

A NEW BOOK: THE ECOLOGY AND SILVICULTURE OF OAKS

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A new book, *The Ecology and Silviculture of Oaks*, is now available (Johnson and others 2002). The book focuses on the oaks of the United States and was written for forest and wildlife managers, ecologists, silviculturists, environmentalists, students of those fields, and others interested in sustaining oak forests for their many tangible and intangible values. Although the approach of the book is fundamentally silvicultural, it is based on the premise that effective and environmentally sound management and protection of oak forests and associated landscapes should be grounded in ecological understanding.

Much has been written about the ecology and silviculture of oaks. This literature represents, in one sense, an informational “embarrassment of riches.” This stems from a previous lack of synthesis within and across two broad fields of study: ecology and silviculture. Although the literature on North American oaks dates to the colonial period, most of it was written within the last 50 years. Much literature resides in relatively obscure scientific and technical journals, proceedings, government publications, and other sources that can be difficult to locate and retrieve. The first 12 proceedings of the Central Hardwood Forest Conferences are important sources for much relevant knowledge (Fralish 2002). But even with ready access to this information, a synthesis into a holistic framework has, until now, been unavailable.

One of the objectives of the book is to present ecological and silvicultural concepts that can be used to address an array of problems defined by various perceptions of how we should treat oak forests. The current trend in managing forests and forested landscapes is away from narrowly defined timber and other commodity objectives and toward a broader philosophy of sustaining desired ecological states. The book accordingly is intended not so much as a how-to-do-it management manual as it is a source of ideas on how to think about oak forests as responsive ecosystems. Armed with that understanding, we believe managers and conservators of oak forests will be better able to adapt to changing social values and to simultaneously build and act on co-evolving ecological and silvicultural knowledge.

LITERATURE CITED

- Fralish, J.S.**, comp. 2002. The Central Hardwood Forest Conferences 1976-1999: Title, subject, author, and species indexes for the proceedings. Gen. Tech. Rep. NC-225. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Research Station. 227 p.
- Johnson, P.S.; Shifley, S.R.; Rogers, R.** 2002. *The Ecology and Silviculture of Oaks*. Wallingford Oxon, UK: CABI Publishing. 528 p.

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