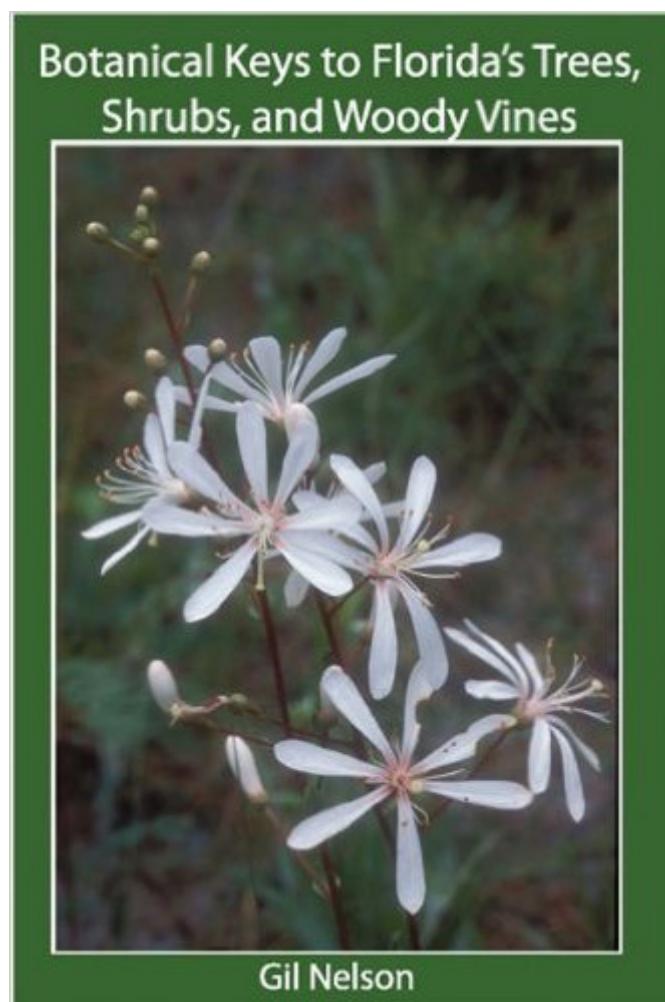


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Botanical Keys To Florida's Trees, Shrubs, And Woody Vines



Synopsis

This handy handbook, which can be used independently or as a companion to *The Trees of Florida* and *The Shrubs and Woody Vines of Florida*, makes it possible to easily identify all of Florida's native and naturalized woody plants. The text is formatted as a traditional botanical key, offering a series of either/or decisions leading to the precise identification of a plant in hand. Designed primarily for field use and targeted to both amateurs and professionals, the keys are clear, concise, non-technical, and rely on conspicuous and easily seen features with emphasis on characteristics that are observable year-round. An important addition to any plant lover's field gear.

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Customer Reviews

I am quite familiar with the Botany reference books of Gil Nelson. His "The Trees of Florida", "The Ferns of Florida" and "The Shrubs and Woody Vines of Florida" are constant companions of my numerous treks into to the woods, scrubs and swamps of this my adopted state. I cannot emphasize enough how much I value these texts for their clear, concise understandable identifications of the botanical specimen encountered in my field forays. The only problem is that if I carry all these reference works I am so weighted down I cannot travel very far at all. Thus I restrict my backpack references to the very minimum. One essential in the future will be "Botanical Keys to Trees, Shrubs and Woody Vines". I have for the past several months field tested this work. I tried it out on three catagories of specimens: one group was familiar and known -just to check how Nelson's key would approach the answer, the second category were some shrubs and vines I was not sure of and lastly

some vines and shrubs I was unfamiliar with. Nelson's keys worked easily in all situations - even on some new to me exotics. As something of an erstwhile taxonomist and having composed a few keys myself I am pleased by his deft use of easily appreciated differences in forming the keys. These keys will be useful to the amateur as well as the professional as they rely on observable differences not on microscopic work and are thus real field guides. I am also pleased with his choice of the more modern classifications such as Adoxaceae for Sambucus and Viburnum as separate from the Caprifoliaceae and several other such knotty taxonomic problems. I strongly recommend this text along with his other books as aids in identifying Florida's abundance of plant life.

This book is excellent for identifying the trees, shrubs, and woody vines found in my area, central Florida. At the front of the book are illustrations of leaf shapes and positioning. The rest of the book lists by process of elimination the way to identify what you are trying to discover. In some of the reviews of this book complaints were expressed that there weren't pictures. I believe pictures would have made the book too cumbersome. If you are in doubt about what you think is the correct identification you can always 'google' images for it.

The book states "... the keys are clear, concise, non-technical, and rely as much as possible on conspicuous and easily seen features with emphasis on characteristics that are OBSERVABLE YEAR-ROUND." The key for "alternate, simple leaves, margins entire" goes immediately to flower characteristics. That leaves you dead at the start if your specimen is not flowering. Come on! How about leaf shape, size, etc; growth habit, height; so many other things that are observable year-round? I really haven't gotten to the other keys yet. Gil's bigger book "The Trees of Florida" has the same key, but at least some good drawings to search through; along with more descriptive text on species. This book is simply the key. I do botany in several states, and this is my first time in Florida. So, just a bit surprised that authors have such a hard time creating a key that is truly more accessible.

The always effective yes/no decision tree format is well done. You absolutely must end up with the ID of the plant in question. A basic and necessary tool for the naturalist.

It's not what I thought-no pics. I thought that the different bushes, trees etc would be illustrated. I suppose it would be a great book for a botanist which I am not.

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