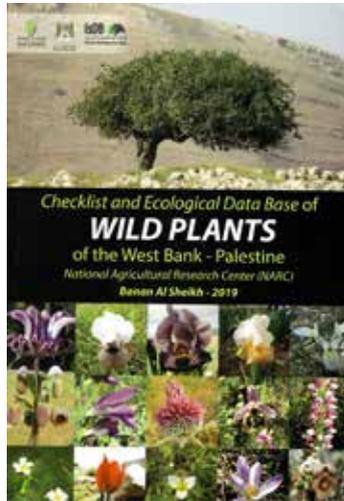




Checklist and Ecological Database of
Wild Plants
of the West Bank – Palestine
By Banan Al Sheikh



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National Agricultural Research Center, Jenin, 2019
229 pages, 240 color images

Available at the Palestinian Museum of National History, NIS 50

The few books that address the flora of Palestine were written primarily by either international visitors (during the period of the Palestine Exploration Fund in the nineteenth century, for example) or by Israelis. It is rare to find locally produced books on the fauna and flora of Palestine. Banan Al-Sheikh's contribution is a welcome addition, especially for the growing list of nature enthusiasts in Palestine. As more people become interested in Palestine's natural beauty, there is a need for authoritative books that provide an understanding of the rich natural environment and encourage its protection. This updated checklist of Palestine's flora is the result of more than two decades of the author's research and experience. The book focuses on only a part of

historical Palestine – the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Despite its small size of 5,856 square kilometers, the West Bank contains over 1,612 species of vascular plants in 117 families. The species occur in habitats that range from the Sudanese/Ethiopian areas around the Jordan Valley, through semi-arid regions of the Jerusalem eastern slopes to the mountainous Mediterranean habitats.

This is indeed the most comprehensive reference that details the flora of the West Bank and will be valued by both professionals and interested lay people. This checklist of all the wild plants in the West Bank includes their scientific names and common Arabic names. For each species, the author also gives scientific synonyms, family names, blooming periods, and some ecological and growth indicators, such as whether they are annual or perennial, geophyte (having tubers/bulbs), chamaephyte (dwarf shrub), shrubs, trees, aquatic plants, or vines. The author also notes abundance: whether the plant is rare or common and in which climatic zone the species grows naturally, namely, Mediterranean, semi-arid, desert, or high mountains. The book includes 420 color pictures arranged according to flower color, which greatly facilitates the finding of species even by nature lovers who have no botanical knowledge.

