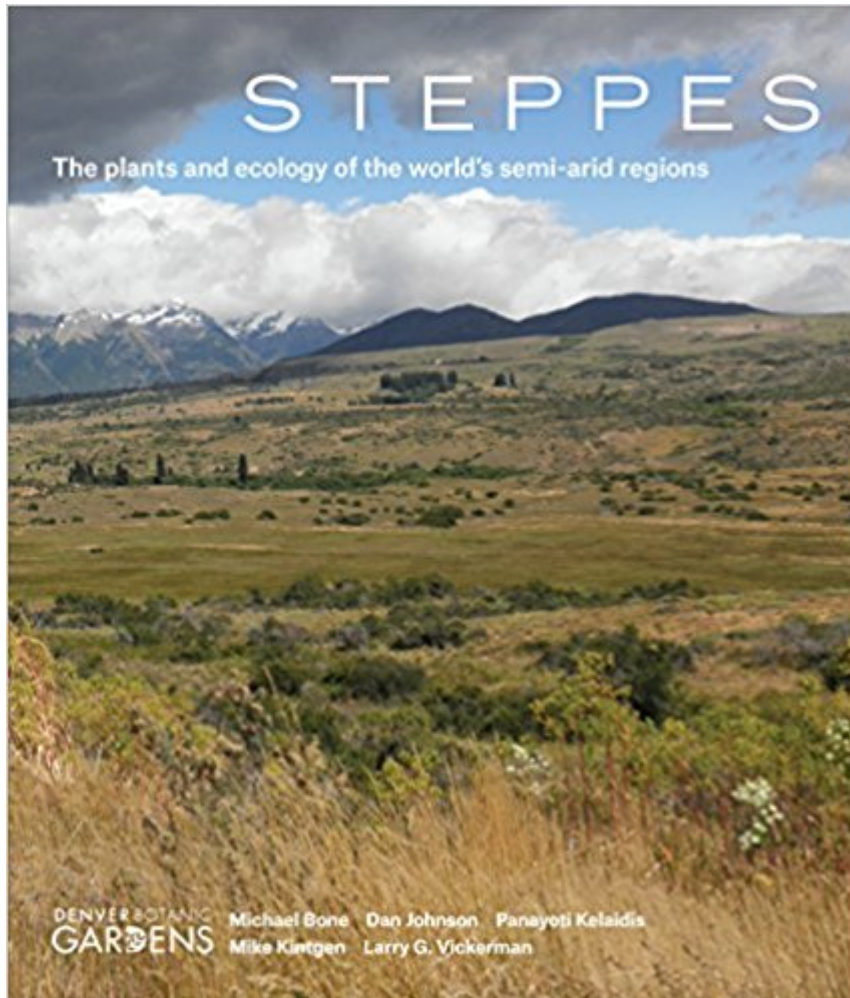




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Steppes: The Plants And Ecology Of The World's Semi-arid Regions



Synopsis

Steppes—semi-arid biomes dominated by forbs, grasses, and grass-like species, and characterized by extremes of cold and heat—occupy enormous areas on four continents. Yet these ecosystems are among the least studied on our planet. Given that the birth and evolution of human beings have been so intimately interwoven with steppe regions, it is amazing that so few attempts have been made to compare and quantify the features of these regions. In this ground-breaking volume, five leading voices in horticulture—all staff members of Denver Botanic Gardens—examine the plants, climate, geology, and geography of the world's steppes: central Asia, central and intermountain North America, Patagonia, and South Africa. Drawing upon their first-hand experience, the writers illuminate the distinctive features of each region, with a particular emphasis on the striking similarities between their floras. Each chapter includes a primer of species of horticultural interest—a rich resource for readers with an interest in steppe plants.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Mention steppes, and many envision exotic, even extinct locales, such as stops along Marco Polo's Silk Road. This work, produced under the aegis of the Denver Botanic Gardens, which has a dedicated steppe collection, dispels such misconceptions by providing a comprehensive examination of the rich biodiversity to be found in the significant, still-existing semi-arid grasslands regions throughout the world. Color photos inform the

