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Review: Sonoran Desert Life: Understanding, Insight, and Enjoyment

By Gerald Rosenthal

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Rosenthal, Gerald. *Sonoran Desert Life: Understanding, Insight and Enjoyment*. Scottsdale, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2008. 306pp. ISBN 9780615186719. US\$27.95, paper.

The Sonoran Desert is a vast, arid region covering some 120,000 square miles, most of which is located in southwestern Arizona and southeastern California as well as Sonora and Baja California in Mexico.

The book under review is a fascinating book on the flora and fauna of the American Sonoran Desert by a world-renowned biologist and biochemical entomologist. The unique aspect of this book is the role that beetles, bugs, bats and bees play in maintaining genetic diversity by dispersing pollen and assuring that eternal life thrives in the Sonoran Desert. More than 300 plant species from 70 families in the desert are provided in this compact multicolored book. It provides information on flowers, stems, involucre, tubercles, spines, leaves, calyx and fruit.

The book is divided in three broad sections and further divided into eighteen chapters. The opening section includes information on the Sonoran Desert, how to use the book, and basic botanical information for non-professionals. The main section is distributed into seven chapters labeled and marked in the range of colors shown by Sonoran plants: Yuccas; White, White-Green and Green Flowers; Yellow Flowers; Red, Pink, Magenta and Purple Flowers; Orange and Apricot Flowers; Blue, Violet and Lavender Flowers; and Large Shrubs and Trees. The last section provides a comprehensive glossary of more than 225 terminologies used in the book along with information sources. The technical aspects related to the production of the photos are also provided. The photography was done using a Canon 1Ds MII (16.7 MP) camera equipped with a Canon 100 mm EF lens. Image manipulation was achieved using ULEAD Photo Explorer 8.5 and Photoshop 7.0 software.

The book *Sonoran Desert Life: Understanding, Insight and Enjoyment* could be of interest to high school teachers and students as well as individuals interested in arid land biodiversity. The work is also useful in understanding the special and unique Sonoran desert ecosystem.

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