

Book Review: *Native Hostplants for Texas Butterflies, a Field Guide*, by Jim Weber, Lynne M. Weber, and Ronald H. Wauer (2018)

College Station, Texas A&M University Press. 6.125" x 9.25", 260 pp, 600 color photos, 100 maps.

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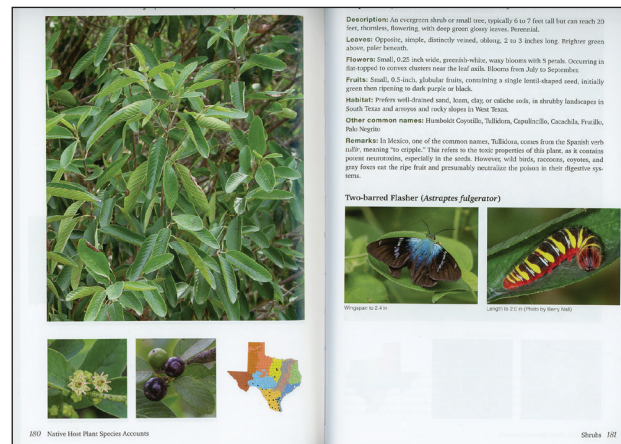
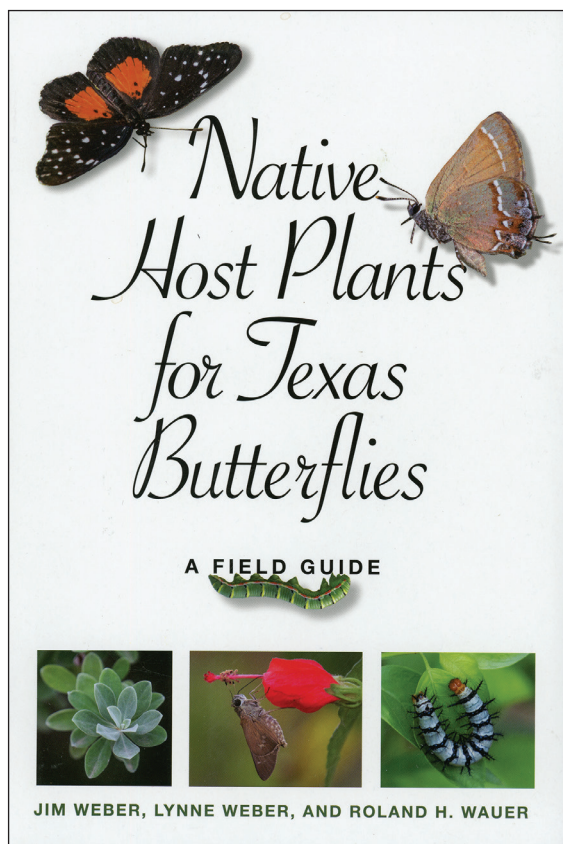
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One of my hobbies is planting butterfly gardens in local elementary schools in the town where I live. It started with planting a number of 'butterfly plants' at home, which suddenly transformed my previously empty backyard into a place where I can study behavior of butterflies, and engage in butterfly photography.

I am no botanist however, and learning plants, for the most part, has been an extension of my love for rearing Lepidoptera. Considering the thousands of butterfly species out there, combined with the tens of thousands of moth species in the New World alone, and considering the taxonomic breadth of the plants with which these species associate, it is of paramount importance to recognize plants in the wild.

Yet, while we have very good guides for the identification of butterflies of most regions, and, with the arrival of the latest books and websites, even for the identification of moths of some regions, where does one start identifying 'butterfly plants'? Taxonomic keys are surely not the way to go for most of us.

I would argue that the recent book *Native Hostplants for Texas Butterflies, a Field Guide* is an excellent place to start learning 'butterfly plants'. Taking a photo of a plant that is useful for identification and beautiful at the same time is much harder than taking a pretty or useful photo of an insect. However, the authors have done a tremendous job of illustrating plants, devoting a page to each plant species. Each plant photo page has three photos, a large one showing the whole plant and two small ones illustrating its flowers and fruit. And there is also a distribution map for each plant within Texas borders. The opposing page illustrates adult butterfly(ies) and caterpillar(s) that use this plant as a host, and contains a brief description of the plant, its habitat, and a few other useful bits of information.



While a person who lives in another state may be deterred by the title, I would say that for me, living in Florida, the book is largely applicable to our fauna and flora. It is also a great way to learn how the butterfly fauna of Texas differs from that of my state and what, if any, are the differences in hostplant use for the species that we have here. While there is an interesting introduction to ecoregions of Texas, the majority of the book is devoted to individual plant pages (Pp. 17-225) divided into sections including Wildflowers, Trees, Shrubs, and Vines. There is also a brief glossary of botanical terms and excellent indexes to plants and butterflies. The book is published in a convenient-to-use field guide format, appears to be durably manufactured, and I expect it will see and withstand much use while in my possession.

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