

REVIEW

H. C. D. DE WIT, Aquariumplanten. Second revised edition. — Hollandia, Baarn. 1966. 359 pp., 94 figures and 51 photographs. Dfl. 17.50.

In the eyes of most aquarists plants have merely a decorative function in the aquarium. Several aquarists, however, have made the plants the subject of their special interest, and it is for these people that Professor De Wit actually wrote his book. In order to make it easier for them he has not followed the usual systematic arrangement of the species but has arranged the species according to their habit. The following growth-forms are dealt with successively:

1. Plants freely floating on the surface;
2. Submerged but freely floating plants;
3. Rooting plants with rosettes of filiform, linear, or ribbon-shaped leaves;
4. Plants with leaf-rosettes on the bottom;
5. Rooting plants with floating leaves;
6. Plants with creeping stems and erect leaves; and
7. Plants with erect leaf-bearing stems.

There are, however, many species that can be classified in more than one of these vague categories, e.g. *Elisma natans*, *Potamogeton octandrus*, many species of *Sagittaria* and *Echinodorus*, and all *Ceratophyllum* species. Two species, *Wolffiella floridana* and *Riccia fluitans*, are erroneously classified as plants floating on the surface; they are submerged pleustophytes.

The fear that for a layman the systematic arrangement is more difficult to understand than the arrangement according to the habit of the plants is in my opinion overestimated. Besides, it is more or less unjustified because in treating the species the author himself often seems to have forgotten that he was writing a book for amateurs with a minimal botanical knowledge. This is precisely the reason that the book is reviewed here. The expositions of the genera *Aponogeton* (p. 102—118, 13 species), *Echinodorus* (p. 198—219, 21 species), *Sagittaria* (p. 75—83, 224—236, 18 species), and *Vallisneria* (p. 86—95, 5 species, tentative key) contain many extremely interesting data gathered mainly by careful and patient observation of plants cultivated in aquaria and paludaria. The crown of the work is without doubt the exposition of the difficult genus *Cryptocoryne* (p. 119—198) of which 39 species and 1 variety are described and with the exception of 3 species also illustrated. The book certainly is a plea for the study of water plants in the aquarium and can be recommended to every aquarist. It is hoped, however, that the proofs for the next edition of this book will be read more carefully than those for the present edition, this will avoid a muddle such as occurs in the table on p. 80.

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