

Flora of North-East Rajasthan by S. Sharma and B. Tiagi. Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi and Ludhiana. 25.5 × 16.5 cm, 1-xx, 1-540. 1979. Price: Rs. 150.00.

It is very heartening to see that the reorganisation of the Botanical Survey of India in 1955 and the establishment of regional herbaria in different parts of the country are yielding the desired results of revival of interest in floristics and plant taxonomy in the country.

Floristic studies in Rajasthan received much attention during last 15 years. Puri *et al* (1964) published the first consolidated account of *Flora of Rajasthan*. Last year botanists welcomed Bhandari's *Desert Flora* (1978). These two works dealt mainly with the western Rajasthan. The present work deals with the north-eastern Rajasthan where the flora is considerably different from drier western Rajasthan and is more related to the Flora of the Gangetic Plains.

The work is divided into seven chapters dealing with Methods in the first chapter, Area surveyed in the second, Vegetation in the third, Key to families in the fourth, Systematic enumeration in the fifth, Conclusion in the sixth and Selected references in the seventh and last chapter, followed by an index.

Arrangement of chapters has, however, got mixed up. Numbers of the chapters are indicated only for chapter I (p. 1) and chapter II (p. 5). Chapter III, on Vegetation starts in the middle of p. 9 without indication of its number, or that it is a new chapter. The folio 'Area surveyed', goes on to p. 15. Indication of new chapter or number is missing for all the remaining chapters (p. 17, 27, 498 and 508). This has resulted in error in the folio on all odd pages from 499 to 515 which deal with Conclusion and Selected Bibliography, but carry the folio 'Systematic enumeration of the plants'.

The general plan of work is indicated on p. xiv, and it is stated that data are given

under the heads: 1. *Circumscription of families*, 2. *Description of families and genera* and 3. *Citation of references*. Neither of the first two headings are seen anywhere. There is neither a discussion on circumscription of families, nor description of any family or genus.

In the last para on p. xiv it is stated that the data (a) to (g) *have invariably been mentioned*. The very first species (*Annona squamosa* Linn.) does not have all these seven entries; few species have all these data.

The acknowledgements (written in plural but signed by one author) could well go in Preface.

The first paragraph of Introduction (p. xiii) indicates that the basis of the work is the Ph. D. thesis of one of the authors. It has become too obvious in the last paragraphs of the Introduction (p. xx) where singular and *not* plural is used for the collector and even the author. Such editorial discrepancies are not infrequent in works based on Ph. D. thesis but published in joint authorships.

The Systematic enumeration forms the bulk of the work and is written in the usual pattern with keys to families, genera and species. Current names of the species with original references, followed by references to Hooker's *Flora of British India*, Cooke's *Flora of the Presidency of Bombay* and some other relevant works on the area such as the *Flora of the Indian Desert* (Blatter & Hallberg, 1918-21), *Flora of Saurashtra* (Santapau, 1962), *Flora of Rajasthan* (Puri, *et al*, 1964), etc. are given. Important synonyms are also given. Brief descriptions of the species are followed in most cases by data on phenology, ecology, distribution and critical notes. A scrutiny of some pages of the flora showed a few nomenclatural and other discrepancies. Notes, particularly on nomenclature are sometimes too lengthy; they usually contain discussion on conclusions already published in earlier

works. They are useful but could be considerably shortened.

In citation of synonymous names, in some cases subsequent names of the same genus are abbreviated to the first syllable (*vide* pp. 228, 229, 267, 278 etc.) and in other cases full names are cited (*vide* pp. 67, 87, 139, 259, etc.).

Too many mistakes of spellings have crept in, perhaps many of them are printing errors. The Preface shows that the authors are aware of it and will rectify in next edition. Mention may be made of *Cactacea* (p. 20), *Zornea* (p. 108; page no. itself printed as 801), *Periplocacal* (p. 238, foot note).

On page 325 the new combination *Rostellularia prostrata* (Clarke) by the authors is illegitimate as the same has already been effectively published earlier (R. B. Majumdar in *Bull. bot. Soc. Beng.* 25: 75. 1971). Even the names of authors, making the combination (wrongly printed: '*comp. nov.*') are missing. On the same page, citation for var. *simplex* (D. Don) Yamazaki is missing.

Mere citation of Wall. Cat. no. and year after the taxon is not an effective citation as such names are *nomen nuda*. This can be seen on pages 54 (*Portulaca suffruticosa* Wt. in Wall. Cat. 6842. 1828), page 146 (*Tephrosia coccinea* Wall. Cat. 5633. 1828) and page 155 (*Anogeissus* Wall. Cat. 4014. 1832). In some cases existence of basionym is indicated but the author of this name is

not mentioned in parenthesis in the correct name; eg. in p. 59, *Abutilon asiaticum* G. Don should have Linn. in parenthesis before Don's name; or the author of basionym itself is not cited [eg. *Abutilon indicum* (Linn.) Swet on p. 60]. This author is Sweet not Swet (see Bibliography, p. 514).

Page 58: in the nomenclatural note under *Bergia capensis* the last sentence 'validly published combination by Linnaeus' seems wrong. It should read 'validly published name' as Linnaeus did not make the combination in *Mant. Pl.* 241. 1771. There is no uniformity in citation of Roxburgh's *Hortus Bengalensis* and *Flora Indica*. In some places the word *nom. nudum* is mentioned after *Hort. Beng.* (line 12, page 228); in other cases, it is not given (line 14, page 175).

These few shortcomings do not reduce the overall utility of the book for botany students in degree and postgraduate classes as also for others interested in plant resources of the region. The Flora should serve as a good identification manual not only for workers in Rajasthan but also in most of the regions in plains of northern and central India.

The Flora is a very welcome addition to the literature on Indian Floristics.

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