

BOOK REVIEW

ELIZABETH A. (BERNDT) GEORGE. Watercolour paintings and illustrations by MARGARET PIERONI. 2002. **Verticordia: The Turner of Hearts**. (ISBN 1 876268 46 8, hbk.). University of Australia Press, Crawley, Western Australia 6009, www.uwapress.uwa.edu.au. (Orders: International Specialized Book Services, 5824 NE Hassalo St., Portland, OR 97213-3644, U.S.A. 503-280-8832 fax; www.isbs.com; info@isbs.com). \$84.95, 422 pp., 28 color photos, 39 figs., 44 maps, 149 color plates, 6 tables, glossary, 8 1/2" x 11 1/2".

This magnum opus is a product of ten years of collecting, mounting, and photographing 1400 specimens of *Verticordia* (Myrtaceae) by the author and more than 250 volunteer helpers. Furthermore, the artist, Margaret Pieroni, worked over a period of eighteen years to paint the 147 species, subspecies, and varieties pictured in the book. She wanted to paint each plant in full flower from the actual specimen and not only had to depend on chance to achieve that, but over the years the number of known species kept increasing. The result of this collaboration is a very comprehensive study of a genus unique to Western Australia and the Northern Territories. It is a splendid introduction for anyone who wants to become familiar with this less well known genus and a valuable resource for the specialist.

The enormous amount of material about *Verticordia* has been well-organized by the author. Her introduction discusses every aspect of the genus: from its ancient origins to its cultivation today, from chromosome studies to its use in art and craft.

The following section contains tables of species arranged by chronological order of naming, by chromosome number, by flowering characteristics, and by habit. There is a good glossary, and a key to infrageneric taxa and species. A line drawing illustrates each subgenus and section.

The main part of the book is devoted to the illustrations and treatments of the species. Each of the 102 color plates is faced by a page of text and a map showing where the species may be found. The watercolors are in the genre of botanical painting where the aim is to convey information, and these paintings show close scrutiny of the specimen by the artist. A line drawing of the reproductive system of the plant is included on each plate. This is somewhat unfortunate especially when the painting is on a colored background. The decision to show the flowering twig precluded the possibility of portraying the habit of this shrubby plant. The spectacular masses of color can be seen in the photographs.

The author's aim is to share information about *Verticordia*. It is a worthwhile project as the genus may not be well-represented in herbaria outside of Australia. The BRIT Herbarium of about 1,000,000 specimens has only ten examples of this interesting genus.—Ruth Ginsburg, *Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, TX, 76102-4060, U.S.A.*



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