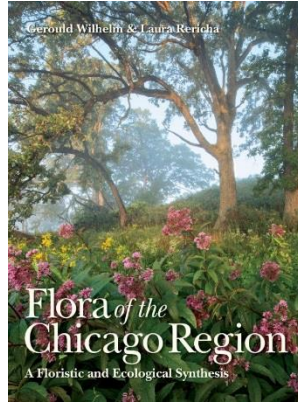


## PRAIRIE MOON NURSURY REVIEW:



[click image\(s\) below to view larger](#)



**6/15: Wow! In a very short time we've sold all our stock reserved for the introductory sale price! What a great response - thank you Plant Geeks!**

*Shipping fee is included (within the contiguous US) on this massive 10+ lb. book!* by Gerould Wilhelm & Laura Rericha

The long wait for plant geeks is over! This massively improved sequel to the 1994 edition of *Plants of the Chicago Region*, by Floyd Swink and Gerould Wilhelm, still has the familiar distribution maps and descriptions, but now boasts many hand-drawn illustrations and animal (vertebrate and invertebrate) associations for thousands of native species in 977 genera.

Brimming with new data, such as 24 full-color photo plates on plant-insect interactions, this 1,372-page volume is presented with impeccable scholarship. Especially fascinating is a reflective essay by senior author Gerould Wilhelm. The wealth of information is pertinent and applicable far beyond this book's Chicagoland focus.

Included with each book, all sturdily laminated, are a bookmark, Natural Divisions map of the Chicago region, Guide to the Floristic and Ecological Synthesis, and Surficial Geology Map of the Chicago Region.

## REVIEW IN MISSOURIENSIS

Missouriensis,35: 25-26. 2018. \*pdf effectively published online 29 January 2018 via <https://monativeplants.org/missouriensis25>

### Floristic Sublimity

BOOK REVIEW: Flora of the Chicago Region: A Floristic and Ecological Synthesis, by Gerould Wilhelm and Laura Rericha. 2017. Indiana Academy of Science, Indianapolis. xvii + 1371 pp. [ISBN 9781883362157 (hardbound)]

JUSTIN R. THOMAS

NatureCITE: Center for Integrative Taxonomy and Ecology, 1530 E. Farm Rd. 96, Springfield, MO 65803. email: [jthomas@botanytraining.com](mailto:jthomas@botanytraining.com)

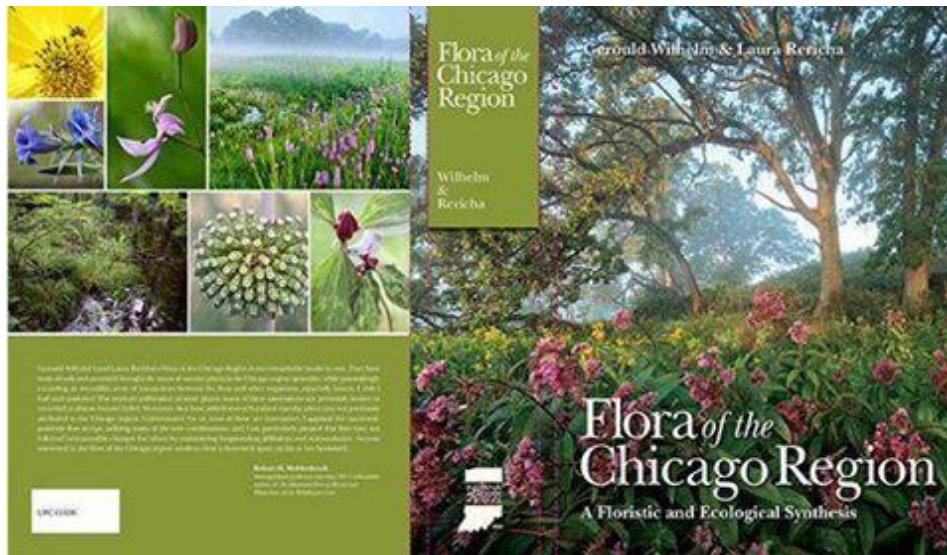
The appeal of field botany rests within the deeply human drive to explore and understand nature; it is heuristic and phenomenological. Touching soil and roots where each greets the other, witnessing and pondering the complexity that drives phytoecological trends, and experiencing the awakening that comes from understanding place through process are as characteristically human as speech, bipedalism, and wielding fire. To fulfill this destiny, a field botanist needs only keen eyes, a compulsion to explore, and a good flora to guide them on their path to botanical and ecological enlightenment. The new Flora of the Chicago Region: A Floristic and Ecological Synthesis, by Gerould Wilhelm and Laura Rericha, is the most contemporary and thorough manifestation of this endeavor. Long anticipated, the new flora came out in early 2017 as both an update and upgrade of the long esteemed fourth edition of Plants of the Chicago Region, by Floyd Swink and Gerould Wilhelm, published in 1994. Like its predecessor, the new flora covers the 22-county area around the southern tip of Lake Michigan and encompasses portions of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin. This reboot includes over 600 new vascular plants, for a total of 3,149 taxa. It also includes descriptions of all plant taxa, nomenclatural etymology, surficial geology maps, updated distribution maps, a natural divisions map, natural community descriptions with gorgeous photographs, numerous line drawings, several color plates with close-up images of stamens, styles and nectaries of select species and much, much more. As with the old edition, each entry includes a list of associated plant taxa for the communities in which that taxon occurs; this has long proven to be a better way of inferring habitat than simply listing a community type. The real game changer, however, is the addition of non-plant (mostly insect) associates that are provided for most plant species. This is largely the contribution of co-author Laura Rericha whose

