

BOOK REVIEW

Mohlenbrock, Robert H. Sedges: *Carex*. 1999. xvi + 329 pages; dichotomous keys; descriptions; illustrations; distribution maps; glossary; literature cited; species index. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville, Illinois. Cloth. Price: US\$59.95. Available from the Southern Illinois University Press, P.O. Box 3697, Carbondale, IL 62902-3697.

Sedges: *Carex* is a recent release in the Illustrated Flora of Illinois series and completes a set of six volumes treating the monocots. The other five volumes, by the same author deal with monocot forbs (1970), rushes (1970), grasses (1972, 1973), and non-*Carex* sedges (1976).

The identification of species of *Carex* is a difficult task to say the least; however, to this end the author has provided an outstanding manual that will greatly enhance the users' chances of accurately identifying species of *Carex* occurring in Illinois. The dichotomous keys are effective. The first key is to 13 genera of Cyperaceae in Illinois. This key will be very helpful to beginning students of the family. The second key, actually a set of keys, is to the species of *Carex* treated in the manual by way of five species and 15 groups. Subsequently, each group has its own dichotomous key to the species comprising the group. There are 159 species covered, of which five species are considered varieties, and for three species, two varieties are recognized. Hence, the author places a total of 162 taxa in Illinois' *Carex* flora.

A commendable feature of the manual is the user's ability to move quickly from the dichotomous keys to descriptions and illustrations which are numerically arranged. This is possible because each species is assigned a unique number in the keys and that number will lead the user directly to its description and illustrations. The descriptions of the species and information on their habitats, ranges, and distributions in Illinois with dot maps are excellent. Also, students of *Carex* will appreciate the bibliographic documentation for each species and variety, as well as for the synonyms listed. The illustrations by Paul Nelson are superb. All species are illustrated consistently by line drawings of the whole plant and other important diagnostic structures (e.g., pistillate scale, perigynium, and achene). However, the illustration on page 282 is apparently superfluous.

Mohlenbrock's manual for Illinois *Carex* is highly recommended for all college and university libraries in Illinois. Furthermore, it needs to be added to the personal libraries of those doing serious floristic, plant ecologic, or plant restorational works, especially in wetland habitats, in Illinois and neighboring states.

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