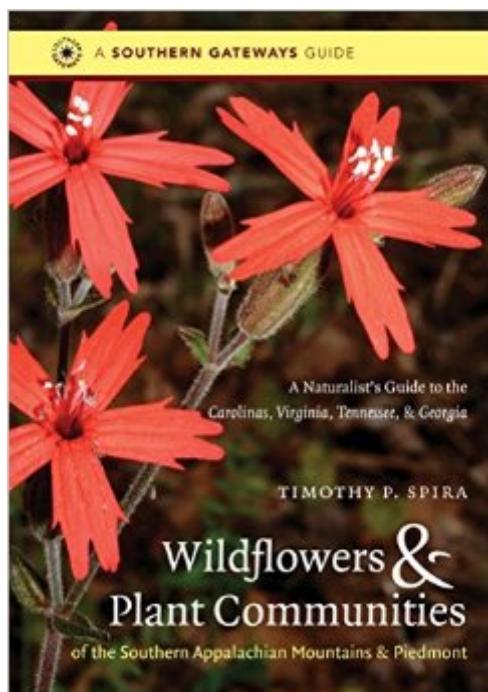


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# Wildflowers And Plant Communities Of The Southern Appalachian Mountains And Piedmont: A Naturalist's Guide To The Carolinas, Virginia, Tennessee, And Georgia (Southern Gateways Guides)



## 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

This field guide is a wealth of information for anyone interested in understanding plant communities

unique to the southeastern region of the United States. This book has spectacular photography accompanied by fascinating facts on featured specimens. Spira's book thoroughly covers 21 different plant communities that are expertly arranged by color-coded topics. I would recommend this book to novice hikers, expert backpackers, and all naturalists. Anyone who lives in or has visited the southern Appalachians and piedmont regions should own a copy of this book. Reading it will make you want to explore each and every cove forest, mountain bog, and granite outcrop.

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.

This book helps you understand the natural world of the Southern Appalachians and Piedmont. It's great. Written by a plant ecologist, it provides an engaging and informative guide to plant communities and the species that you might find in those communities, but more importantly, gives you detailed information about the ecology of those species, accompanied by excellent photos. It's a well-written and beautifully illustrated book; I highly recommend it to anyone in the Southeastern U.S who's interested in learning more about the plants and plant communities that make up the fabric (and background) of our biodiverse region.

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.

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