FLORA AMERICANA

EDWARD R. WOLPOW
Brookline, Massachusetts

The usual compilation of official state flowers is based upon people's likes and dislikes regarding the plants themselves. We should attempt instead a logologist's list - in particular, try to provide an example for the species name of the Latin binomial, for each state. (There is, as far as I can tell, only one genus name which qualifies, IDAHOA.) Most names in the list below are taken from H.W. Rickett's Wild Flowers of the United States (1966). Those marked with an asterisk are from N. Britton and A. Brown's An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada (1913; reprinted 1970). The single example from Alaska is from E. Hultén's Flora of Alaska (1968), and the Hawaiian flower is from B.D. Morley's Wild Flowers of the World (1970).

AL
Scutellaria alabamensis

AK
Agrostis alaskana

AZ
Agoseris arizonica

AR
Erysimum arkansanum

CA
Abutilon californicum

CO
Erigonum colorandense

CT
Potamogeton lonichtes connecticutensis

FL
Buchnera floridana

GA
Amorpha georgiana

HI
Argyroxypnium sandwicense

ID
Lomatium idahoense

IL
Desmanthus illinoensis

IA
Chrysopsis iowense

KS
Zephyranthes kansensis

KY
Aster kentuckiensis*

LA
Proboscidea louisianica

ME
Carex mainensis*

MD
Desmodium marilandicum

MI
Lilium michiganense

MS
Cassia mississippiensis

MO
Astragalus missouriensis

MT
Arnica montana

NE
Cirsium nebraskense

NY
Allium nevadense

NJ
Lechea novae-caesareae*

NM
Acalypha neomexicana

NY
Aconitum noveboracense*

OH
Solidago ohiensis

OK
Phlox oklahomensis
OR Chrysopsis oregona
PA Cardamine pensylvanica
TN Astragalus tennesseensis
TX Abronia texana
UT Agave utahensis
VA Agave virginica
WA Lilium washingtonianum
WY Besseya wyomingensis

We could add Anemone caroliniana to represent the Carolinas. This leaves Delaware, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, the Dakotas, Vermont, West Virginia and Wisconsin unrepresented.

There is an Aster novae-angliae, for New England, and even Ilex bronxensis*, for the holly that did not grow in Brooklyn. Because Eboracum was the name of the Roman town whose ruins were at about the same location as the English town of York, the Latinization of New York (as I noted years ago, on my Columbia College diploma) is navoracense, or some such, and therefore unrecognizable. Caesar’s connection to the island of Jersey leads to novae-caesareae for New Jersey. The silversword, found only in Hawaii, is Latin-named for the state’s former designation, the Sandwich Islands.

Readers are called upon to complete the list. The search into floral binomials will at the least lead one to encounter such wonders as the vowel-rich Allium aaseae, and the simple joys of Phacelia cookie and Veronica beccabunga.

AN ALICE LEXICON

Alice aficionados will be delighted with Isn’t That Lewis Carroll?, a lexicon of more than one thousand “mimsy words” and their exact locations in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Through the Looking-Glass, and The Hunting of the Snark. The book, a paperback of 126 pages, has been compiled by Charles A. Miller, and is available for $3.95 plus $1 shipping from the Lake Forest Book Store, Lake Forest IL 60045.

The author comments in the Preface

To go through the index methodically is to enter the world of Lewis Carroll in his own words. Here we find bathing machines, deal-boxes, orange marmalade, macassar oil, and pocket watches. Unexpectedly, perhaps, we find no direct reference to either religion or empire, subjects one would suppose concerned the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) and his friends at Oxford University in the late nineteenth century. Maybe these subjects were unfit for children. But the index does contain many entries on law and justice, from the “Mouse’s Tale” in Alice in Wonderland to the “Barrister’s Dream” in The Hunting of the Snark.