

Illustrated Flora of Lebanon

2600 wild flowers

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ABOUT THE BOOK

The total number of plants described in this book is 2597. Over the past twelve years, we personally have collected and identified 2479 species, sub-species and varieties of Lebanese wild plants, which we have photographed. We still need to find 118 species (*Poaceae*, *Caryophyllaceae*, *Brassicaceae*, *Fabaceae*, *Asteraceae*...). Photographs of several plants were taken 40 years ago and those plants have not been observed since that time in Lebanon: are they now extinct? We have scanned the photographs and reproduce them here.

The extinction of some plants is due to the destruction of their habitat. Forest fires, excessive tree cutting, the draining of marshland, rivers or land, the transformation of agricultural land on the coast into land for housing, and, since 1993, excessive urban development, together with tourist development all along the coast, have altered the very nature of the land. Sports centres in the high mountains and uncontrolled grazing are other factors that have contributed, according to recent research, to the loss of 93 species of wild plants, of which 13 were endemic. As an example of a plant that has recently become extinct, we mention the *Retama raetam*, whose bushes used to brighten up the coastal sands of south Beirut and which has not been seen since 1986. The total number of Lebanese plants (trees, ferns included) is, according to our calculations, 2597 species, 757 genera, and 124 families. Each family is succinctly described. Families with a large number of species are divided into small groups to facilitate their identification.

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