entomological prowess is unrivaled. Thus, for a commonly known species like *Schizachyrium scoparium* (little bluestem), one will not only learn what its associated plant species are in wet-mesic sand prairies, dry to dry-mesic prairies, and prairie fens, but also that a black leaf beetle, *Anisostena nigrita*, mines the blades, that the Eastern Towhee utilizes the tussocks for nesting and thermally regulated incubation, that numerous ant species nest in the root zone (each is listed), that a rust called *Puccinia andropogonis* infects the herbage and a smut called *Sporisorium everhartii* is frequently encountered on the spikelets. This additional information is a giant step toward the consilience and concinnity of which Dr. Wilhelm has long spoken, and furthers the precept that knowing the flora is merely a gateway into knowing an entire system. The taxonomic treatments in the flora are unparalleled and demonstrate the level of clarity and richness that decades of studying plants as manifestations of living systems, and their names as human constructs, should entail. The treatments also exemplify intimate knowledge and wise consideration of the primary taxonomic literature; one only need examine the care and detail evident under *Dichanthelium* and *Rubus* for proof. The species concepts are lenient, robust and well argued. The numerous nomenclatural updates and innovations are not so eccentric as to alienate the professional user nor so erudite as to stupefy amateurs grown dependent on the older version. In the fashion of the previous work, the keys have been distilled to their most potent characters, with elaboration included only where necessary. The book itself is hefty, ornate, and well-constructed. This, combined with the constitution of its contents, makes it very well deserving of the rich tapestry of communities and species that make the Chicago region so wonderfully unique. The ancillary information found in this flora reads like a field botanist's manifesto. It is dripping with a wild-honey philosophy that both asks and allows the reader to ponder not only the "lilies of the field," but the soil in which they grow, the insects that pollinate them, and the observer's place in the field itself. The preface explains that the first purpose of the flora is "to provide the student with a means to identify vascular plants." The second purpose is "to provide the user with an appreciation that plants are not stand-alone taxonomic integers in a landscape matrix, but rather, self-replicating genetic entities inextricably woven into a broader array of life adapted to a particular place, defined in part by climate, geography, soils, physiography, geologic age and history, and relationship with human culture." At a time when science is myopically focused on plants as "taxonomic integers," and overly obsessed with testing hypotheses by algorithm and computer modulation, where field botany is passed off as the epitome of antiquation, this work comes as a breath of fresh air and a much-needed confirmation that the study of organisms as they occur in nature is simultaneously existential, life-affirming, and whole-heartedly scientific.

