

INTRODUCTION

TREES DOMINATE Iowa's forests while grasses predominate in our prairies and roadsides. Shrubs and vines receive much less attention, though they, too, are important elements of our natural landscapes. This book is a guide for those who want to know more about these interesting and useful plants.

Like trees, shrubs and vines are woody plants that are easy to observe year round. The first part of this book will help you identify them. Illustrated keys take you through the process one step at a time and are followed by images and descriptions of all but the rarest species. Summer and winter features are covered separately to facilitate identification at these two very different times of year.

Information about the distribution, ecology, and uses of each species native and naturalized in Iowa is provided with the descriptions. We hope this information will enhance your appreciation of shrubs and vines and help you use these plants effectively in your outdoor spaces.

The book continues with brief chapters about the culture and natural history of shrubs and vines. These offer tips for selecting, planting, and caring for these plants in your landscape and explain why the plants grow where they do in nature.

While complete in its coverage, this book is not meant to be a flora or taxonomic treatise. Synonyms are provided when botanists differ on how to name a species, but the reasoning behind the differing opinions is not explored. Nomenclature mostly follows Eilers and Roosa (1994) because that text has been widely used and quoted by Iowa botanists; other sources are listed in the bibliography.

Readers will note that this book does not include many exotic shrubs and vines that are cultivated in Iowa. Insufficient space precluded the illustration and discussion of these varied and attractive plants, although we acknowledge their value for landscaping here.

Unless otherwise credited, photographic images are the work of author Donald R. Farrar. Most drawings in the keys were created by John van der Linden. Other drawings in the keys and the illustrations in the first chapter were prepared by Carol Jacobs and first appeared in our previous work, *Forest and Shade Trees of Iowa*. Carol Jacobs also assembled the winter twig plates in this book.