Arnoldia Reviews


The Botanical Society of the British Isles is an association of amateur and professional botanists whose common interest lies in the study and conservation of flowering plants and ferns. The Society has sponsored a series of conferences, and since 1948 many of the papers presented at individual conferences have been published as symposium volumes. In 1973 we welcomed "Plants, Wild and Cultivated" edited by P. S. Green. The current volume relates to a three-day conference held in the same year.

"The British Oak" is a comprehensive study of two native species, Quercus petraea and Q. robur. Peats and sediments provide a pollen record indicating that the oak has been dominant over large areas of the British lowlands for some 8,000 years. Today Q. robur and Q. petraea remain the dominant trees in all of the British Isles.

As chapters in this volume, twenty-one papers by botanists, foresters and historians cover the taxonomy, cytology, morphology, reproduction, regeneration, productivity, and the ecological role of the oak. The wealth of information makes this an excellent reference work and demonstrates the value of such conferences. The pattern is one that might well be followed to consolidate the knowledge of equally valuable American trees.

Richard A. Howard


Nearly everyone knows of Peter Collinson, the Quaker Merchant of Mill Hill who subsidized and encouraged John Bartram. Less known is his contemporary, the Quaker physician, Dr. John Fothergill, and his garden at Upton. Fothergill's contacts were world-wide. It is recorded that, in the most flourishing
From Chain of Friendship.

period, his garden contained nearly 3,400 kinds of glasshouse exotics and about 3,000 kinds of hardy plants.

Fothergill is of interest to Americans because of his support of, and contact with, horticulturists in the Philadelphia area (including William Bartram), and because he is commemorated in the genus Fothergilla.

These selected letters of Dr. John Fothergill give us a glimpse of English society as seen through Quaker eyes in the middle of the 18th century. It includes, incidentally, some background to the political troubles that culminated in the American Revolution. Altogether a delightful and interesting book.

GORDON P. DEWOLF, JR.

It is unfortunate that in many areas cherries are threatened by a virus that, added to their other problems, now makes these spring favorites a poor choice for the average small garden. However for those who are prepared to ignore the hazards, this is a reasonably priced and well-written book that should fulfill the late author's hope that he can help the cherry lover to select, plant, and grow the best variety for his purpose.

The 58 cultivars and species described have been selected from the hundreds that have evolved since the cherry first became popular in the Orient centuries ago, and are arranged according to habit of growth. This at first appears to be awkward; but with the aid of the index it proves to be simple and quite effective. The real problem will arise when the gardener has selected the tree that he wants and then tries to locate it commercially.

The chapter on cultivation contains sound information and advice, but I feel that the disease and pest problems are dismissed too lightly. To add variety and complete this very pleasant volume there is also a list, with short descriptions, of trees and shrubs for use as foil and background.

Sheila Magullion


This work is a pocket-sized tree and, occasionally, shrub guide to specimens in northern areas. The key is described as unique, but substantially represents the usual dichotomous keys to woody plants.

The descriptions of particular species are fuller than usual and there are good, brief descriptions of habitat. Although it has a glossary at the back, this little volume is virtually useless to anyone who does not have a good basic course in botany and/or taxonomy. A book best suited to the expert rather than the novice.

Elinore B. Trowbridge

Devotees of British Colonial literature recognize Nepal as the home of the Gurkha, legendary fighting men of the wars in the Indian sub continent. Nepal is also an Indian state in one of the most horticulturally and botanically interesting regions of the world. It has been only recently however, that westerners have been allowed to travel in the country.

Between 1954 and 1969 J. D. A. Stainton made 18 plant collecting trips to Nepal. The present volume is a synoptic overview of the plant association to be found in that country. It is written for the interested lay person who may have the good fortune to visit Nepal.

Supplementing the text are 156 colored reproductions of photographs and a folding map which shows the physiography and the botanical regions. All in all a useful and interesting book.

GORDON P. DEWOLF, JR.


The White Mountains on the California/Nevada border are celebrated as the home of the oldest known living things: the Great Basin bristle-cone pines. This manual details our knowledge of the plants and plant communities of this area.

The little book is a model of what a local flora should be. A map shows the location of various areas mentioned. Chapters deal with the geology of the area, the phytogeographical relationship of the plants and the plant communities and vegetation.

For pilgrims to the bristle-cone pine forests this little book will be indispensable.

GORDON P. DEWOLF, JR.

The author is a well-known contributor to various garden magazines. Lawn management is his horticultural specialty. On the basis of decades of study of grasses, fertilizers, disease identification and treatment, he distills his wisdom in this treatise. Everything is here. Emphasis is on starting newly or anew. We read how to site, grade, prepare the soil, fertilize, select appropriate grasses for seeding or sodding. We are instructed in how to nurse the grass, recognize ailments and engage in the necessary chemotherapy.

