

Detailed graphs, maps, diagrams, and photos help the reader understand the material being reviewed, though minor flaws do appear. For example, the arcane term *steppe* is never defined or contrasted and compared with the more widely used term *prairie*. Indeed, it is a bit ironic that the dramatic color cover photo has its foreground dominated by Plains soapweed (*Yucca glauca*), but its importance is never discussed or is the species mentioned anywhere in the book. The last chapter, "The Future of the Shortgrass Steppe," chops through to the book's conclusion most likely because of the number of its perspectives (land-use change, invasive species, conservation strategies, global change, and disease) and authors (seven), but also because it lacks detailed research upon which to draw.

The next ecological book written on the shortgrass steppe will need to focus on important human-landscape interactions as the urban conflagrations of Cheyenne, Fort Collins, Greeley, Denver, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo continue their spread eastward. In the meantime, this book is a "must-have" operating guide for understanding this ecosystem and should be required reading for any social scientist trying to describe or explain the region's history, depopulation, land use changes, and other human responses backdropped by the unique shortgrass steppe. **Richard K. Sutton**, *Department of Agronomy and Horticulture and the Program in Landscape Architecture, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*.

High Plains Horticulture: A History By John F. Freeman. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2008. xii + 270 pp. Map, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

High Plains Horticulture is an outstanding historical review of the amazing challenges and environmental constraints homesteaders, early settlers, and visionary plantmen faced head on in their noble efforts to establish horticultural pursuits in the High Plains. Its historical documentation is noteworthy, its author's treatment commendable. Anyone reading this book will gain renewed respect for the sheer grit, patience, endurance, passion, and leadership sacrificially offered by early plantmen, horticulturists, and community pioneers, including early horticultural society and governmental leaders.

The text describes early vegetable- and fruit-growing efforts and clearly paints the definitive, yet intangible, role horticulture plays, in all its facets, in making our environment more liveable and aesthetically satisfying. John F. Freeman skillfully intertwines this well-docu-

mented concept with our human dependence on a reliable source of water, though this overwhelming emphasis on drought and water needs results in a bit of repetitiveness. While his coverage of the horticultural contributions of Niels Hansen at the South Dakota Agricultural College in Brookings, South Dakota, is somewhat superficial compared with the more encompassing and complete presentation of research at the Cheyenne Horticultural Field Station in Wyoming, this may be in part because Brookings is located to the east of the High Plains. For current accuracy, several scientific plant names could have been updated, but plant nomenclature is sound overall.

For its sweep and the quality of its information, *High Plains Horticulture: A History* is a valuable work that merits a broader readership than its title might imply. I, for one, was challenged by its content as it renewed my zeal and pride to be in the ranks of horticultural plantmen who seek to improve and broaden the diversity of plants that are winter hardy and adapted to the climatic rigors of the Great Plains. **Dale E. Herman**, *Department of Plant Sciences, North Dakota State University*.

The Land Where the Sky Begins: North America's Endangered Tall Grass Prairie and Aspen Parkland. Photography by Dennis Fast. Text by Barbara Huck. Winnipeg, MB: Heartland Associates Inc., 2007. 160 pp. Photographs, maps. C\$29.95 cloth.

The Land Where the Sky Begins is a small coffee-table book, elegantly illustrated with photographs and a few drawings of the critically endangered tallgrass prairie, and the more extensive neighboring aspen parkland. It covers, in surprising detail given its diminutive size, the evolution of grasslands and aspen parkland and describes, primarily by season, a number of typical plant and animal species that inhabit these systems.

The photographs are absolutely exquisite and far more than simply a backdrop to the lyrical text. They are really responsible for developing the images of the complex habitats described. The photos are beautifully composed and displayed, providing a captivating image of prairies and parklands, yet are not so taken with their own aesthetic as to obscure an accurate reflection of the nature of these ecosystems.

The text is generally accurate, comprehensive, and engagingly detailed. It is liltily written and sprinkled with enough descriptions of individual species to develop the reader's rapport with these habitats. Even prairie ecologists are likely to learn some new trivia about particular species, or perhaps pick up an enticing recipe or two. The