



News Release

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**NAU ecologists encourage nature lovers to stop and smell
the rose tick clover**

New plant field guide out this spring

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – Open the book and step into the creeping, climbing, blossoming world of fairy slippers, pink elephants and Arizona kittentails. As amateur and professional botanists anticipate nature's most vivid season, *Field Guide to Forest & Mountain Plants of Northern Arizona* is available now for \$30 to aid in scientific study and casual enjoyment.

Plant ecologists of the Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University have invested nearly two decades identifying plants named after animals such as owls, mice and monkeys and meticulously categorizing every brown-eyed Susan and blue-eyed Mary of the Colorado Plateau. They will be available at a book signing scheduled for noon to 2 p.m., Thursday, March 4 at the NAU Bookstore.

This comprehensive, up-to-date botanical resource for northern Arizona forests is the first book of its kind for the higher elevation ecosystems of northern and eastern Arizona. It distinguishes more than 1,400 species, using the scientific and common names of conifers, flowering trees and shrubs, grasses and grass-like plants (graminoids), wildflowers, cacti and agaves, ferns and fern allies and aquatics.

Distinguished through line drawings, the regional flora is a collection of hardy plants that have evolved through millions of years of disturbances including ice ages, tropical swamps and volcanic eruptions, and have survived drought, extreme temperatures and wildfires.

“My hope is that it will advance our understanding and appreciation of native plant species in our backyards and in the forests that surround us as we are faced with unprecedented challenges in this century, including the effects of projected climate change on the environment,” said ERI plant ecologist Judith Springer.

Blooming from the center of the book is a bouquet of nearly 300 wildflowers captured in full-color photographs.

“Our aim was to create an attractive and useful guide to help researchers and the general public appreciate the richness and beauty of our local flora,” said ERI botanist and ecologist Mark Daniels. “We hope we have succeeded, and that the book will be used for a long time to come.”



New field guide/page 2

Former U.S. Interior Secretary and Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt says the publication marks another significant step in the rich tradition of scientific research at NAU.

“To understand and appreciate our forest surroundings, we begin by identifying the individual species that make up the whole ecosystem. That is the essential value of a field guide, a book to take into the field and use on-site to help us become familiar with the component parts of our surroundings. And for that we have reason to thank the authors for their efforts in producing this fine work.”

Babbitt adds that work of the ERI in forest health and restoration has become even more urgent as forests are threatened by climate change, invasive species and spreading urbanization.

NAU Regent’s Professor and Biological Sciences professor Dr. Thomas Whitham says the publication is a comprehensive and welcome field guide. “It is well laid out with keys for the more difficult groups, useful notes on ecology and well illustrated.”

Coconino National Forest botanist Debra Crisp says the use of nontechnical language in the field guide cuts the time it takes to identify different species. “I can hardly wait to get out and look at plants and try it out. Is it spring yet?”

The field guide, compiled by Springer, Daniels and botanist Mare Nazaire in collaboration with a number of contributing authors, photographers, researchers and artists, also offers a snapshot of the geology, human history and climatic events that have shaped the region from the San Francisco Peaks, along the Mogollon Rim and into the White Mountains.

“Where floristic manuals for northern Arizona are either outdated or currently lacking, this comprehensive and current field guide fills a critical need for Arizona botanists and laypeople,” said Nazaire.

Field Guide to Forest & Mountain Plants of Northern Arizona is available for purchase at the NAU Bookstore. Log on to nau.edu/bookstore or call 928-523-4041.

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