The treatment is so complete, so scientific, and so dull that most readers will find their salvation in the chapter “Places Where Grass Doesn’t Grow.” The author’s solution to that dilemma: ground-covers. This should arouse the ire of an Arnold Arboretum staff member who is fond of stating, “the best ground-cover in the long run is — grass.” He obviously hasn’t read Milton Carleton’s book or his reply might be, “anything but grass — grass is SO MUCH WORK.”

ELINORE B. TROWBRIDGE

One of the most useful indices of plant names available to taxonomists has been *A Dictionary of Flowering Plants and Ferns* compiled by J. C. Willis (6th ed. 1931). The 7th edition of this work (1966), edited by H. K. Airy Shaw, eliminated for brevity much of the general information on economic uses, as has the 8th edition (1973). The present volume compiled by the late Keeper of the Museum at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, consists of that material extended and brought up to date. It is said to include the “common names of plants throughout the world, where English is, or has been spoken or used.” Trade names and the names of economic or commercial plant products, including timbers, are included and given in English. No dictionary could ever be complete since common names are so variable in use and in spelling. “British-English” spelling commonly is not the same as an “American-English” spelling. The information supplied varies considerably from long detailed discussions to very brief statements. Most data is supplied under the common name, requiring a cross reference from a generic or scientific name; the cross references are not always adequate. A number of the binomials used do not represent the correct scientific name. Recognizing such limitation, the work of Howes will be useful for occasional reference and probably best used as a starting point for further research on an otherwise obscure English common name.

Richard A. Howard


The colonial economy of New England was based upon fishing, farming, and lumbering. While most of us have heard, in a general way, about the King’s Trees, I think we are rather ignorant about the colonial timber trade. This volume tells, in a few pages, a great deal about the economic impact of various forest products upon England and Europe and the West Indies. Along with R. G. Albion’s “Forests and Sea Power” it should be on the shelf of every New England colonial history buff.

Gordon P. DeWolf, Jr.

The most appropriate, accurate description of this volume is supplied by the artist on the third flap of the dust jacket which, in time, will be lost. It is worth repetition. "This book is not intended to be a reference book and certainly not a field guide. It is by no means complete; however, it may serve to identify some of the less familiar plants and to draw attention to others which may have escaped notice. I have made a real effort to

draw the plants accurately, true to form and color. In general the plates are arranged in the sequence of bloom, beginning with skunk cabbage which appears in March and ending with the seeds and berries of autumn. The book is intended for pleasure rather than instruction and I hope it may in some measure achieve its goal.”

The brief commentary rarely exceeding fifty words of free verse which Ms. Sargent provides for each plate is indeed an “enthusiastic response to the life around me.” Both the artist and the writer have achieved their goals in this expensive, attractive, well-bound and pleasing volume.

RICHARD A. HOWARD


Viability is defined as: “ability to live, grow and develop.” “Viability of Seeds” is an attempt to assess the state of our knowledge of the factors which affect or influence seed viability. It is apparent that much of the work on this subject has been done with a limited number of species of crop plants and weeds; thus the data base is still too limited to allow sure generalizations to be made.

The present volume is welcomed as a summary of present knowledge and an indication of the vast quantity of work to be done.

GORDON P. DEWOLF, JR.


This work is part of a long series of titles published by Southern Living, a regional magazine. The contents are, therefore, suited to readers who reside in Zones 8 or 9, and for visitors to azalea country in spring and early summer.

In a pleasant and comfortable style, the author, director of the Callaway Gardens in Georgia, fully describes and illustrates basic procedures relating to azalea growing. The first half of the text includes digging, planting, weeding, feeding, pruning, mulching and watering. There is attention to selecting suitable sites for “naturalistic” plantings; there are lists and discussions
of complementary "companion plants." Azaleas in containers, including Bonsai, are treated. Propagation and disease diagnosis and treatment have complete but not excessive space. The final half considers particular species and hybrids thereof with color descriptions, hardiness ratings, sunshine requirements at various altitudes, and the like.

Several pages are devoted to a state-by-state listing of various southern "azalea show gardens." For one in the northeast this little book is still a good buy. The cultural information alone is worth the price of the volume.

ELINORE B. TROWBRIDGE

The variation in form between seedlings of different species is familiar to all gardeners. We are less apt to observe the change in form of the successive leaves produced by the germinating seed until the mature pattern of leaf position, size and shape is established. The young plant in its cotyledons and first few leaves does offer characteristics by which the species can be identified.

Dr. Burger obtained fruits from known native and cultivated plants and germinated the seeds. In this volume 187 species of 49 families are described and illustrated. The book will be useful primarily to foresters in South East Asia. When used along with James Duke's comparable work on plants of Panama and Puerto Rico (Ann. Mo. Bot. Gard. 52: 314-350. 1965; 56: 125-161. 1969) a good coverage of seedling morphology of tropical families is obtained.

The present volume was prepared for publication in Dutch in 1924, but was never published. In 1967-1971 the manuscript was translated into English for the present publication. Regrettably the translation has resulted in many awkward sentences and questionable use of punctuation. The identification keys supplied for a few families seem superfluous considering the few taxa treated. The illustrations are excellent and useful.

Richard A. Howard