# ILLINOIS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY – NORTHEAST CHAPTER

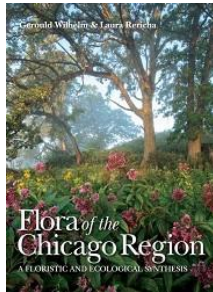
March 11, 2017

This new flora, written by Gerould Wilhelm and Laura Rericha, will quickly become the reference for all botanical work conducted in the Chicago Region and its information on plant ecology and specifically plant-insect interactions will make it an invaluable resource throughout the Midwest (see sample pages in the comments).



# MORTON ARBORETUM REVIEW

## Flora of the Chicago Region



This tome substantially supercedes the 4th edition of the now out-of-print *Plants of the Chicago Region* (Swink & Wilhelm, 1994).

1390 pages, 3200 maps, 2000 line drawings (at least one per genus), keys, etymology of genus and species name, glossary, several indices, 40 color plates/figures, associates (other vascular plant species, animals, fungi, bryophytes, lichens), pollination observations, phenology, introduction date for non-native taxa, birthplace of the new famous

Coefficient of Conservatism (C-value), 3 large format bookmark inserts.

"This will be considered the most complete flora ever written for any place in the U.S. They have meticulously and accurately brought the status of vascular plants in the Chicago region up-to-date, while painstakingly recording an incredible array of interactions between the flora and other organisms, especially insects. The intricate pollination of some plants, many of these associations not previously known or recorded, is almost beyond belief." - Robert H. Mohlenbrock, Distinguished professor emeritus, SIU Carbondale

"The scholarship is off the scale!" - Bill N. McKnight



# FOREST PRESERVE OF COOK COUNTY REVIEW

## Blog

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### New Book Catalogs Chicagoland Plants, Insect Interactions

*Jun 2, 2017*  
234



From beginning to end, Forest Preserves of Cook County Wildlife Biologist Laura Rericha-Anchor spent more than 15 years working on her new book “Flora of the Chicago Region: A Floristic And Ecological Synthesis.” Co-authored with Dr. Gerould Wilhelm, director of research at The Conservation Research Institute, the book is a thorough look at the plant communities within Chicagoland and beyond, detailing nearly 3,200 plant species and documenting the delicate, yet powerful world of plants, their pollinators, and the environment.

Rericha-Anchor has worked for the Forest Preserves since 1997, and in that time, she has served an important role in protecting and preserving the plants and animals of the Forest Preserves. Through exploration, research and documentation, her contribution to

the Forest Preserves' restoration efforts and the health of the region's plant and animal communities is invaluable.

"Flora of the Chicago Region" was inspired by the book "Plants of the Chicago Region," which was originally published in 1969 by Floyd Swink, a renowned taxonomist and naturalist, with the most recent edition published in 1994. Floyd Swink previously mentored both Rericha-Anchor and Wilhelm.

**Here are some important facts about the new book:**

- The book includes plants from across 22 counties in four states: Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan.
- During the course of their fieldwork, Rericha-Anchor and Wilhelm discovered a new plant species.
- The book documents hundreds of discoveries regarding plant-insect interactions.
- "Flora of the Chicago Region" recognizes several plant species that are only found in the Chicago region.
- Of the 3,149 identified plants in the book, 1,876 are considered native and 1,273 are considered non-native.
- The book includes 10 plant species described new to science since 1994.

According to Doug Ladd, director of conservation for the Missouri Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, "Flora of the Chicago Region" is "astounding, and will set a new standard for both floras and the context in which people look at and think about plants as components of a system."

Books like "Flora of the Chicago Region" are important for a variety of reasons. According to Rericha-Anchor, this type of research helps us define where species live so we can better understand how to manage plant populations that are extremely rare.

"High-quality native plant species occur in remnants or in well-managed forest preserves, whether it be a prairie, savanna, woodland or wetland" explains Rericha-Anchor. "The more that we learn about plants, their animal associates, and the habitats in which they occur, the better we can manage our remnant landscapes throughout the region."

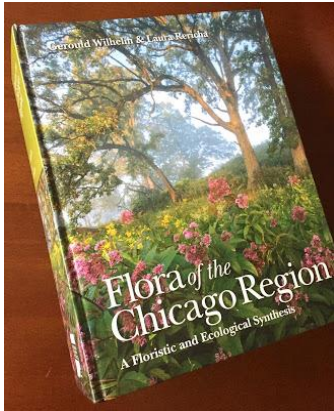
"Flora of the Chicago Region" significantly adds to the current body of scientific knowledge, enabling both the professional and amateur botanist to better understand our region's plants and insects.

