

## **“Lilies, Irises, & Orchids of Saskatchewan”**

### **Review by Sandy Bonny**

There is something about flowers—from Tchaikovsky’s “Waltz of the Flowers” to Spike Jonze’s film “Adaptation,” our culture celebrates their transient beauty above the reproductive bodies of other flora. Intriguing though mushrooms and pinecones may be, they just don’t have the aura of mystique that draws floraphiles to the many-coloured monocots. In this keyed field guide from Nature Saskatchewan, professional and amateur botanists are introduced to Saskatchewan’s fifty-one species of lilies, irises and orchids, twenty-one of which are considered rare or endangered.

The guide’s authors, Anna Leighton and Vernon L. Harms, are key players in the Flora of Saskatchewan Association’s volunteer-driven initiative to document the province’s flora, and in this offering they supplement detailed line drawings, colour photographs, and identification keys with interesting notes and commentary regarding the distribution and seasonal appearances of each flowering species. True to the diversity of species at large, the guide includes both native species and ‘garden-escapes.’ Thus, we see cultivated chives beside Red ‘Tiger’ Lilies in the Lily Family, and introduced German Irises alongside native Blue Flag in the Iris Family. The delicate Orchid Family contains the most diversity of native form and colour, with nine species of familiar Lady’s Slippers in the genus *Cypripedium*, and a variety of rare boreal specimens. Anticipating that some readers may have knowledge of new locations, or flower dates, for some species, the authors invite ongoing dialogue to benefit future editions of this book, as well as the much-anticipated comprehensive “Flora of Saskatchewan”.

Following an introduction to the physiology and reproductive diversity of the monocots, Leighton and Harms provide a simple key pointing users toward identifications within each family of flowers. Thoughtful details like colour-coded sidebars, distribution maps, a printed metric scale, and weather-proof cover are promising indicators of its value as a field companion. Surpassing its utility as a guide, floral enthusiasts will recognize this slim volume as a treasure map. Restrain yourselves this spring, folks—grab your cameras and ‘click don’t pick!’