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## CATERPILLARS IN THE FIELD AND GARDEN

Thomas J. Allen, Jim P. Brock, and Jeffrey Glassberg. 2005. Oxford University Press. 240 pp. Paperback. 13cm x 20 cm (5 1/2" x 8 1/4"), 413 color maps, 496 color photos. U.S. \$29.95. ISBN: 0-19-514987-4

## CATERPILLARS OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA

David L. Wagner, 2005. Princeton University Press. 496 pp. Paperback. 12.5 cm x 20 cm (5" x 8"), 1,200+ color photos, 24 line illustrations. U.S. \$29.95. ISBN: 0-691-12144-3

Many people have asked me why I didn't include the caterpillars when I wrote the field guide, *Butterflies of Alberta*.<sup>1</sup> My standard answer has been that each of our over 160 Alberta butterflies goes through five instars as a caterpillar (between shedding of their skins), and that each instar looks a bit different. Not only that, but butterflies are hopelessly outnumbered by the moths—more than 3000 for Alberta alone—and there is no single easy way to tell a butterfly caterpillar from a moth caterpillar. The project is simply too big, so we butterfly people generally avoid it.

Now, suddenly, we have two new caterpillar books to celebrate. The first, *Caterpillars in the Field and Garden. A Field Guide to the Butterfly Caterpillars of North America* by Thomas Allen, Jim Brock, and Jeff Glassberg, deals exclusively with the caterpillars of butterflies in the US and Canada. It is nicely illustrated with photographs of the caterpillars as well as selected adult butterflies, and begins with a well-written introductory section covering such topics as butterfly gardening, rearing caterpillars, and conservation. This is a book for the confirmed butterfly enthusiast, intended as a companion

to butterfly field guides, and as such it does a fine job. I have used it in the field, and although not all of the butterfly caterpillars of the Canadian prairies are illustrated (for instance, you won't find the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, but you will find the incredibly rare Arizona vagrant, the White-dotted Cattleheart), it is certainly a better reference than any that have come before it.

David Wagner's book, *Caterpillars of Eastern North America: A Guide to Identification and Natural History*, has twice as many pages as its competitor, but is priced the same. Wagner covers both butterfly and moth caterpillars, and his photos are superb as well. He may not have as many butterfly species in his book, but his overall coverage of caterpillar diversity is impressive. Not only that, he is also such a knowledgeable lepidopterist that the accounts for each caterpillar are accompanied by more fascinating details and interesting facts than you might think possible. Wagner's approach is more technical, but the reader will be richly rewarded by the details and breadth of the book as a whole. Don't let the word "Eastern" in the title scare you away—outside of the

mountains the book will work reasonably well.

If I had to recommend only one of these two books, I would put Wagner's first. But of course, that's silly—why not buy both? I know that I'll be using both of them regularly and my nine-year old son will be borrowing them frequently as well. We love rearing caterpillars in the summertime and these books are just what we need to help our hobby along. In fact, we've already made good use of

them on a trip to South Texas in the fall. I happily recommend them, and I'm certainly appreciative of the hard work and creative energy that the authors have put into these two fine books.

1. ACORN, JOHN. 1993. *Butterflies of Alberta*, Lone Pine Press, Edmonton, AB

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## THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SASKATCHEWAN: A LIVING LEGACY

CANADIAN PLAINS RESEARCH CENTRE. 2005. University of Regina, SK. ISBN 0-88977-175-8. Hard cover. \$125 Can. 1092 pages.

The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan was a mammoth 9-year Centennial project involving over 800 writers, dozens of editors, support staff, student assistants and committee members. This is the first provincial encyclopedia for Saskatchewan and the third provincial encyclopedia in Canada. The 1,000 page, single, 9-pound, hard-cover volume (one needs a sturdy table for it) includes over 2,200 alphabetically organized individual entries covering all aspects of life in Saskatchewan, and 21 in-depth essays on topics ranging from agriculture to military history.

Both the entries and essays are concise and well written for the layperson and students (Grade 7 and up), and are without serious errors. Many entries have 1 to 3 references to assist readers to find additional information. Most of the 21 essays have additional references. These entries and essays will encourage readers to

seek out additional information from other sources.

Each alphabetical 'chapter' begins with a stunning image by photographer Courtney Milne. In addition, the book contains 406 colour and 593 black and white photos illustrating the people, objects, features, events and places in the province. There is a good mix of archival and recent photos. In addition, 34 maps, 56 tables and 59 line drawings and illustrations were used to highlight items and facts in selected entries and essays throughout the book. These features enhance the book's appearance as well as the text. Natural history topics include major geographic features and regions, climate change, biodiversity, conservation, flora and fauna. The flora and fauna entries are at the family level or higher, for example plants and birds (at the family level), mammals (by major group), amphibians, reptiles, fishes,

trees and invertebrates (by major group). These topics are covered by brief entries ranging in size from a single paragraph to about two pages, and many have accompanying illustrations. For example, the entry on owls contains basic information on owl attributes and habits, plus brief descriptions of Saskatchewan species, their habitats and a photo of a Great Horned Owl. Some naturalists with biographies in the Encyclopedia are Doug Gilroy, Bill Sarjeant, Stuart Houston, Isabel Priestly, Fred Bard, Fred Lahrman, R.T. Coupland, Paul Riegert and George Ledingham.

Although they are very different books, there is significant yet complimentary overlap between the second edition of the Atlas of Saskatchewan and the Encyclopedia in the areas of natural history, human geography, economics and history topics.<sup>1</sup> The Atlas has more text information and visual presentation of information for a smaller number of entries, but the Encyclopedia has different, and a greater number of, entries (especially for institutions, events and people), and often more up-to-date information (Encyclopedia entries were accepted up to the fall of 2004) than the Atlas, published in 1999. With these two important reference books, Saskatchewan is well covered in terms of geography, natural history,

economy, history, government, culture and people.

Three lists are appended to the book: the 800 plus contributors, entries organized by 22 subject areas, and the people mentioned in the book, cross-referenced to the relevant entries in the book. The last two appendices greatly assist readers to find information in the book quickly and easily. On the last page, there is a Saskatchewan-at-a-glance feature summarizing key facts about Saskatchewan: name origin, area, geography, time zone, population, climate, governance, flag and provincial emblems.

It must have been tough to decide which entries to include and some readers will find some things excluded from the Encyclopedia. However, I found that this book does an excellent job covering the key features, places, people and events in a single volume publication. I highly recommend this reference book to all libraries and anyone interested in Saskatchewan. It is truly a stunning Centennial project.

1. FUNG, K. (ed.). 1999. The Atlas of Saskatchewan, Second Edition. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

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“Perhaps the most complex mutualism between plants and ants is the ant garden, which is an aggregation of epiphytes assembled by ants. The ants bring the seeds of the epiphytes into their carton nests. As the plants grow, nourished by the carton and detritus brought by the ants, their roots become part of the framework of the nests. The ants also feed on the fruit pulp, the elaiosomes (food bodies) of the seeds, and the secretions of the extrafloral nectaries.”

Bert Holldobler and Edward O. Wilson, *The Ants*, p. 546.