This book will be used by national and regional agencies and institutions to determine the quality of natural areas, as well as serve as a model for other regions. It will also inspire people to take a closer look at the intricate natural world around them, more deeply appreciate this region's natural heritage, and to consider what humans can do to heal the environment.



# NEW FLORA FOR THE CHICAGO REGION

## Announcement: Chicago Botanical Garden



On Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, a fat volume of botanical and ecosystem science was introduced to Chicago Region conservationists with a symposium and reception at the Chicago Botanic Garden. In his opening speech Arnold Randall, Superintendent of the Cook County Forest Preserves, highlighted the impressive fact that authors Gerould Wilhelm and Laura Rericha had worked on the new *Flora of the Chicago Region* for more than **100,000 hours** over **17 years**.

Speaking for the Botanic Garden, Dr. Greg Mueller pointed out that Chicago region has been a leader in the development of **citizen science** and **stewardship**, and that this community has been eagerly anticipating this book.

Lead author, Dr. Gerould Wilhelm (Jerry), said that the new *Flora* is **not** another edition of "*Plants of the Chicago Region*." Wilhelm had joined author Floyd Swink as junior author for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of that book (published by the Morton Arboretum in 1979) and for the famous 4<sup>th</sup> edition, published by the Indiana Academy of Sciences in 1994. From the beginning, Swink had sought to make botany more accessible to non-experts and to include species associations, invaluable to conservationists working to restore degraded lands. Those four editions of "*Plants of ...*" had been a major foundation (or "the Bible") for the region's botanical citizen scientists and stewards.

There were 2530 plants in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition. There are 3149 in the new *Flora*. Some of those 619 new ones are invaders. Ten have been newly described by botanists since 1994. But most resulted from each genus being "revaluated." For example, in the genus *Rubus* (raspberries and blackberries) the key in 1994 divided our plants into 13 types. The 2017 key requires us to discriminate among 43 types.

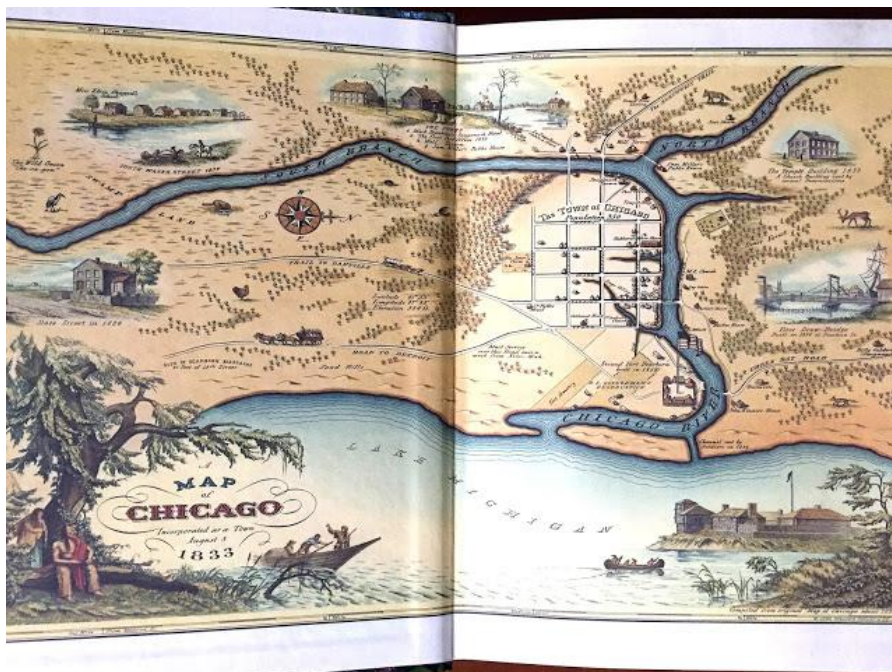
Most of the new ones are variants of what we've been calling dewberry (*Rubus flagelaris*). Dewberries, although mostly native, can be aggressive pests. Sometimes they're controlled by herbicide. Now stewards will want to determine if there are rare dewberries among the pests. Fuller's dewberry? Steele's dewberry? Wheeler's bristly

dewberry? It may not be easy. As the new Flora comments, in an introduction to the Rubus key:

The student should not be daunted by the number of taxa in this treatment. The species delineated here are ... floristically meaningful ... Careful assessment of populations in the field may be quite rewarding provided fully developed primocanes and floricanes are secured ... Casually collected specimens will result in frustration and possibly ungracious thoughts about the parentage of our blackberries and dewberries.

