REVIEW

E. G. B. GOODING, A. R. LOVELESS, and G. R. PROCTOR, Flora of Barbados. — Ministry of Overseas Development. Overseas Research Publication nr. 7 (1965) 486 pp., incl. map & 27 fig. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London. — £ 4.4.-: O. net.

This new hard-cover Flora of Barbados is in every respect a fine specimen of a local tropical flora. The black and white frontispiece is by Priscilla Fawcett, representing the 'Barbados Pride' *(Caesalpinia pulcherrima)*.

Concise in design, limited in consequence of the small space of the area concerned, hence restricted to a rather small number of species slightly over 600, this book dealing with Spermatophytes is of great value, supplying a long-felt need for a modern flora 'by students, teachers, agriculturists, as well as by amateur botanists, whether residents or only visitors to the island'. It does not pretend to be more than it aims at: 'to enable anybody with only a slight knowledge of botany to identify any wild Flowering plant he or she may come across'. Though devoted to the island of Barbados, the present work is surely of great importance for the recognition of the floristic composition of the numerous islets of the West Indies, most of them being small, with a flora to some extent agreeing with that of Barbados.

This flora is the result of both keen mastership and a great love for a beloved Island in the Sun.

Congratulations are for Mr G. R. PROCTOR (Monocotyledones), Mr E. G. B. GOODING and Mr A. R. LOVELESS (Dicotyledones), and Mr J. E. DANDY (British Museum Nat. Hist.) (nomenclature) with assistance by Dr W. T. STEARN (British Museum Nat. Hist.) and the late Mr N. Y. SANDWITH (Kew), with the final issue of a work which for a long time was seemingly deemed never to see the light.

The general part contains beside a foreword by A. E. S. MCINTOSH, an introduction by A. R. LOVELESS, and an acknowledgment by G. R. PROCTOR, the following headings: Abbreviations (used for works frequently cited in the text); Select bibliography; Key to the families of flowering plants in Barbados (pp. 1—12); Vegetative key, based mainly on leaf characters, to the commoner trees and shrubs of Barbados (pp. 13—25). A detailed map of the island has been added.

The keys are indented dichotomous ones, using only characters easy to handle.

The taxonomic part comprises (a) Monocotyledones (fam. 1—15; pp. 29—114; by G. R. PROCTOR) (b) Dicotyledones (fam. 16—101; pp. 115—439; by E. G. B. GOODING & A. R. LOVELESS), with the additions of a 'list of Common names with their botanical equivalents' (pp. 441—461) and an 'index of botanical names' (pp. 463—486).

Descriptions (usually 5—10 lines, but sometimes considerably more) are added to the species as well as to the genus and the family, but only in connection with native species and introduced weeds. Cultivated aliens, however, have been provided with a description only when they were also met with as an escape (e.g. *Casuarina equisetifolia, Tamarindus indicus, Tectona grandis, Terminalia catappa*), otherwise they are merely mentioned at the end of each family.

Synonyms and references are dealing with Barbados in the first place, but the Caribbean area, especially the West Indies, have been usually included as well.

Vernaculars were taken up both in the species description as well as in a separate, alphabetically arranged list.

Much attention was paid to the distribution of each taxon over the island (together with collector's names).

Miscellaneous information of interest e.g. on geographical distribution, native country of weeds, uses, etc. are richly added.

A survey of the taxa reveals 101 families, about 393 genera, and about 600 species (of which *c.* 480 described).

The floristic composition of Barbados seems to be largely agreeing with that of the surrounding areas. The New World element is of course well-represented, but there are only very few endemic species *(Agave barbadensis, Aiphanes erosa)*. The presence of a considerable number of aliens cannot be denied, which of course is not surprising as much of the vegetation of this small area has been replaced due to at least 3 centuries of human influence. This can best be illustrated by reference to those species still mentioned by Maycock in his Flora Barbadensis (1830), but which have been omitted in the present work as it must be assumed that they are now extinct in this island.

When comparing the Flora of Barbados with another tropical island flora of much larger size, the Flora of Java, the following statements may be noted. There is an enormous number of cultivated and introduced species which the two islands have in common. Though one is easily inclined to suppose and accept the idea that in all tropical regions largely the same cultivated and weedy taxa are found (which is actually not always so evident, especially as Africa is concerned), the striking similarity of the two floras in this respect is only realized by actual comparison. About 100 cultivated species and over 100 weeds are found in both islands. Over 30 species considered in the Flora of Barbados as pantropic also accur in Java. A number of indigenous genera, familiar to both regions, however, are exclusively represented by different species (e.g. *Ammannia, Avicennia, Capparis, Casearia, Calophyllum, Calotropis, Colubrina, Cordia, Dicliptera, Guettarda, Hernandia, Jacquemontia, Psychotria, Rhizophora, Tournefortia)*.

Altogether, the new Flora of Barbados is warmly recommended to everyone interested in tropical botany.

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