

winter key to the shrubs that goes to the species level for all but *Salix* species.

While the book does not include a key to the various plant families, this is not necessary both because of the comprehensive keys referred to earlier and because the book only deals with 128 species. The authors do however provide family descriptions in the main part of the book before presenting individual species keys and descriptions for members of each family. Before writing this review I tested the keys on a number of specimens and found them to be very laudable in their accuracy, ease of use and distinct lack of reliance on obscure characteristics known only to those well versed in taxonomic terminology. Though not essential, it would have been nice if the authors had included a glossary to cover the few less well-known terms they do use. Even the keys to the genus *Salix* are usable and provide a means of identifying species primarily on vegetative characteristics. All in all it is apparent that the keys have been developed by individuals with a great amount of field experience who have been confronted with the difficult task of studying plants in the field during all seasons. Such keys could not have readily been written by purely "lab scientists."

Supplementing the keys is a series of carefully selected and beautifully drawn illustrations that have been extracted with acknowledgement from a number of sources. The only concern that could legitimately be expressed about the illustrations is that they are so good the users could be seduced into the bad scientific practice of "picture keying" specimens and ignoring the text. While range maps are provided for the distribution of each species in Alaska, the authors have not seen fit to include ranges in the neighbouring areas of Canada that are shown on the map base. Though technically the book need not include such distributions, they would be very nice to have as northern scientists tend to view "the North" as the entity they study rather than specific political jurisdictions. Perhaps the authors will again draw upon the work of Professor Hulten when they prepare the next edition and include such distributions.

Individual species entries are carefully written and include: common and scientific names, synonymy, species descriptions, autecological notes and notes on worldwide distribution.

From the production standpoint, the book is soft cover in 6" x 9" format, perfect bound with both glue and stitching. The stitching should ensure that the book will stand up to the abuse that books of this nature usually experience at the hands of field workers.

In summary, this book is of very high quality both from the technical and production standpoints and should be a constant companion of both researchers and interested naturalists who enjoy the delightful offerings of western North American northlands. A price of only US\$12.95 for an academic book of this quality is a singularly fine buy. I commend the book very highly.

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COOKING ALASKAN. By THE EDITORS AND FRIENDS OF *Alaska* MAGAZINE. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1983. 476 p., bib., index. US\$17.95 + \$1.00 postage.

Cooking Alaskan was sent to me, at *Arctic*, several years ago as a review copy. It is impossible to review a cookbook until one has tried enough of the recipes to make a judgment about the volume. Over the years I have used quite a few of those contained in this comprehensive collection, and I can now report that for anyone interested in cooking fish, game, or harvest foods, in the field or in the urban kitchen, this book will be an invaluable addition to the cookbook shelf.

Fish and shellfish: From cleaning to storage (including how-to's for field-smoking your catch) to filleting all shapes and sizes, and myriad

cooking techniques, the information is as complete as I have found anywhere. (The cardinal rule: fresh fish require 10 minutes per inch — 2.5 cm — at the thickest point, regardless of cooking method; frozen, they take twice as long.) You'll learn how to remove sand from clams and cockles and how to shuck them by alternative methods. You'll also learn about PSP — paralytic shellfish poisoning — and how best to avoid it. This is *not* a Pollyanna-ish guide to the wild. Every consumable denizen of Alaska's seas, rivers, and lakes is covered in detail in the "From the Waters" section, which includes some unexpected treats, such as Whale Oil Sugar Cookies (from Helen Fisher, of Kenai).

Wild birds and four-legged game animals are dealt with extensively, and many native Alaskan preparation techniques are included. To my knowledge, no one since Mrs. Beeton has given such detailed instructions for butchering and skinning-out game animals. The editors conscientiously provide references to more explicit books on field-dressing and preparation of large and small game both in Alaska and in the Lower 48 (references are provided throughout the book). Nutritional information is included in each section.

An exhaustive survey is given in "From the Earth" of Alaskan wild and home-grown food plants. Greens, berries, mushrooms, tea plants of various kinds, "mousetuts" (cottongrass, or *Eriophorum angustifolium*), water plants, and cultivated plants are given thorough treatment, including cautions about poisonous varieties and stages of development during which the harvester should avoid certain plants.

In case you're feeling a sudden starch deficit, read on! The editors devote 31 pages to sourdough alone, followed by dozens of recipes for "cache and cupboard" delicacies using flour, yeast, sugar, and powdered milk. In this section you'll find not only breads and desserts, but also sauces, savories, and stuffings galore to complement the recipes in earlier chapters.

The final chapter, "Stocking the Cache," is a sort of appendix of preservation methods. Freezing, canning, salting, smoking, pickling, curing, corning, drying, jelling, and more esoteric methods such as making fruit leather and "oil-capping" (press the berries into a jar to release the juice, then "cap" with a ¼-inch layer of cooking oil and store underground near the permafrost layer until the weather is cold enough to freeze the berries!) are all described step by step. And in the last section of this chapter, recipes are provided for bottled delights made from harvest foods. My personal favorite is Northern Comfort (donated anonymously, perhaps because of the requirement for a liberal portion of 190-proof Everclear!).

A bibliography is included of other Alaskan cookbooks, and there is a listing of contributors both individual and elsewhere published. Finally, a cookbook wouldn't be complete without a comprehensive cross-referenced index, and in this case it is 20 pages long, covering the 1000+ recipes.

Besides being a useful cookbook, this is a lot of fun to read. First-person bush experiences lend local color, in which few North Americans excel so proudly as Alaskans. Historical food-preparation techniques involving a generous dollop of folklore and ethnology are also described, courtesy of various native and non-native historical societies from the Kenai Peninsula to the Aleutian Chain. And even those of you who live far south of the 60th — or even the 49th — parallel can surprise your dinner guests with Seagull Egg Cake or judiciously substitute beef for moose or caribou in any of the multitude of red-meat recipes.

The book is well produced and I found no glaring typos (high praise from an obsessive editor!). Recipes are laid out in the time-honored fashion, with a list of ingredients and amounts followed by a step-by-step description of what to do with them. So far, I have had no failures using the recipes from this compendium, and I can recommend it without reservation.

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