I wonder if the authors were also concerned about frustrated stewards having ungracious thoughts about the parentage of botanists.

As for “primocanes and floricanes” – the new Flora will for most people require a great deal of back and forth to the glossary. It turns out that a trip from the Rubus page 960 to Glossary pages 1313 and 1316 reveals that a primocane is a *first year* shoot or “cane” (which does not flower) and a floricane is a *second year* cane (which in season produces flowers and tasty fruits). But since these definitions apply only to the genus Rubus, couldn't the definitions be provided on page 960? And wouldn't the key be more accessible to non-experts if the authors avoided the arcane terms and used simply “first year canes” and “second year canes”?



The inside front cover maps the Chicago Loop area in 1833 showing prairie, wooded areas, and other features.

Twenty four pages of handsome and interesting color photos show mostly botanical and insect close-ups.

Stewards are willing to suffer through a lot of page-turning to do better conservation. Many of us are eager to see how helpful this book will be in our work. In my own case, when gathering and planting seed, I've long wondered about the distinction between golden ragwort and balsam ragwort. When I used the 1994 key, they often seem to blend into each other. In the new Flora, for better or worse, golden and balsam have multiplied. Now I should worry about the closely related Crawford's, round-leaved, false woolly, savanna, and false golden ragworts, in addition to golden and balsam. In the short run, I'll probably continue to use the old names and cite the 1994 edition as my authority. That is acceptable scientifically, until I or someone has studied the sites in question sufficiently to move on to the new names, if they help.

A big part of this new book is zoological rather than botanical. Junior author Laura Rericha has provided long lists of animals (mostly insects) associated with the various plant species. If more people study these species, conservation should be able to benefit. For example, if a rare species of ant is present, and if monitoring shows it to be decreasing, and if that decrease can be associated with an inappropriate burn regime (too frequent, too seldom, or at the wrong season?), then remedial action can be taken. A species of ant (or pollinator, or beetle) may have an important role in an ecosystem, or not.

Rericha is working on keys that will help more people identify and study our region's ants and bees. In the new Flora, she has provided on page 909 a key to more than forty types of oak galls – each made by a different species of wasp or fly. Wilhelm pointed out that ecosystems and species are complexly interdependent. In our bodies we have roughly the same number of human cells as we do bacterial cells, many of which are important to our health. Comparable relationships are critical for other mammals, birds, and all animals. Most plants depend utterly on various fungi, bacteria, pollinators, and other symbionts. The more we understand those relationships, the better we will be as defenders and managers of ecosystems and the planet. We have a long way to go.

# CHICAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY BOOK REVIEW

By Laurel Ross

Flora of the Chicago Region: A Floristic and Ecological Synthesis, By Gerould Wilhelm,  
Conservation Research Institute Laura Rericha, Forest Preserve District of Cook County

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Weighing a full nine pounds and 1,300 pages, a truly noteworthy local nature book was released April 8 at the Chicago Botanic Garden. A half day symposium on the book attracted several hundred people, most of them not academic botanists, but conservation practitioners such as land managers, volunteer stewards and rare plant monitors who, after the symposium, enjoyed each other's company at a celebratory reception. I mention this event because the *Compass* is read mostly by birders and it should be noted this book is NOT a typical flora, but a rich resource of interest to a wider audience. In fact, one of the most amazing things about this Flora is that it includes FAUNA! Insects, birds, and other taxa are illustrated and discussed as they relate to plants, and we are reminded that the natural world is closely interconnected in ways that science is beginning to probe more deeply.

