

Arnoldia Reviews

Vegetation of West Virginia. Earl L. Core. Parsons, W. Va.: McClain Printing Company. 1966. 217 pages, illustrated. \$7.00.

The author's concept of vegetation refers to the ecological organization of flora in communities, and its interrelationships with other forms of life. The paper jacket depicts an overview from West Virginian mountaintops and is synoptic of the work within, which is a companion to a predecessor, the *Flora of West Virginia*.

The text commences with the geography, topology, climatology, and geology of West Virginia, illustrated by the necessary charts and tables. Evolutionary ages are presented; the zones of vegetation and their characteristic flora and fauna are offered; endemic and epidemic species are differentiated and enumerated; plant communities are characterized.

These topics are treated in breadth and depth by the author. Documentation in scholarly footnotes is frequent, and there is a well-organized index. Unfortunately the gravity of the presentation makes it onerous reading.

This book is best suited to the student of elementary botany, especially of the south Atlantic states.

ELINORE B. TROWBRIDGE

The Native Orchids of the United States and Canada (excluding Florida). Bronx, N.Y.: The New York Botanical Garden. 1975. 361 pp., illustrated. \$40.00.

This rather sumptuous volume is one that most orchid or wild-flower enthusiasts would love to own. However, many more of us would have fulfilled our desires if the book were somewhat condensed and therefore less expensive. The color photographs, however beautifully posed and reproduced they may be, are certainly excessive. Many plates, and there are 96 of them — mostly a full $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, contain essentially repetitive photographs; a particularly striking example is Plate #51, representing *Platanthera peramoena*, which is made up of one photograph of a close-up of a flower, one habit shot, and four of inflorescences at different magnifications, three of these taken at the same locality.

Nevertheless, the book, which is the second of a two-volume work (the first on the orchids of Florida), is quite valuable as well as very beautiful. Every species and variety north of Florida is represented. Most treatments include a short, technical description, a list of synonymous names, a distribution map, line drawings of floral details, a full-page color plate, and a generally informative and quite readable text usually concerned with anecdotes or various aspects of the plant's biology. Accounts of the genera include keys to

the species. Introductory material includes a discussion of orchid biology and rather technical keys to genera and higher categories. The book is actually quite technical in general, but the photographs can be enjoyed by anyone.

The author must be given considerable credit for having photographed every single native orchid species in the wild. A minor part of the book, but one that deserves mention, are the often whimsical sketches, also by the author, scattered throughout. Some are unusually clever, particularly those which are of flowers exaggerated so as to conform more closely to the objects whose supposed similarity gave the genus or species its common or Latin name, e.g. Dragon's Mouth, Ladies' Tresses, etc.

RICHARD E. WEAVER, JR.

Dried Flowers. From Antiquity to the Present. Leonard Karel. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1973. 192 pages. \$6.00.

Flowers are not the only dry things in this book. The prose is rather dull and so littered with indigestible facts that beginners are likely to be overwhelmed. A great deal of information on the history of dried flowers and various drying techniques is presented at the outset, but the uneven writing style and the somewhat excessive use of quotations make it difficult and tedious reading. A section on definitions written in lengthy paragraph style would best be presented in a more succinct glossary at the end of the book. Simple line drawings of the plant parts, at the very least, would be an aid to the beginner, for whom this book is intended.

Dried Flowers is the work of a professional scientist whose hobby is preserving flowers. More than anything else, this book is a diary of his personal experience with various desiccants and preservation techniques. A 77-page table details his results with over 300 flowers, arranged alphabetically by common name. This, together with an interesting bibliography, is the most informative part of the book.

MARGO W. REYNOLDS

Garden Pests and Diseases of Flowers and Shrubs. Mogens Dahl and Thyge B. Thygesen. New York: Macmillan. 1974. 223 pp. illustrated. \$6.95.

Many European-based works are unsuited to America, but this reasonably-priced book translated from the Danish for readers in the U.K. can be quite useful in our area. True, there are some vocabulary differences (what we call Ladybug, the English call Ladybird, for example), and some of the ailments pictured are rare in the American scene. However, these disadvantages are more than compensated for by excellent colored drawings of various organisms, disease symptoms, signs of such injuries as cold and wind damage in leaves, illustrations of lawn-grass pathologies, and so forth. An excellent index with both popular and technical names follows the text.

ELINORE B. TROWBRIDGE

Fundamentals of Horticulture. J. B. Edmond, T. L. Senn, and F. S. Andrews. New York: McGraw Hill. 1964, 3rd edition. 476 pp., black and white photographs and line drawings. \$10.50.

This is a textbook divided into 3 parts. The first deals with theory; the second, with basic problem-solving in horticulture; and the third, with practical horticulture technocracy — i.e. crop-growing.

As the work is intended to furnish all necessary background material to students undertaking the practice of horticulture as a vocation, the treatment of crop-raising is, expectedly, economic in its orientation. Crops both in greenhouse and on large out-door acreages are dealt with; floriculture has only a few pages.

This is a revision of a 1951 work and some of the cited researches are dated in the 1940s. Most carry no dates and there is no bibliography. The appearance of the text has been brought up-to-date by numerous photographs of mechanized field equipment — spraying by plane, and the like; however, the student will need to modernize his information on plant pathology, and the efficacy and government status of various chemical controls.

ELINORE B. TROWBRIDGE

Sacred Narcotic Plants of the New World Indians. Hedwig Schleiffer. New York: Hafner Press. 1973. 156 pages, paperback. \$5.95.

The rather astonishingly high number of hallucinogenic plants in this anthology are comfortably arranged according to families, with plants from Agaricaceae, Cactaceae, Convolvulaceae, Erythroxylaceae, Leguminosae, Malpighiaceae, Myristicaceae and Solanaceae included, plus a selection of plants of uncertain origin, as well as indices of the Latin names of genera and species, and of the vernacular names of plants and plant products.

Hedwig Schleiffer has made an acknowledged attempt to present a cross-section of moral viewpoints wherever possible. These seem somewhat repetitious at times, but I believe this is the result of the lack of cultural background for the descriptions. The few times cultural depth and metaphysical positions are bared, the sources truly take on credibility — as in the explanation of why the Desano Indians of the Columbian northeast Amazon use viho (*Piptadena* spp. of the Pulse Family), written in 1968 by Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff. In each case, the sources have been carefully documented to facilitate further research of the excerpted texts which date from the 16th century to the present.

In a time when plants have often become little more than another luxurious strip of chrome around outsized human economic endeavors, this anthology also provides refreshing perception as to just what life is all about, and its bearing upon human-plant associations.

EDWARD H. FLAHERTY, III



1976. "Arnoldia Reviews." *Arnoldia* 36(1), 34–36.

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