

REVIEWS

J.L.C.H. VAN VALKENBURG & N. BUNYAPRAPHATSARA (eds.): **Plant Resources of South-East Asia. 12 (2). Medicinal and poisonous plants 2.** Backhuys Publishers, Leiden, 2001. 782 pp., illus. ISBN 90-5782-099-4. Price: EUR 159. [A paperback edition will be available for c. EUR 68 as from December 2003. For developing countries a much cheaper paperback edition (ISBN 979-8316-43-6) will be available early 2002 from the PROSEA Network Office, P.O. Box 332, Bogor 16122, Indonesia.]

This volume on medicinal and poisonous plants treats lesser known species. In the brief introduction to the book it is explained that the choice of taxa to be included is a bit arbitrary and mostly based on the amount of information available. For the species treated in vol. 12 (1) more information is available than for those treated in vol. 12 (2). However, the book discusses many taxa with surprisingly detailed information, maybe the truly lesser known species are saved for vol. 12 (3). Many of the taxa treated are not originally found in South-East Asia, but are locally or widely cultivated in the area. For general information on medicinal and poisonous plants the reader is referred to vol. 12 (1).

As usual for the PROSEA volumes, also this one is produced along the well-known PROSEA standards.

FRITS ADEMA

W.F. PRUD'HOMME VAN REINE & G.C. TRONO JR. (eds.): **Plant Resources of South-East Asia. 15 (1). Cryptogams: Algae.** Backhuys Publishers, Leiden, 2001. 318 pp., illus. ISBN 90-5782-096-x. Price: EUR 90. [A paperback edition will be available for c. EUR 36 as from 2003. For developing countries a much cheaper paperback edition (ISBN 979-8316-41-x) will be available early 2002 from the PROSEA Network Office, P.O. Box 332, Bogor 16122, Indonesia.]

The algae in this volume are taken in the old wide definition including the Cyanobacteriae (Blue-green algae). The algae as such are not a commodity group as the groups of plants discussed in the other PROSEA volumes. The uses of Algae fall in the following commodity groups: Auxiliary plants, Dye and tannin producing plants, Forage, Medicinal and poisonous plants, Plants yielding carbohydrates, Spices, Stimulants, Vegetables. This volume treats 70 taxa (1 group, 25 genera, 44 species), in several cases genera and one or more of their species are treated separately (*Caulerpa* (3), *Gelidium* (1), *Gracilaria* (9), *Kappaphyces* (2)).

The main algae products are Phyllocolloids, Agar, Carrageenan, Alginate, and 'Microalgae'. These products are discussed in the various subchapters (Role of algae, Botany, Ecology, Exploitation and cultivation, Harvesting and post-harvest handling, Processing and utilisation, Genetic and breeding prospects) of the Introduction. Uses of algae are found in food additives (agar, carrageenan); as agar gels in medicines, photographic films, printing; as carrageenans in toothpaste, cosmetics, textile paints; as alginates in viscosifiers or thickeners. Macro- and Microalgae are used as human food and as feed in aquacultures; algae are furthermore used as fertilisers and soil conditioners. Algae show up in some surprising places! Chapter 1 also describes cultivation, production, and marketing of algae and algae products.

The volume is concluded by a list of references and several indices. It is produced along the well-known layout and format of the PROSEA volumes.

FRITS ADEMA