For those not familiar with the history behind this book it should be noted that the Chicago region has been blessed for decades with splendid plant books by Floyd Swink (botanical hero, now deceased) and Jerry Wilhelm (living hero) that have sometimes baffled academic taxonomists. Q: Why are the plants listed in alphabetical, not taxonomic order? A: To be more useful to non-botanists. The idiosyncrasies of these books were designed in to add to their usefulness. Ecologists in the Chicago region were very fortunate that we did not learn our local plants by using the Peterson's guides that cover huge swathes of the country, but instead had a resource infinitely more intimate that covers 22 counties in this region. Space does not permit a description of earlier versions of this book, but I recommend a lively account of that history found at [conservationresearchinstitute.org/flora-of-the-chicago-region.html](http://conservationresearchinstitute.org/flora-of-the-chicago-region.html). Suffice it to say, Plants of the Chicago Region (PoCR) in its four earlier editions were arguably among the most important tools of conservationists. The 3rd and 4th editions are commonly, and respectfully, referred to as "the Bible."

To give you a hint of my own interest, when the 4th edition of PoCR was released in 1994, I bought 3 copies: one for my office, one for my car, and one for home. From these books we learned which plants grew in which counties, and which other

plants associated with them. We learned which plants were common and grew just about anywhere, and which were rare and precious and are only found in true natural remnants. Seventeen years in the making, this new book is still to be discovered. Though not a field guide due to its size, this enormous tome is intended to continue to influence and aid those of us who are working on conservation of natural areas. An electronic version will follow that will be easier to take to the field.

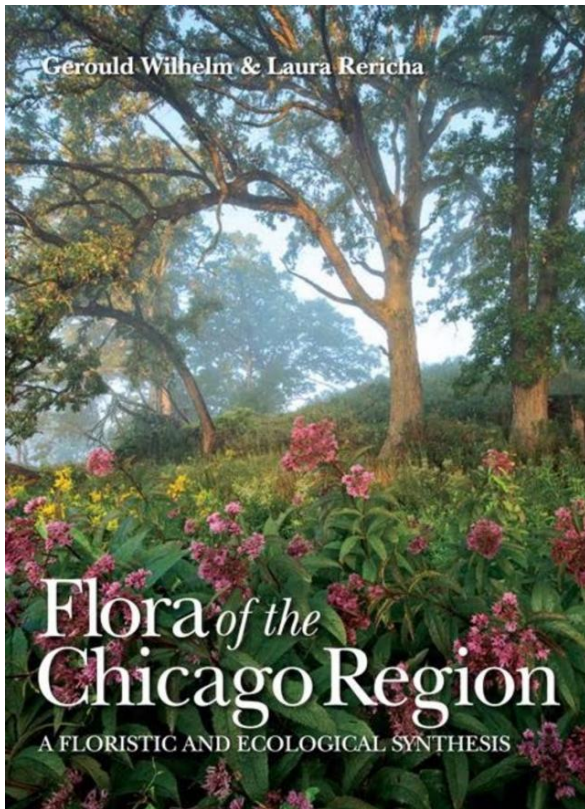
New in this version are: • 1,544 original illustrations by Margot Mazur for each of the 944 plant genera, as well as morphological descriptions. • A whole new section of associated insects, birds, and mammals that have relationships with our plants: nectaring, collection of pollen, seed or fruit, myrmecochory (seed dispersal by ants), and much more. • Twenty-four pages of gorgeous color photos, mostly botanical and insect close-ups. • More fine-grained plant community descriptions than in previous editions and more closely described in conjunction with natural divisions and geology. • The etymology of scientific names, making them much easier to learn. As Wilhelm says, "Scientific names are basically common names in Greek or Latin." • A key to identifying the 48 species of oak galls in our region. • The inside front cover is a lovely map of the Chicago Loop area in 1833 showing prairie, wooded areas, and other features. Many people will be spending time delving into the riches of Flora of the Chicago Region in the next months. I look forward to learning a lot.



# DAILY JOURNAL BOOK REVIEW

Flora of the Chicago Region, an Essential nature guide 15 years in making.

May 11, 2017, 8:00 am



In the past couple weeks, a new, essential book has come to the public market.

