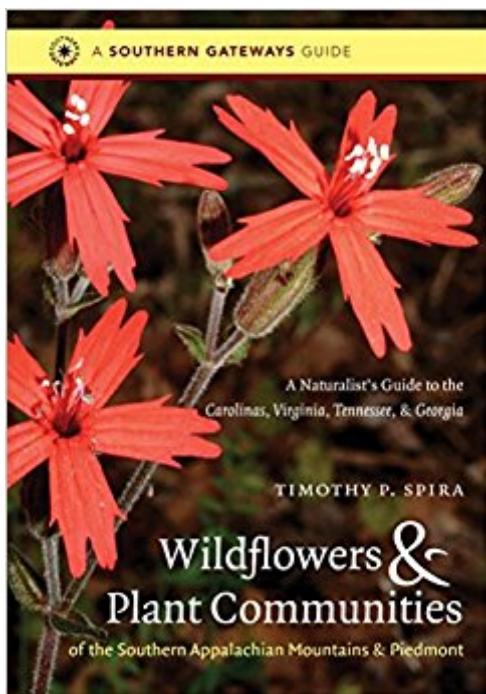


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# Wildflowers And Plant Communities Of The Southern Appalachian Mountains And Piedmont: A Naturalist's Guide To The Carolinas, Virginia, Tennessee, And Georgia (Southern Gateways Guides)



## Synopsis

This richly illustrated field guide serves as an introduction to the wildflowers and plant communities of the southern Appalachians and the rolling hills of the adjoining piedmont. Rather than organizing plants, including trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, by flower color or family characteristics, as is done in most guidebooks, botanist Tim Spira takes a holistic, ecological approach that enables the reader to identify and learn about plants in their natural communities. This approach, says Spira, better reflects the natural world, as plants, like other organisms, don't live in isolation; they coexist and interact in myriad ways. Full-color photo keys allow the reader to rapidly preview plants found within each of the 21 major plant communities described, and the illustrated species description for each of the 340 featured plants includes fascinating information about the ecology and natural history of each plant in its larger environment. With this new format, readers can see how the mountain and piedmont landscapes form a mosaic of plant communities that harbor particular groups of plants. The volume also includes a glossary, illustrations of plant structures, and descriptions of sites to visit. Whether you're a beginning naturalist or an expert botanist, this guidebook is a useful companion on field excursions and wildflower walks, as well as a valuable reference. Southern Gateways Guide is a registered trademark of the University of North Carolina Press

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It deserves a good look from individuals interested in natural history, plant communities and

diversity, and conservation.--Plant Science Bulletin Whether you are a beginning naturalist or an expert botanist, this guidebook is a useful companion on field excursions and wildflower walks, as well as a valuable reference." --McCormick Messenger I have never met [Spira], but I feel indebted to him for the time and thought that went into the compilation of this wonderful new source guide. I never thought I'd see anything this good on this topic for this region in my lifetime.--Asheville Citizen Times Twenty-one major plant communities are described in detail, and the refreshing and easy-to-use format allows readers to explore each of the 340 featured plants in terms of their natural history, ecology, habitat, range, and uses--where applicable. Highly recommended.--Virginia Wildlife One of the finest contributions to regional plant studies in recent years.--Asheville Citizen Times This book, with its color coded sections, is easy to use. . . . Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates, graduate students, two-year technical program students, and general readers.--Choice His book differs from others because it is organized by plant communities. . . . Spira makes it easier to understand the relationship between plant species and their particular physical environment. . . . This book certainly piqued my curiosity and has found a home on my book shelf.--And Sow Forth

Tim Spira's book breaks new and fertile ground in the field of natural history. Using what is quickly becoming the state-of-the-art approach to understanding native plants--by considering them fully within their natural communities--Spira has successfully created a wonderful field guide to the southern Appalachian region.--Robert Wyatt, Professor Emeritus of Botany and Ecology, University of Georgia Full of gorgeous photography, this in-depth guide to plant communities and plant identification will be of immense interest to field naturalists as well as birders, wildflower enthusiasts, hikers, nature lovers, and photographers.--Peter White, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

I try not to give 5 stars too often, this really is a terrific book. It's hard to put a finger on it, but the writing style is more narrative than "facts" and allows you to make fundamental connections. For example, we learn that Yellow (tulip) Poplars and Black Locusts are shade intolerant and therefore will not develop as under story. I can now look out off my back deck and understand why I have tall stands of tulip poplars there or why you see Black Locusts along highways, humans created places with plenty of sunlight. It's not original with this book, of course, but dividing up chapters on plant communities helps you understand of what's going in a particular environment. I can go on but for a guy like me, occasional hiker from Pennsylvania down to the Smokies can now make more sense of what I'm seeing, whether on looking out over quartzite cliffs or sitting next to a waterfall. Learning

that narrative first makes learning all the details easier. In addition, this book is is quality, good paper, crisp photos, sturdy binding and again, explanations that are more a readable dialogue than just detail. (I have other books for distinguishing species, eg whether twigs are fuzzy or not) There are also interesting asides: ginseng, hemlock agelids, wild boars (!) in the southern Appalachians... Like an added bonus feature, the book lists "selected natural areas" a few of my future summer walks are already being planned. If you want to see Appalachian environments not simply as the staging but as the actor, buy this book.

This is a great book for anyone interested in the plants of the Southern Appalachians and how they interact with each other to form unique communities, but it seems mostly targeted at serious naturalists. It looks like a useful resource for botany and ecology students, in particular studying the flora of the Southern Appalachians. I find it a bit too heavy to carry around as a field guide, so I use it more as a reference and leave it in the car rather than take it on a hike. But the information it provides is highly valuable and has helped me with identifying some plants common in certain rare ecosystems that I haven't been able to find in any of the other wildflower books I own. What is unique about this book is its organization into plant communities. You will find photo keys and community descriptions with lists of plants typical e.g. for spruce-fir forest, high elevation outcrops, or mountain bogs. It is obvious that the author knows these plant communities very well. As someone who loves hiking in the area and experiencing the seasons in the different ecosystems along the trails, I felt like revisiting certain locations and meeting old friends again when reading through the community descriptions. If you know the community you are hiking through, the book's organization also makes it very easy to identify the common plants along the trail. The plant profiles are rich in information and the pictures are gorgeous and helpful with identifications though smallish. Most are half the size of a credit card or smaller. What I like about this book is that it does not only consider wildflowers, but the entire plant community including non-flowering trees, shrubs and ferns. Even some commonly encountered lichens are included in the plant profiles (even though they are not actually plants). As such, it allows for a much broader understanding of the members of a particular community and their significance and interactions compared to books that only present the flowering plants. The back of the book contains a glossary of botanical terms, descriptions of natural areas that are helpful for planning your next wildflower hike or botany class field trip, indices of scientific as well as common plant names, and a few line drawings illustrating the terminology used to describe basic plant structures. All in all, it's a wonderful book and an instant favorite, not just for me but also other naturalists I've talked to while out in the mountains.

This book is fantastic and here is why:1. He categorizes the different habitats for easy lookup: rich cove, heath bald, rocky outcrop, spruce/fir forest, etc. So if you're in the field, you can quickly find what you want to identify.2. The pictures are good3. The information on each species is very robust and informational. He talks about it's uses, and history as well as it's physical attributes.4. Two indexes - one listed alphabetically with scientific names, the other with common names5. He really talks about the 'community' of plants. So one can get an understanding of how they all live together.Until I learn all the names of all the plants, this book goes with me on all hikes.

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