book's series of exploratory essays organized by geographical region, including Central Asia, South America, and American prairies. VERDICT A celebratory compendium of the Earth's amazing grassy plains. • Library Journal • "A fascinating blend of geography, geology, human history and global politics with a generous helping of botany thrown in. • The Pueblo Chieftain • "This book is to be hugely welcomed. This is an attractive and thought-provoking volume of great interest to the garden, horticulturist and ecologist alike. • The Garden • "Despite their horticultural importance, little has been written about them. This book highlights the plants in each area and gives climatic and geological descriptions. • Alpine Garden Society • "This ambitious book surveys the steppe habitats of the world, with a primary emphasis on botany and horticulture the whole is harmonized by the consistent erudition of all the authors. It is rich in detail, and can be consulted by serious horticulturalists, both professional and amateur. • botanists, geographers, and even policy-makers, and it is a must-read before visiting any of the steppe regions. • North American Rock Garden Society • "Steppes: The Plants and Ecology of the World's Semi-arid Regions is a deep and far-reaching survey of all four steppe areas. Richly illustrated and packed with information about plants, history, geography, and geology, it brings together the talents of five outstanding horticulturists. Day by day, our world is becoming more steppe-like. If we know what's good for us, we'll start learning the lessons of these complex, fascinating regions. And Steppes is a great place to begin. • I Can Garden • "Much of the human story has been written in exactly these sort of high, dry grasslands and shrub lands, broadly known as the world's steppe climates. It's no accident that so many of our best garden plants come to us from these far-off lands. Journey from the familiar canyons and prairies of the American West to the vast plains of Mongolia, to the rugged grasslands and Karoo of South Africa and to the windswept peaks and plateaus of Patagonia. • Slow Food Denver

The first comprehensive overview of the world's four steppe regions, this important volume surveys the plants, climate, geology, and geography of the steppes of North America, Eurasia, Patagonia, and South Africa. Given the stark realities of climate change, it is imperative that we gain a better knowledge of these regions, characterized by extremes of heat and cold and by limited rainfall. The perspectives offered by this book will enrich the reader's understanding and appreciation of these fascinating but fragile landscapes.

First of all, this book just looks great on your bookshelf without even reading it. It has a great and high-quality look and feel to it and is nicely put together. Inside, it is a first-class effort. While I am not totally into all the plant species that it mentions, the physical descriptions of all the steppe areas and constituent geographical regions is excellent and very well-written throughout. It is a virtual geography tour of this most under-appreciated part of our planet. The pictures and maps are also first rate and it is a very good read throughout. If you like physical geography this is a wonderful book. Plus, at its excellent price, this book is a no-brainer!

Excellent feast for the eyes. Written brilliantly with no pretense. Not dry and boring but exciting and down to earth information from scholars who appeal to educated horticulturalists AND your everyday homegrown gardener. Rock alpine is my particular favorite and there is a goldmine of information here. A treasure trove that Panayoti Kelaidis and his renowned colleagues welcome you to visit and learn about the world's semi-arid regions and the plants that proliferate there.

This is a wonderful read! It has a dual purpose: first, to introduce readers to an environment that most of us have never thought much about, and second, to introduce us to plants growing in these places that have potential for ornamental use for water-restricted areas. When I was a kid (and a bored adult attending interminable meetings in a conference room with a giant map on the wall), I used to stare at the map and wonder about the places that didn't have many roads or cities. Many of those are located in the great steppe areas of the world. Now I know that there's a wealth of living, growing, fascinating plants there. I loved this book--so much that I had to buy a copy for a friend. (I'm not giving up my copy!)

On page 47 we are informed that people migrated across the Caucasus Mountains and found the great plains of Moldavia. On page 40 we are told that Lake Issyk Kul is south of the Himalayas. I think the author knows more about weeds than geography. The reader is expected to know the difference between Berberidaceae and Boraginaceae. Descriptions of plants found in different regions are little more than lists since plant distributions are not linked to anything else.

Fascinating, well-written contributions from all the authors. This is one that will be reread often. It covers a large area of the world and is very welcomed. I only wish it could have been twice as long.

I especially appreciated learning about the steppes of North America, which I never knew about before.

Great book by local authors, just to read and for reference.

This book is not about steppes (grasslands dominated by bunchgrasses) or even shrub-steppe. Basically it is a narrative picture or coffee table book, of "wild flowers" (forbs and pretty shrubs). Yes, there are some pictures of native grasses (some in botanical gardens), but for every grass picture there are "half a dozen" of blooming forbs. Most importantly, it is not a book devoted to grasslands, but to biotic and abiotic features of grassland (steppe) regions. For book lovers like me it was a nice addition to an already overflowing personal library, but for those wanting a technical book devoted to steppe in the ecological/floristic meaning do NOT waste your money. It is not even a coffee table book about steppes in the true meaning of the term. Randy E. Rosiere, Professor of Range Management Certified Professional in Rangeland Management ,,

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