

BOOK REVIEW

DELENA TULL. 1999. **Edible and Useful Plants of Texas and the Southwest.** (ISBN 0-292-78164-4, pbk.). University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819, U.S.A. (512-471-4032, 512-320-0668 fax; orders: 800-252-3206 or 800-687-6046 fax; www.utexas.edu/utpress/). \$24.95 pbk., xxiv + 518 pp. Line drawings, 57 color photos.

Edible and Useful Plants of Texas and the Southwest is just as its subtitle says: a practical guide. In its second edition (first in paperback) this book, by Delena Tull, offers information on plant characteristics, habitat, and range in Texas, to be used with a supplemental and more detailed flora of Texas. Despite the preface in which the author goes on about the joys of her new home, Alaska, the book is undoubtedly written by a lover of Texas biota. Subsequently, other lovers of the Texas outdoors and its biological diversity will find it valuable and enjoyable.

The book breaks down in seven major parts followed by a glossary, bibliography, and index. **Part One**, titled "Edible and Useful Wild Plants" discusses native plants and tips on grazing from wild plants. What follows is a list of over 30 plant families who have species that are edible and/or useful. This is roughly a third of the book and offers encyclopedic reference to native Texas plants and their uses. **Part Two**, "Teas and Spices" covers 40 plants used as such. **Part Three**, "Edible and Poisonous Berries and Other Fleshy Fruits" is incredibly valuable for the camper or naturalists who wants to distinguish a poisonous fruit from an edible one. **Part Four**, "Poisonous and Harmful Plants" discusses similar issues and covers first aid methods for toxic plant ingestion, dispels some myths about poisonous plants, livestock poisoning, plant toxins, and then lists toxic wild plants by family. **Part Five**, "Colorful Dyes with Texas Plants" is definitely a strong point of this book. First discussing vegetable dyes historically and dyes today, and going on to discuss fibers for dyeing, factors that influence dye colors, dyeing techniques and dye recipes. **Part Six**, "Fibers from Texas Plants" covers plants for basketmaking, textile fibers, and papermaking. Part Seven, "Rubber, Wax, Oil, and Soap: Industrial Resources from Texas Plants" closes the book.

This would be a great book for any Texas university-level economic botany class. This is a great book to take out in the field to identify useful and edible plants and taking them back to a lab to do a number of projects, whether, papermaking, basket weaving, or dyeing textiles. This book, along with Simpson and Ogorzaly's *Economic Botany*, Murphey's *Indian Uses of Native Plants*, and perhaps a selected ethnography of local group, would be suitable for an Economic Botany class that could be cross listed for both anthropology and botany credit. With 50 plus color plates and twice as many black and white illustrations this edition is field ready and easily accessible.

While the possibilities of using this book in the academic level are exciting, it should find wide readership among naturalists and/or Texas lovers. As a field guide for identification and an encyclopedic reference of edible and economic uses of Texas plants, this book is must have for anyone waiting in anticipation for the spring and summer camping and hiking seasons.—Kevin D. Janni, *Botanical Research Institute of Texas*, kjanni@brit.org.



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