

**PLANT MATERIALS OF
DECORATIVE GARDENING;
THE WOODY PLANTS**

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Plant materials of decorative gardening; the woody plants by William Trelease

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WILLIAM TRELEASE

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OF
DECORATIVE GARDENING



THE WOODY PLANTS

BY

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by
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INTRODUCTION.

It has become the practice of gardeners to speak of the plants used for decorative purposes as the plant materials of their art. These materials fall rather naturally into three classes: the woody plants used in landscape architecture and street planting, the herbs used for bedding and border planting, pools, etc., and the grasses of lawns.

The present little volume is an attempt to make it possible for any careful observer to learn the generic and usually the specific name of any hardy tree, shrub or woody climber that he is likely to find cultivated in the eastern United States—apart from the extreme south—or in northern Europe, anywhere except on the more pretentious estates, or in nurseries or botanical establishments. It accounts for 247 genera and 782 species, with some 375 minor forms, or over 1150 distinct kinds. These pertain to 83 natural families.

For a few hopelessly complicated genera, such as the haws, cotoneasters, mockoranges and roses, only a few of the most easily recognized species have been admitted. Except for these, an effort has been made to include all but the rarer or newer species. By way of compensation for omissions, the common trees and shrubs of the orchard may be traced to their species, and also the commoner native shrubs and cover plants.

It is assumed that the terms usually applied to the parts of plants are understood or will be looked up in the glossary by anyone who wishes to use the keys, and that he will quickly learn to make a small and not necessarily expensive pocket lens of about twelve-diameter magnification his inseparable companion and helper: no further equipment is necessary except a good store of care, patient interest, and common sense.

To keep the book inexpensive, and of a size to fit the pocket, identifications are provided for in concise keys. As a rule these

should lead to reasonably certain conclusions: but no key in itself is to be regarded as final, and determinations should be checked up by reference to Bailey's Standard Cyclopaedia of Horticulture, in which are to be found full descriptions and references to excellent illustrations. To facilitate this use, technical considerations are waived and the names here used for genera and species are conformed to the Cyclopaedia: but where native genera are differently named in currently used Manuals, these names are added as synonyms.

The keys do not bring together the names of genera that are related; but their division into sections dealing respectively with Trees, Shrubs, Undershrubs and Cover Plants, and Climbers, gives them a certain comparative value in addition to convenience of reference; and this is increased by the grouping in various places of evergreen and deciduous, armed and spineless forms, etc., and by a division of the undershrubs according to their habit of growth.

The relationships of the genera and the relative landscape or other importance of families are to be seen at a glance when reference is made to the systematic part of the book. An innovation that it is hoped may prove useful, and that affords suggestions for further observation on dependable though rarely-used characters, is to be found in the brief descriptions of the genera, in which more space is given to wood, bud, leaf-scar, foliage and inflorescence than to the more transient details of flower and fruit on which botanical classification largely rests.

Though the manuscript has been subjected to critical use by individuals and classes, it is probable that errors have been overlooked, or introduced in the effort to make betterments. For these, apologies are tendered; but the hope is entertained that its shortcomings may be outweighed by a general usefulness of the little handbook, which is intended to meet a need that my own experience as a teacher shows to be very real now that plant materials are so much studied and used.

Urbana, Illinois, June 30, 1917.

USING THE KEYS.

The determination keys are essentially "dichotomous." At each point it is necessary to decide between two—rarely three or four—very distinctly contrasted characters, and in each case these contrasts are grouped under a single number in the key. The first few choices are between differences that can be seen without touching the plant. Since poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumach are very poisonous to the touch, it is advisable to have the first two, which are common everywhere, pointed out by someone who knows them, and to regard anything with compound leaves as suspicious until these three are well known. A few examples will show the simplicity of using a key, and the directness with which it leads to the name of a plant.

Wishing to become acquainted with one of the poisonous species as quickly as possible, I go to a "vine"-covered fence-post and without touching the plant am able to see readily that it is thin-leaved, therefore probably deciduous; with one leaf at a node, the leaves therefore alternate; and that each leaf is compound,—made up of three rather large wavy-margined leaflets coming from the end of the leaf-stalk, and therefore digitate, or palmate. Turning to the Synopsis of Groups (p. 10), I find that it is to be sought in Key D on p. 38. In this key, beginning—as always—with no. 1, the characters that I have seen already take me through the key by the following references:—no. 1, to 7; no. 7, to 10; no. 10, to 11; no. 11, to 23,—with a caution that this group contains poisonous species; no. 23 compels me to look at the plant a little more closely, still without touching it, and I see that it does not support itself by coiling about the post, and that it has no tendrils though it has fastened itself by short roots coming from between the nodes. The conclusion is inevitable that it belongs to the genus *Rhus*. In the key to species of this genus (p. 117), I find, under no. 1,