, L. and R.S. Ferris, 1960. Illustrated Flora of the Pacific States, Vol 4. Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, CA
Same comments as for above volumes.
- Cronquist, A., A.H. Holmgren, N.H. Holmgren, J.L. Reveal, P.K. Holmgren. 1994 (reprint, copyright 1977). Intermountain Flora, Vascular Plants of the Intermountain West, U.S.A. Volume Six (monocots). The New York Botanical Garden.
Nice illustrations, descriptions, keys, brief habitats. Works for Great Basin areas. Other volumes also available. Especially useful are the illustrations for the grasses, sedges and rushes. Most of the species described occur in California.
- Griffin, J.R. and W.B. Critchfield. 1972. The Distribution of Forest Trees in California. USDA Forest Service Res. Pap PSW-82.
- Harris, J.G., Woolf Harris, M. 1994. Plant Identification Terminology: An Illustrated Glossary. Spring Lake Publishing. Spring Lake, Utah
"Plant Identification Terminology provides over seventeen hundred clear illustrations of terms used in plant identification keys and descriptions. It also includes definitions for more than twenty-four hundred taxonomic terms." Excellent reference to use in addition to or in the absence of a glossary for any field guide or manual being used (especially because of all the diagrammatic illustrations). This is a must for your library.
- Hickman, J.C., Editor. 1993. The Jepson Manual of Higher Plants of California. U.C. Press Berkeley, CA
The current "Bible", i.e., the latest, accepted authority (since Munz). Updated, easier to use than Munz (especially because of diagrammatic illustrations), but still requiring a moderate to high degree of botanical knowledge/skill to be able to understand and use to key plants accurately.

- Hitchcock, A.S., A. Chase 1950. Manual of the Grasses of the United States, second edition. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Misc. Publ. 200
Still an excellent identification guide for the grasses. Be aware that the taxonomy in this book is rapidly becoming outdated. Check the Jepson Manual for the more current plant names.
- Hitchcock, C.L. and A. Cronquist. 1973. Flora of the Pacific Northwest. U. of Wash. Press., Seattle, WA.
The field version of the Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest. (see below). Well illustrated with very good keys for grasses, sedges and willows. Works well for the Northwest Coast, the Cascades and the Modoc Plateau.
- Hitchcock, C.L., Cronquist, A., Ownbey, M., Thompson, J.W. 1955-69. Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest. Univ. of Wash. Press. Seattle, WA. 5 volumes.
Beautifully illustrated and very good for grasses, grass-like plants (Vol. 1) and willows. Works well for the Northwest Coast, the Cascades and the Modoc Plateau.
- Mason, H.L. 1957. A Flora of the Marshes of California. U.C. Press Berkeley, CA
A very good guide for plants of wet meadows and streamsides. Definitely not restricted to true marshes.
- McMinn, Howard E. 1970. An Illustrated Manual of California Shrubs. University of California Press. Berkeley, California.
More detailed descriptions than Jepson for shrubs, includes specific distributions. Some black and white photos; mostly diagrammatic illustrations.
- Munz, P.A. 1959. A California Flora. U.C. Press, Berkeley, CA. Also a Supplement (1968).
Detailed descriptions and distribution (given by plant community and county). A good place to look for more information about a species after you have used Jepson or other good keys. Essentially no illustrations and no photos.
- Whitson, Tom D., editor. 1992. Weeds of the West. The Western Society of Weed Science in cooperation with the Western United States Land Grant Universities Cooperative Extension Services and the University of Wyoming. Jackson, Wyoming.
Excellent photographs, with species organized by plant family. Narrative description including types of habitats typically invaded. A "must have" for your library.

LOCAL FLORAS:

The listing includes some of the smaller floras available for a local area. Talk to your forest botanist for more suggestions. If you have used another key and still have questions about the species you are trying to identify, these references can help you narrow-down the possibilities to those that are known for your county or immediate area.

Brunsfeld, S.J. and F.D. Johnson. 1985. Field Guide to the Willows of east-central Idaho. University of Idaho; Forest, Wildlife and Range Experiment Station Bull. No. 39.

Not really local, but seems to work pretty well for northeastern California. Includes good illustrations.

Gillett, G.W., J.T. Howell, H. Leschke; revised by V.H. Oswald, D.W. Showers, M.A. Showers. 1995. A Flora of Lassen Volcanic National Park, California. California Native Plant Society.

Keys and brief notes on habitats and elevations. No description (except those given in the keys) or illustrations.

Janeway, L.P. 1992. Cyperaceae of Butte County, CA, Part 1: Carex. Studies from the Herbarium, California State University, Chico.

Keys, descriptions, habitat, Butte County distribution and map, and taxonomic discussion. Illustration of Carex plant parts but not individual species.

