

Preface

The first edition of Fassett's *Manual of Aquatic Plants* appeared in 1940 and quickly became a classic in its field. Its success was, in large part, due to Dr. Fassett's aim to provide a manual which would make possible the identification of an aquatic plant in sterile as well as reproductive conditions. He made an all-out effort to construct his keys as simply as possible, coupled with flowering or fruiting characters where essential for proper identification. He copiously cross-referenced characters in his keys to labeled illustrations to facilitate the identification process further.

Shortly before his death in 1954, Dr. Fassett invited Dr. Eugene Ogden to prepare a revised edition. This effort, which appeared in 1957, resulted in a 22-page appendix aimed at bringing the nomenclature of the original text up to date. It also provided a much improved supplementary key to the genus *Potamogeton*. Both Drs. Fassett and Ogden readily acknowledged that the addition of an appendix, though extremely useful, fell far short of the need for a complete revision.

This new edition provides the badly needed updating, yet attempts to retain the features which made Fassett's work a classic. The region covered by the first edition, Minnesota to Missouri, eastward to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Virginia, has been extended slightly to include

Newfoundland. The coverage of Virginia in the first edition was necessarily incomplete, and that gap has been closed in this treatment. Fassett's treatment of 752 taxa (plus 95 named forms) has been greatly expanded in this edition to include 1186 taxa.

Dr. Fassett's decision to exclude bog species in the first edition left many aquatic biologists and students in northern regions without a comparable guide to the identification of species occupying those wet, boggy habitats. Thus, we have included those species which typically grow in saturated peat. Likewise, we have attempted to meet the needs of aquatic biologists along the Atlantic coast by including species of salt marshes and tidal waters, a study of which began Dr. Fassett's career as a beginning student in Professor Fernald's Botany 7 class at Harvard University and later became the focal point of his doctoral dissertation.

In the original edition Dr. Fassett also included a few of the more common examples of various groups of algae and some common mosses and liverworts. There are excellent references now available for the identification of these groups of plants. We feel that to give adequate attention even to just the aquatic bryophytes would be beyond the scope of our work.