

REVIEW

E. J. H. CORNER & K. WATANABE, *Illustrated Guide to Tropical Plants*. — Hirokawa Publishing Company Inc., Tokyo, 1969, 2206 (21 col.) fig., 15 col. pl., 14 + 1147 pp., large 8°. — Clothbound, DM 225., c. £ 28.

A massive, expensive book, principally an atlas of small botanical drawings (line drawings, c. 10 by 6 cm, two to a page), each provided with the Latin and vernacular name, a concise 2—4 line descriptive note, and the use of the plant. A similar text is added in Japanese. Most pictures are reproduced at $\frac{1}{2}$ nat. size. Species are arranged alphabetically within the families which are in turn arranged according to the Englerian system. Only Gymnosperms and Angiosperms are included. Prof. Corner is responsible for checking the names and the brief descriptive notes.

The pictures were drawn by Prof. Watanabe during World War II for the Japanese Military Administration at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Two volumes of these drawings were already published in small octavo in 1945 at Singapore, one on Medicinal Plants, the second on Edible Plants. A selection of some 200 plates was also later published by Prof. H. B. Gilliland in his 'Common Malayan Plants' in 1958 (University of Malaya Press, Singapore). The present work embraces all pictures made by Prof. Watanabe, many unpublished before, with addition of a number not made at Singapore, amongst them several of rare parasitic and saprophytic species from Borneo and Celebes, *Pandanus* from New Guinea, and other interesting odds, even from Japan, the Bonins, etc.

The authors hope 'that by presenting so many character-sketches of South East Asian Plants, the work will assist the progress of botany in this part of the world'. It is true that such a massive atlas has the virtue of filling a distinct gap in illustrated material available to the layman and the young botanist for enriching their form-knowledge. The present work has made this especially attractive by being printed on paper which should allow the use of water colour paint for private enterprise by their owner.

The title is somewhat misleading as tropical African and American plants are far in the minority and restricted to pantropical weeds and exotics grown at Singapore.

It is unfortunate that in such a magnificently produced volume the quality of the drawings is rather crude and reproduction often inferior to that of the small war issue. Why this is so is unclear as both were reproduced from the original drawings.

Also some critical remarks should be made on the names of which the accuracy is less than desirable. To mention a few: the plant depicted as *Sonneratia griffithii* is really *S. alba*, and that named *S. alba* represents *S. ovata*. Also the cross-references of the names under the plates are unclear: under *Sonneratia caseolaris* Engl. is put '= *S. acida* L. f.' from which one would derive that the lower name would be the correct one, comparable to '*Enhydrias angustipetala* Ridl. = *Blyxa alternifolia* (Miq.) Hartog', but this is not so as *S. caseolaris* (L.) Engl. is really the correct name. The same is the case with *Eurycles amboinensis* Loud., where the reference is to the synonym *E. silvestris* Salisb. and *Gynura procumbens* Merr. to the synonym *G. sarmentosa*. The correct name of *Scaevola frutescens*, viz. *S. taccada*, is not mentioned; it is not clear why the name *Rhizophora candelaria* is accepted instead of the correct name *R. apiculata*. Both the generic names *Jussiaea* and *Ludwigia* have been used, though the first name has been reduced in favour of the latter in modern revisions. I conclude that checking of names has been insufficient.

C. G. G. J. VAN STEENIS