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# Dennis W. Magee Flora of the Northeast Collection

1964-1989

1 box ; 1 oversized folder (1.5 linear feet)

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Read collection overview

Dennis Magee has spent his life dedicated to the study of the natural world as a hunter, trapper, fisherman, environmental consultant, and scholar. He attended grad school at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in the 1970s and was a protege of Harry Ahles, a field botanist and Botany professor, who co-wrote books on the flora of Illinois and the Carolinas. Magee and Ahles became friends and spent many hours together, building Ahles' log cabin located on Horse Mountain in Hatfield, MA, going to diners, and collecting plants for the UMass Herbarium. Ahles taught Magee how to think about classification and how to construct useful keys of genera and species. Following Ahles' passing in March 1981, Magee petitioned the Botany Department and Ahles' sister Marjorie Armstrong to take Ahles' large file of distribution records of New England plant species and the keys he used for his teaching, and turn it into a book on the flora of New England. This turned into a 17 year undertaking in which Magee gathered lists of species, created species and genera keys, secured funding, worked with illustrator Abigail Rorer to create illustrations, and other assorted book-related tasks. Finally, the book was published by UMass Press in September of 1999. It was well received and sold out of its initial 2500 print run within the first five years of publication. It is still widely used by universities as a textbook and a reference book by botanists, consultants, and other professionals.

## Background on Dennis W. Magee

Dennis Magee has spent his life dedicated to the study of the natural world as a hunter, trapper, fisherman, environmental consultant, and scholar. He attended grad school at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in the 1970s and was a protege of Harry Ahles, a field botanist and Botany professor, who co-wrote books on the flora of Illinois and the Carolinas. Magee and Ahles became friends and spent many hours together, building Ahles' log cabin located on Horse Mountain in Hatfield, MA, going to diners, and collecting plants for the UMass Herbarium. Ahles taught Magee how to think about classification and how to construct useful keys of genera and species. Following Ahles' passing in March 1981, Magee petitioned the Botany Department and Ahles' sister Marjorie Armstrong to take Ahles' large file of distribution records of New England plant species and the keys he used for his teaching, and turn it into a book on the flora of New England. This turned into a 17 year undertaking in which Magee gathered lists of species, created species and genera keys, secured funding, worked with illustrator Abigail Rorer to create illustrations, and other assorted book-related tasks. Finally, the book was published by UMass Press in September of 1999. It was well received and sold out of its initial 2500 print run within the first five years of publication. It is still widely used by universities as a textbook and a reference book by botanists, consultants, and other professionals.

## Scope of collection

Magee's collection consists of his original handwritten species and genera keys as well as the original handwritten manuscript of Flora of the Northeast. An article titled "How I Wrote the Flora of the Northeast: A Manual of the Vascular Flora of New England and Adjacent New York", which was published in a 2018 issue of Phytoneuron, accompanies the collection.

## Inventory

Flora of the Northeast: General keys, key to group  
undated

Box 1: 1.

Descriptive flora sedums: Poaceae pp. 1-108

undated

Box 1: 2.

Descriptive flora sedums pp. 1-9

undated

Box 1: 3.

Descriptive flora sedums pp. 1-54

undated

Box 1: 4.

Descriptive flora sedums pp. 1-116

undated

Box 1: 5.

Descriptive flora sedums: Umbelliferae pp. 1-129

undated

Box 1: 6.

Divisions and keys to the groups

undated

Box 1: 7.

Family 69 (myricacaceae sweet gale) - family 77 (plantanaceae) pp. 1-26

undated

Box 1: 8.

Magee, Dennis W. : "How I wrote the Flora of the Northeast - a manual of the vascular flora of New England and adjacent New York", Phytoneuron

2018 Jul.

Box 1: 9.

Notes made in the writing keys

1985

Box 1: 10.

Subdivision II angiospermae (angiosperms), pp. 1-48

undated

Box 1: 11.

## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Gift of Dennis Magee, 2024.

### Processing Information

Processed by Jeremy Smith, February 2024.

### Language:

English

### Copyright and Use ([More information](#) )

Cite as: Dennis W. Magee Flora of the Northeast Collection (MS 1209). Robert S. Cox Special Collections and University Archives Research Center, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

## Search terms

## Subjects

- Plants--New England--Identification
- Plants--New York (State)--Identification

## Genres and formats

- Articles
- Floras (documents)
- Manuscripts (documents)
- Notes (documents)

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