

Flora of Bedfordshire. By JOHN G. DONY. 532 pp., 22 figs., and 24 plates. 1953. The Corporation of Luton Museum and Art Gallery, Wardown Park, Luton, Great Britain. 42s. net.

Bedfordshire is a small county in the South Midlands of England. It is only 35 miles long and 25 miles wide at its greatest breadth and has a population of about 312,000. It was one of the first counties in England to have a published Flora (1798). The history of botanical investigation in this area is largely an interesting story of the accomplishments of enthusiastic amateurs. The present book, culminating an 18-year study, is the work of the volunteer Keeper of Botany at the Luton Museum. It was published by the Luton Museum with the support of the Luton Borough Council and the Royal Botanical Society. The assistance of the Borough Council in obtaining subscriptions from Bedfordshire residents and botanical organizations the world over is especially interesting. How many American city or county commissions would be willing to support work of this type?

"Habitat studies" of nearly a hundred selected localities are a noteworthy feature of this flora. Exact location, estimated relative abundance of species, soil type, and pH were noted at each site. Numerous photographs illustrate the habitat study areas. These detailed stand data will be of value in noting change in frequency and abundance of species within the county in future years. The author unfortunately merely lists these analyses according to "natural areas"; thus he does not succeed in effectively organizing the information so that a picture of community types emerges for the reader.

A list of flowering plants, ferns and fern allies, mosses, liverworts, stoneworts, and fungi comprises the bulk of the book. Both scientific and common names, with synonyms from standard manuals of the British Isles, are given. Records for each species are listed in historical sequence according to botanical districts. Habitats occupied and distribution in neighboring counties are presented. To an American the omission of keys seems to limit the usefulness of the flora. It must be considered, however, that the flora of the entire British Isles is relatively small, and excellent keys are readily available for the flowering plants and ferns. Keys for the lower plants, on the other hand, would have been of considerable value as manuals covering these are difficult to obtain.

An extensive bibliography of published material, relating to the flora of neighboring counties as well as Bedfordshire and a list of herbaria containing specimens from the county are included. There are separate indices not only of plant names but also of botanists and place names.

Obviously this book has required an enormous amount of meticulous labor. Such elaborate cataloging of details regarding a small area is somewhat astounding to an American. Because of the areal extent of our country and the size of our flora we have not as yet attempted such compilations. It also is perhaps surprising to us that this work has been executed primarily by individuals enthusiastically interested in, although not professionally occupied with botany. Such a publication is of great service in providing local information which may be utilized to advantage by the professional botanist doing comprehensive and interpretative studies. JEAN LANGENHEIM, Department of Botany, University of California, Berkeley.

NOTES AND NEWS

PRESENCE OF ALPINE PLANTS ON LASSEN PEAK, CALIFORNIA. During the summers of 1952 and 1953 while working as a ranger-naturalist in Lassen Volcanic National Park this writer carefully examined the upper reaches of Lassen Peak, which rise to an altitude of 10,453 feet, and found that its alpine plants are currently represented by substantial populations. Certain of these species, namely *Draba aureola* Wats., *Colomia larsenii* (Gray) Payson, and *Smelowskia ovalis* Jones var. *congesta* Rollins have interesting patterns of distribution in that they are largely restricted to certain peaks of the Cascades. The *Smelowskia* is endemic to Lassen Peak, while the others



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