Moe, L. Maynard. 1995. A Key to Vascular Plants of Kern County, California.

Published together with A Flora of Kern County, California by Twisselmann. California Native Plant Society. Sacramento, California.

Oswald, V.H. and L. Ahart. 1994. Manual of the Vascular Plants of Butte County, California. California Native Plant Society.

Keys and brief notes on habitats and elevations. No descriptions or illustrations. Appendices include essays on plant names and pronunciation and glossaries of generic names and epithets. It's useful especially for its narrowed-down keys.

Thomas, John Hunter and Dennis R. Parnell. 1974. Native Shrubs of the Sierra Nevada. California Natural History Guides: 34. University of California press. Berkeley, California.

Not comprehensive, but including the common shrub genera and most species for the Sierra. Not very technical. Good diagrammatic drawings and some color plates. Convenient and easy to use in the field.

Twisselmann, Ernest C. 1967. A Flora of Kern County. Reprinted by California Native Plant Society from The Wassmann Journal of Biology 25 (1 and 2) and published together with A key to Vascular Plants of Kern County, California by Moe (1995). *Excellent narrative of the natural history of plants in Kern County with black and white photos combined with a catalog listing of species (by family) and known locations. (No species descriptions). Good for location or range confirmation. Excellent color photos and brief descriptions of many invasive introduced (and some native) species for this area. Non-technical. Only general ranges within the Western states given. Useful for exotic/noxious weed control species verification.*

TO GET YOU STARTED:

The following references are basic guides to help you become familiar with some of the plants that may occur in your area. They are meant as introductory tools and the other, more comprehensive guides listed above should be used for positive identification of plants.

Crampton, Beecher. 1974. Grasses of California. California Natural History Guides: 33. University of California Press. Berkeley, California.

A good starting place, but you should depend more on a larger flora like Jepson or Munz. Small color plates (mostly distance views of plants in natural settings) for some species and diagrammatic drawings for most.

Faber, P.M., R.F. Holland, 1988. Common Riparian Plants of California: A Field Guide for the Layman. Pickleweed Press, Mill Valley, CA

Direct photocopies of live plants(1:1 scale) that immediately help you see key features. Great book to page through to become familiarized with common plants. Species from montane Sierra to coastal forests to Mojave Desert represented.

Horn, Elizabeth L. 1976. Wildflowers 3. The Sierra Nevada. The Touchstone Press. Beaverton, Oregon.

"A field guide to selected flowers and foliage of the Sierra Nevada Mountains." Organized by habitat type. Good for the layman (no key) with non-technical but informative, useful plant descriptions and color photos for species (broadleaved plants, shrubs and trees; no grasses) commonly found in four different types of habitats.

Little, Elbert L., Susan Rayfield and Olivia Buehl. 1980. The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees. Western Region. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. New York, New York.

Good descriptions, easy to use and excellent color photo plates. Missing some local varieties.

Neihaus, Theodore F. 1974. Sierra Wildflowers. Mt. Lassen to Kern Canyon. California Natural History Guides: 32. University of California Press, Berkeley, California.

Includes the common wildflower genera and species for the Sierra. Good diagrammatic drawings and some color plates. Convenient and easy to use in the field.

Neihaus, Theodore F. and Charles L. Ripper. 1976. A Field Guide to Pacific States Wildflowers. The Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, Massachusetts.

Good for the layman for herbaceous, broadleaved plants, primarily because of illustrations (color and black and white drawings), short, simple species descriptions and minimal technical terminology. Organized by family within flower color groups.

Peterson, P. Victor and P. Victor Peterson, Jr. 1975. Native Trees of the Sierra Nevada. California Natural History Guides: 36. University of California Press. Berkeley, California.

Not comprehensive, but includes the common tree genera and most species for the Sierra. Good diagrammatic drawings and some color plates. Convenient and easy to use in the field.

Petrides, George A. Olivia Petrides. 1992. Western Trees. The Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, Massachusetts.

Practical, easy to use, good species and distribution descriptions. Not too technical. Good for illustrations and plates.

Taylor, Ronald J. and Rolf W. Valum. 1974. Wildflowers 2. Sagebrush Country. The Touchstone Press. Beaverton, Oregon.

Organized by family, with key includes. Excellent color photos and good, non-technical species descriptions. Although oriented more towards Great Basin flora, includes many common genera and species found in the drier habitats of the Sierra Nevada.

Weeden, Norman F. 1986. A Sierra Nevada Flora. Wilderness Press. Berkeley, California. New, revised 1996 edition also available, updated to conform to Jepson Manual.

Compact, concise field guide, containing many local species, varieties. Good preliminary reference to Jepson. Diagrammatic sketches limited and generally of poor quality.