

## Book Review

### Flora of Australia Volume 50 : Oceanic Islands 2.

Pp xxvi + 606, 1 black-and-white and 17 colour plates (56 colour photographs), 7 maps and 34 line drawings. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1993. ISBN 0 644 25875 6 (pbk). Price \$A 44.95 (paperback), \$A 59.95 (hardcover). Available from AGPS Mail Order Sales, GPO Box 84, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia.

This is one of a series of 50 or so volumes of *Flora of Australia* that is currently being undertaken under the Australian Biological Resources Study. So far, thirteen volumes have been published, including one volume on lichens. Their publication dates are given in this volume on page 579. Volume 50 is one the two volumes that cover the vascular flora of Australia's offshore islands. Vascular plants of Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Ashmore Reef, Cartier Island, the Coral Sea Islands Territory and Subantarctic Islands (Macquarie Island, Heard Island, McDonald Islands) are included here while those of Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands will be dealt with in a separate volume to be published at a later date. The combination of floras of tropical/subtropical islands and subantarctic islands in one volume is due to economical rather than phylogeographical reasons. Nonetheless, this is certainly the most up-to-date flora for anyone interested in oceanic islands.

Arrangement of contents in this volume is well-planned. The combination of the taxonomic treatments of floras of the various islands into a single text avoids duplication of text where a particular taxon occurs in more than one island. Under the heading of each island or island groups, besides general information on geographical location, physical features, climate, vegetation, floristics and history of human usage, a species list and a key to the plant families encountered are given. In the main text, the description of various genera and species comes under the respective families arranged according to the Cronquist System. A glossary on botanical terms and a list of abbreviations and contractions provided towards the end of the volume are particularly useful in explaining some of the unfamiliar terms found in the text. Unlike some classical floras, this volume provides additional information on plant geography such as vegetation zonation. Accounts on animal-plant relationships such as the dispersal of plants by animal agents and the use of forest by sea birds provide the users with further insight to island ecology.

Considerable efforts have gone into the description of plants, based on material from the islands. Synonyms of each species, published illustrations, important references and meaning of epithets are well covered. The adoption of revised names of certain 'problematic' species with explanation in some instances such as *Moringa oleifera* Lam. [instead of *M. pterygosperma* Gaertn.] on p. 176, *Hippobroma longiflora* (L.) G. Don [instead of *Isotoma longiflora* on p. 390 and *Melanthera biflora* (L.) Wild [in place of *Wedelia biflora* (L.) DC] on p. 419 helps to clarify the long-standing confusion of these names.

Except for minor errors such as the spelling of sub-heading USEAGE on p. 50, the use of *Swietenia mahogani* L. instead of *S. mahagoni* (L.)Jacq. on p. 253, the omission of the explanation of epithet of *Citrus maxima* on p. 300, the authors and editors should be congratulated for the excellent work and effort they put in to bring this volume to fruition. I would certainly recommend this volume to all libraries and herbaria and to anyone with an interest in floristics and plant geography of oceanic islands.

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