American Wild Flowers. The introduction to this volume* points out that previous popular books on American plants have been either inadequate or inaccurate: too few species have been dealt with or else too small an area has been covered. The present two-partite volume is the first of a proposed five which will make good this deficiency and give a simple illustrated guide to the wild flowers of all the North American states of the United States. Not all species are illustrated or discussed and trees, grasses, sedges, rushes and ferns, are omitted. It is scarcely surprising that some selectivity was necessary considering the total number of species represented in the country; without it, the cost of the work would have been astronomical. As it is, one reads with awe, that, within its present scope, it has been estimated that one million dollars are needed for the whole project. The first volume deals with the wild flowers of 22 of the north-eastern states of America. One hundred and eighty colour plates, each with six to eight species, are supplemented by some black and white line drawings and a simple informative text. The overall standard of the photographs and their reproduction is excellent: many are very beautiful and few fail to give an adequate impression of the flower or the plant. In addition, by varying the shape and size of the photographs on each page, a most attractively balanced effect has been achieved so that the overall impression is very pleasing to the eye. The experience and knowledge of numerous American botanists, especially those at the New York Botanic Garden, has been drawn upon to maintain botanical accuracy throughout the illustrations and the text. Mistakes have, however, crept in here and there and occasionally the plant illustrated is not what the caption says e.g. on plate 120 the plant labelled as *Hyssopus officinalis* is not that but probably *Cunilla origanoides*.

A great deal of money and labour has gone into producing this lush volume and allowing for its inherent limitations, it is a most impressive blending of botanical, photographic and printing skill. One wishes similar success to future volumes.

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* Wild flowers of the United States by H. W. Rickett and others. Volume 1: The North Eastern States. New York, The New York Botanical Garden and McGraw Hill Book Company, 1966. x, 559p., 180 plates (in 2 vols.) 13 × 9.5 in. Price £15.16.6.