"Flora of the Chicago Region " is the long-awaited new resource that replaces the "Plants of the Chicago Region" by Swink & Wilhelm (fourth edition 1994). However, this is not the fifth edition but instead is a stand-alone book with a new co-author and tons of additional information.

"Flora of the Chicago Region: A Floristic and Ecological Synthesis" is authored by Gerould Wilhelm and Laura Rericha. The book, released last month, took 15 years and almost 100,000 hours to complete. I would have gone mad much sooner.

The final printed book is 1,390 pages, contains 3,200 maps and requires two hands to carry!

In the pages, you will find information on 3,149 vascular plants, including more than 600 new additions since 1994.

Also new in 2017 is the huge addition of animal and fungal associate species. Ever wonder what pollinators might visit your native garden or local prairie? Now you can get clued in.

Some 2,000 illustrations also were added and several color pictures also are new.

When you open the book and turn to a plant, you will be able to find keys to help identify what species you are looking at, habitat information, general description of the plant, illustrations of the genus, animal associates, fungal associates, other associate plant species, Chicago wilderness county map, flowering ranges and much, much more!

If you are an aspiring botanist, ecologist or dedicated nature-lover, "Flora of the Chicago Region" is a must-have.

I admit it will take me many years to digest a fraction of what this book offers. There is no other book similar to it on the market today, and because of the painstaking effort it took to make it, I doubt any will surpass it for our region in the next decade or more. Don't let the "Chicago region" fool you; Kankakee County is within the 22-county area this book covers.

If you want a copy of this book, I suggest going online to the Morton Arboretum bookstore. The arboretum has a long history of botanical research and is a wonderful place to support. Online there and everywhere, it should be listed for \$125, which is a bargain considering all the sweat equity that went into it throughout the 15 years it took to produce.



# BOOK REVIEW BY KEITH BOARD

## INDIANA BOTANIST

Dear Jerry and Laura,

How did you do that? How did you put together a scholarly tome of such magnitude, accuracy, and artistry in less than one lifetime? The only explanation is that it was a work of love – love for the landscape, love for the flora and fauna, love for the history of the region. I am reeling in stunned disbelief! Very, very nicely done! In the words of John Ruskin, "When love and skill work together, expect a masterpiece."

When I try to imagine all the field work and observations, the herbaria visited, all the work studying specimens of plants and bugs, writing keys to families, genera, and species, writing annotations and descriptions, editing for new nomenclature and new discoveries, plus a thousand other tasks, it really seems impossible.

Jerry, you have been a legendary rock star of the botanical world for a long time, but now you and Laura have added another indelible and beautiful mark on history. The people of Chicago and surrounding areas should be erecting statues of you two and naming nature preserves after you.

Congratulations on the publication of your truly remarkable flora! I received my copy a few days ago and sincerely appreciate it. Thank you so very much! I've spent a lot of time reading and exploring it and to be honest, there are no superlatives good enough to describe it, or its positive effect on me. The word "magnificent" comes to mind. Of all the works of man that I have seen in my life, this is one of only a few that I see as MAGNIFICENT. The others were created by you and Floyd, and Charlie Deam.

Thank you for allowing me to contribute to this effort in my own small way. Since buying my first Swink & Wilhelm book (the orange one), you have given me a meaningful purpose for all these years. Being inspired by your earlier books with Floyd, I have spent countless thousands of hours wandering around in beautiful natural areas, learning and photographing plants, immersing myself in the thrum of so many living things. I will never forget the intoxicating, wonderful minty smell of prairie remnants on foggy mornings, with Meadowlarks and Bluebirds calling, or the times in deep forest, staring in dumb wonder as I chewed leaves of wintergreen and listened to the song of the Veery and the Wood Thrush.

In the words of Thoreau, "How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book!" Indeed! The mere words "thank you" seem wholly inadequate, but here they are: thank you, my friends, for all you have done. My gratitude knows no bounds.

With sincerity and love,

Keith Board

# BOOK REVIEW BY DOUGLAS LADD

## Missouri Chapter TNC

Jerry & Laura –

I received your new edition yesterday – it's astounding, and will set a new standard for both floras and the context in which people look at and think about plants as components of a system.

Congratulations, it's magnificent, and I look forward to perusing it.

Doug Ladd