

BERRIES OF LABRADOR. By ELLEN BRYAN OBED. St. John's: Memorial University Press, 2024. 978199044279. 115 p., colour illus., glossary, index. Softbound. Cdn\$26.95.

Ellen Bryan Obed's preface clearly describes her book: "a collection of over forty Labrador berries—some with an important part in Labrador history, some hidden and hardly known. Some with many names, some with only one name. Berries for food, berries for medicine. Berries for birds and animals, but not for people. Berries for everyone. Berries with a single habitat, berries that will grow anywhere. Some for beauty, some for play. Each berry with its own distinct character of root, leaf and stem, fruit and flower" (p. 1). She writes that she produced this book for "the people of the land," but she has also included information that will appeal to readers outside Labrador, and those with a technical interest.

This book is 20cm x 20cm and is printed in full colour. The cover is laminated and attractively designed. Each of the main berry-bearing plants in this book is illustrated with several watercolours. From a botanical point of view, the illustrations—by Valerie Powell (with several additions by Mavis Penney)—are excellent and are good enough to allow field identification to species. Each species of berry-bearing plant is introduced with its Labrador common name, its North American common name, its Inuttitut name(s), its Innu-aimun name(s), and its scientific name. Berries are grouped by plant family (e.g., black crowberry, alpine bearberry, bearberry, creeping snowberry, bog cranberry, mountain cranberry, blueberries bilberries, and hurts are all within the family Ericaceae), and each is well illustrated, showing leaves, flowers, and berries. Quotations from local people highlight memories, characteristics, and uses associated with each berry. The text is non-technical and charmingly chatty—almost like a walk in the woods with a naturalist or forager friend who is telling you about wayside plants. The book also includes a few short poems by the author. Within some of the descriptions, less-common related species are also mentioned, although not illustrated (e.g., uncommon rose twisted-stalk is included in the description of clasping-leaved twisted-stalk).

As well as culinary uses, the text includes information about other traditional uses for berry-bearing plants, including for basketry (red-osier dogwood), medicine (dogberry), and tea (bristly black currant), and as flavouring agent (juniper berries), sod for fly smudge and smoking char and salmon (crowberry), dye for hair and grasswork (crowberry), and febrifuge (maidenhair berry).

This book clearly fulfills the author's intentions. It is neither a technical manual nor a field guide—and it was never intended to be. It is an attractive book to pick up and browse, a record of local and traditional uses, and a paean to the bounty of summer and autumn in Labrador. The book includes a glossary, with illustrations to clarify a dozen botanical terms that did have to be used. The etymology of plant names is often included in the text, as

an aide-mémoire for linking a name to a particular plant (e.g., crowberry's genus name, *Empetrum*, is derived from Greek, meaning growing on rocks).

I have only two quibbles with this book. The first is that the book includes common juniper (*Juniperus communis*) for its berry-like cones, but there is no mention of ground juniper (*J. horizontalis*), which also grows in Labrador. These two shrubs often grow side by side and their berries are indistinguishable, although their growth forms are very different.

My second quibble is printed at the bottoms of pages 54 and 55, where a minor proofreading oversight has placed bluebead lily in the Ranunculaceae/buttercup family instead of the Liliaceae/lily family.

This is a well-produced book. The writing is clear and friendly, a tribute to both author and editor. The paper stock is bright, and it is thick enough to prevent show-through from the other side. Illustrations are clear, colourful, and technically accurate. Design and layout are well considered and unpretentious, and the illustrations have lots of white space around them. This book has a solid perfect binding and a laminated cover that should withstand many years of handling.

At a price of Cdn\$26.95, this is a useful reference book for anyone interested in traditional plant use, foraging, or natural history. It contains historical and ecological information about various species, where to find those species, and what else eats them. If you are interested in finding out about the edible, inedible, and toxic berries and berry-like fruits that grow in Labrador (and in nearby Newfoundland), this will be a useful book for you. As the author writes (p. 2), this book is "a literary mixed-berry jam. Store it on the bookshelf. Open it in winter to have a good read. With this little book, we can have our berries all year long."

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ARCTICOLOGIES: EARLY MODERN ACTIONS FOR OUR WARMER WORLD. By LOWELL DUCKERT. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2025. ISBN 9781517913588. xiv + 369 p., b&w illus., appendices, index, bib., notes. Softbound. US\$30.00. Also available in ebook format.

Arcticologies immerses readers in early modern Northern European experiences of cold and changing environments—what its author Lowell Duckert defines as a "cold studies" approach of "cold-infused early modern environmental humanities" (p. 44). Duckert builds historical depth for future projects in Arctic environmental humanities. His historical ethnography is drawn from