

BOOK NOTICE

PHILIP A. CLARKE. 2014. **Discovering Aboriginal Plant Use: The Journeys of an Australian Anthropologist.** (ISBN-13: 978-1925078220, hbk). Rosenberg Publishing, 3 Whitehall Road, Kenthurst NSW 2156, Australia. (**Orders:** sales@rosenbergpub.com.au, +61 2 9654 1502). \$49.95 US, 240 pp., 285 mm × 210 mm.

From the publisher: The career of a museum-based anthropologist is diverse, involving the curation of artefact collections, organizing exhibitions, answering inquiries and conducting fieldwork. Clarke started work at the South Australian Museum over 30 years ago; during that time his role changed from museum assistant, to collection manager, registrar, curator and head of anthropology. There are many ways to explore a culture other than your own, and Clarke chose ethnobotany as the 'window' through which to gain insights into Aboriginal Australia. Ethnobotany is a diverse field that is concerned with investigating the relationships between human cultures and the flora. In the past, it was mainly used by European scholars who studied the societies of hunter-gatherers and non-Western horticulturalists; today it is increasingly being used to document aspects of the lives of Indigenous peoples existing in a postcolonial world. The author argues that we can better understand a people if we know how they see and use plants. In *Discovering Aboriginal Plant Use* Clarke dips into his field journals to provide a rich account of journeys, as both anthropologist and ethnobotanist, that span the temperate, arid and tropical zones of Australia and neighboring landmasses. He describes the cultural and natural heritage of each region, on the plants used by Aboriginal people that contribute to their distinctiveness.

Clarke's other books include *Australian Plants as Aboriginal Tools*, *Aboriginal People and Their Plants*, and *Aboriginal Plant Collectors*.

Preface

Introduction

Part One Southeastern Australia

1. Adelaide Plains - The Museum Crypt - The Value of Collections - Fibrous Bulrushes - Yam-daisies as a Staple Food
2. The Lower Murray Missions and Spirit Beings - Beyond the Mission Sedges for Making Artefacts - Flax-lilies for Medicine and String
3. South East of South Australia and South West of Victoria - South of the Coorong - East of the Glenelg River - Muntrie, a Food for the Future - Grassrees, Multipurpose Plants

Part Two Arid Interiors

4. Eastern Central Australia - Northern Flinders Ranges - Cooper Creek and Diamantina River - Western New South Wales - River Red Gums - Pituri and Tobacco as Narcotics
5. Western Desert - Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands - Northern Goldfields - Great Victoria Desert - Eremophila, a Strong Medicine - Spinifex for Making 'Bush Araldite'
6. Northern Deserts - The Centre - Across the Tropic of Capricorn - Batwing Coral Tree, with Soft Timber and Hard Beans - Capers and Other Related Wild Foods