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***Wild plants and native peoples of the Four Corners* by William W. Dunmire and Gail D. Tierney**

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BOOK REVIEW

Wild Plants and Native Peoples of the Four Corners. William W. Dunmire and Gail D. Tierney. Museum of New Mexico Press, Santa Fe, NM 87504. 1997. \$22.50, soft-cover.

This is a handsomely produced, well-edited volume that provides authoritative commentary on both native peoples and the indigenous plants used by those peoples in the Four Corners area of the American Southwest. The informative and interesting narrative is supported and enriched by 117 photographs (90 in color and 27 in black and white). The quality of photo reproduction is outstanding. Separate chapters introduce the reader to 4 native peoples still inhabiting the area: the Hopi, Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute, and Jicarilla Apache. Although brief, these chapters provide the reader with carefully selected, reliable information concerning the history, geographic distribution, culture, and ethnobotany of each ethnic group. Photographs support the written discussions of each native culture.

Fifty of the plants most frequently used by native peoples are treated individually and in considerable detail. Each species, illustrated by well-executed line drawings and/or color photos, is discussed in terms of cultural uses and occurrence at 5 national parks (Aztec Ruins, Canyon de Chelly, Chaco Canyon, Hovenweep, and Mesa Verde) where one can see the physical remnants of and acquire detailed information concerning the peoples discussed in this book. Specific uses of each species are enumerated, and techniques employed in their collection and preparation are often given. In addition, the authors provide useful references for researchers desiring to pursue a topic in greater depth. An appended "Annotated List of Useful Plants" treats over 500 species, listing their uses in each of 7 categories (basketry, ceremonial uses and tools, cordages or matting, dyes and paints, foods and materials for smoking, medi-

cine, and structural timber or fuel) and 5 cultures (Hopi, Jicarilla Apache, Navajo, southern Paiute, and Ute). Each use/culture listing is documented by 1 of 40 original references included in cited literature.

Any massive effort such as that attempted in this pocket-size handbook (300 pages of 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches) will, of necessity, leave some questions unanswered and include some statements with which other specialists will quibble. I found myself wishing to see clinical evaluations of the numerous curative and salutary effects reported for the 423 species listed as having been used medicinally. Certainly not all those species were effective treatments for the numerous and disparate maladies they were used against. Likewise, some statements concerning individual plants should be accepted with caution. I question the author's assertion that *Phoradendron* mistletoe "does not really harm" host juniper trees. By the same token, I question whether pseudoephedrine is produced by any native American species of *Ephedra*. Of perhaps more importance, I thought the authors dismissed too easily the potential toxicity of crushed chokecherry pits. Pulverized chokecherries (cherries and pits) have caused deaths among Ute Indians of northeastern Utah when added to fresh pemmican.

My few quibbles notwithstanding, I highly recommend this book for the libraries of all interested in native peoples of the Four Corners area. For professional archaeologists and ethnobotanists, the book will be essential reading. I do not know of another single source that is so packed with valuable, reliable information concerning the ways in which native peoples have used the native flora to facilitate their survival.

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