

### REVIEW

S. R. KOTTEGODA: *Flowers of Sri Lanka*. Royal Asiatic Society, Sri Lanka, 1994. xv + 247 pp., illus. ISBN 955-9086-01-04. Price: Rs 2750, US\$ 86, £ 50.

The book contains 411 colour photographs of as many plant species (all Angiosperms). I estimate that about half of the species covered is not native to Sri Lanka, but introduced and sometimes run wild. That means that the pictures are highly representative for what one meets as a resident or as a visitor, in gardens, along the roads and in waste places. It also means that the book can be profitable in other tropical Asian countries.

The arrangement is alphabetical by scientific names, which is of course very easy for those who know the names. It may be felt as a disadvantage by those who try to attach a name to a plant they have found. They will have to go through the entire book. In books like this the arrangement is often by flower colour which makes identification easier. The index on flower colour at the back of this book is not really an alternative.

The lay-out is pleasing to the eye, most photos are quarter-page, interspersed with half-page and also some full-page pictures. The photographs are usually of good quality although there is of course some variation (I found, e. g., the photo of *Cannabis sativa* particularly uninformative). Very often the title of the book is followed literally and only the flowers are pictured. Leaves are often not present on the photo and are not always described either. That may be another drawback for the would-be identifier. Also fruits are not always mentioned, not even the characteristic ones of *Cassia fistula*.

With the photographs there is a text ranging from c. 5 to c. 30 lines of print (over one column). Usually the data given include remarks on the habitat where the plant can be found, country of origin for the not-native species, notes on the habit and appearance of the plant, time of flowering, sometimes the derivation of the name if that is taken from a person. Plant names are given in English, Sinhala, Hindi, Malay, and Tamil (with indices). Uses are mentioned, especially medicinal ones, self-evident since the author/photographer was a professor of pharmacology.

Altogether a nice book to have and to use.

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