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Wildflowers Of The High Sierra And John Muir Trail



Synopsis

This new book by Sierra expert Elizabeth Wenk includes photos and descriptions of approximately 300 species of wildflowers and flowering shrubs in the High Sierra. Focused on areas above 8,000 feet in elevation from Yosemite south through the Whitney Region, by restricting the collection of species to higher elevations, the book can include all commonly seen species and nearly half of all higher elevation species in a compact guide. Make plant identification more approachable to hikers, this book differentiates between species using features easily identifiable to a non-botanist.

Descriptions include the species' common and scientific names, family name, growth form, flowering time, elevation range, region, specific locations on popular trails, and how to identify the plant using color, petal number, leaf shape, height, and more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Elizabeth Wenk has hiked and climbed in the Sierra Nevada with her family since childhood. After she started college, she found excuses to spend every summer in the Sierra, with its beguiling landscape, abundant flowers, and near-perfect weather. During those summers, she worked as a research assistant and completed her Ph.D. thesis research on the effects of rock type on alpine plant distribution and physiology. She lives in Sydney, Australia.

This book is sure to become an immediate hit with wildflower lovers who spend time in the High Sierra from Yosemite south to Mt. Whitney. Conveniently arranged by flower color for easy reference, the author's many photographs illustrate each flower. The book is packed with interesting

tidbits of sidebar information that relate to the broad ecosystem of the High Sierra, including such anecdotes as the typical diet of the pika, why flowers sometimes sport unusual colors in soils around marble and a fascinating reference to the wild patterns that bees can see on flower petals with their superior UV eyesight. The author, Elizabeth Wenk, PhD, is already well known to all who hike the John Muir Trail under her steady guidance using her "Essential Guide to the John Muir Trail". In that guidebook she liberally sprinkles information about the flora, fauna and geology of the region, but it wasn't enough and hikers wanted more. This wildflower book is the answer to those many requests. Day hikers, thru-hikers and casual visitors who love the brilliantly colored wildflowers that thrive in the harsh environment of the High Sierra will find much to interest them in this book, from basic flower identification to learning fascinating facts about the area. A sample was obtained from the publisher for review purposes which I use for at home to compare to my photographs but I bought the Kindle version so I can always have it with me when I'm hiking. I like to be able to zoom out on the photos in the digital version, which aids in identification in the field.

I bought this wildflower guide book for our recent trip to Yosemite National Park. While it is extremely informative about the habitat of the Sierra Nevadas, it has a few shortcomings. I'll begin with the advantages of this guide. 1) The description of flowers, leaves, and stems are very detailed. 2) The location of the flower where usually seen is given. That's helpful for some of us who only have finite amount of time to find the flower. 3) The Elevation and Season were helpful for us to plan time of year to go find the particular flower. The Shortcomings of this book: 1) The photos were at the most on average 2 inches length and 1 1/2 inches width. Therefore flowers were about 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch in the photo. It's very hard to try to compare to live specimen. 2) Each flower heading was the Latin name ! followed by the common name in parenthesis. The heading has a group of four tiny diamonds before the Latin name to designate a new heading. In addition, it's in very small font, in italics, and NOT Boldfaced. The part that is color shaded are Distribution, Habitat, Elevation, Season, and Location. Imagine trying to distinguish the headings while the sunlight is reflecting off these glossy pages. This guide needs to be reorganized for it to be more utilitarian. I ended up using the "Falcon Guide Sierra Nevada Wildflowers" and "Wildflowers of Yosemite".

I'm not sure what I can add to the previous reviews except to say that the strength of a field guide is in its practical usefulness. By this measure, Elizabeth Wenk's new guidebook of the Wildflowers of the High Sierra excels. It is compact enough that you will actually take it into the field. It concisely covers a specific area so that you are not lost searching through pages of descriptions of species

not found in the High Sierra. Further, for novice and experienced botanists, the organization first by flower color, then into two plant types (dicot vs monocot) probably makes identification quicker, especially for those with limited knowledge of plants. Very useful are the descriptions of the elevation and habitat where certain wildflowers are likely to be found. That information is extremely helpful where there are similar looking flowers. I especially liked the sidebar discussions covering such topics as "The Importance of Fire", "Treeline", "How Old are Alpine Plants", "Decisions Plants Make", "Pika Diets", etc. Excellent field guide. I highly recommend it if your plans include hiking the Sierra Nevada.

Elizabeth Wendy's love for biology and the High Sierra is evident in this thoughtfully organized and well written guide book. The photos are beautiful and Wendy's descriptions and guidance to bloom time, elevations and specific location are terrific! This book is more than worth the weight to carry along in the pack back on my next High Sierra sojourn!

Great detail in the writing. Pictures are small

Great book in great condition.

a little big to take on the trail but loads of interesting tid-bits

Nice book!

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