

IV. RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

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Flora of Taiwan, ed. 2. — A brief survey of the history and progress was published by the Chairman of the Editorial Committee, T.C. HUANG [J. Jap. Bot. 65 (1990) 155–158].

Genetic resources of under-utilised plants in Malaysia. — It has been estimated that the region is home to 12,000 species of seed plants, many of which are under-utilised. Wild progenitors, weedy relatives, and primitive cultivars contribute an invaluable treasure to the long-term strategy of breeding programmes, biotechnology, and genetic engineering. Timber species, medicinal plants, rattan, vegetable, root and tuber crops, ornamentals, and fruit trees are highlighted in A.H. ZAKRI (1989) (See Reviews).

After the final issue of volume 71, the **Journal of the Arnold Arboretum** will suspend publication pending a review of its role within the Arboretum. During the next two years the research mission of the Arboretum will be undergoing review and clarification, and, if the Journal can further the mission of the Arboretum, publication may be resumed.

For students of the Malesian flora the J.A.A. has been of great value and the demise, even temporary, of such an authoritative publication is much to be regretted.

The Harvard University Herbaria have announced the termination of Contributions from the Gray Herbarium, Occasional Papers of the Farlow Herbarium, and Leaflets of the Botanical Museum, and the creation of a new journal, **Harvard Papers in Botany** (ISSN 21043-4534), of which the first issue appeared in May 1989.

A **Symposium on the systematics and phylogeny of the Anisophylleaceae and Rhizophoraceae** was held in Amherst on 13 August 1986. Nine papers delivered have now been published in the Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 75 (1989). There was a general consensus that the two were distinct and not even related ('virtually no points of agreement').

The F. R. I. Messenger, a newsletter of the Papua New Guinea Forest Research Institute, POB 314, Lae, Papua New Guinea, Mr. O.G. GIDEON, editor. The first issue appeared in August 1989 and contains historical notes, personal news, a survey of the staff members and their activities.

The September and October 1988 issues (vol. 114/9 and 10) of 'The Indian Forester' were devoted to bamboos, the first issue to management, ecology, distribution, genetics, propagation, and culture, the second one uses, anatomy, pest control, and diseases. Alas, hardly any taxonomy for a group that is so much in need of recent revisionary work.

Between 8 October and 8 December, 1989, the Biological Research and Development Centre in BO together with the Biology Inter-University Centre — IPB conducted a training course in **fungal taxonomic research methodology** under the guidance of Drs. K. KRAMADIBRATA and M.A. RIFAI (BO). The results of the studies in Hyphomycetes will be published in Floribunda.

Index Kewensis on computer. — The original volumes and all the supplements and annuals of the Index Kewensis / Kew Index up to 1988 have been loaded into the Kew STATUS database. There are no less than 943,878 records. Of the names published between 1753 and 1970 only generic and specific names have been listed, but since 1971 (Suppl. 16) all ranks from family downwards have been included. The printed version was microfilmed and then converted into computer form by an optical reader. Unreadable characters were flagged, as were problems which resulted in records impossible to format (and therefore to load). These known errors have been corrected, but the optical reader also misinterpreted a low percentage of characters, making substitutions which result in errors while not preventing loading. The decision was made to proof-read the generic names, and the specific epithets have also been scanned, but undetected errors certainly remain: it is hoped that these will be corrected eventually, as they are brought to the attention.

The database represents the printed page as accurately as possible in electronic form. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is now considering the best way to make this database available. — G. LUCAS, in *Taxon* 38 (1989) 529–530.

J.E. Teijsmann & S. Binnendijk, *Catalogus van 's Lands Plantentuin (1854)*. A photocopy of the interleaved and annotated Bogor copy has been presented to the L library. This book was printed, but somehow never officially published. Two copies are in BO, a partial one in BM.

Tree Flora of East Malaysia Project. — After the completion of the Tree Flora of Malaya vol. 4 (F.S.P. NG, ed., 1989) preliminary discussions were made between taxonomists and herbaria in Malaysia to embark on this project. Those specialists who have contributed to the Tree Flora of Malaya will again be sought to contribute to this, especially on some difficult groups. Funding has been obtained for the period 1991–1995. Further information can be obtained from Messrs. A. LATIFF (UKMB), S.M. NOOR (KEP), or E. SOEPADMO (KLU).

A collaborative project has been set up between the Forest Department of Brunei and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to produce an annotated **check-list of the flowering plants and ferns of Brunei**. It will contain keys to genera and species where possible, with brief notes on the taxa. It is estimated that there are more than 2,000 tree species and over 1,000 orchids. The total number of taxa will be over 4,000. The co-ordinator at K is Mr. L. L. FORMAN, and Dr. J. DRANSFIELD is responsible for the collecting program being carried out in liaison with the Forest Botanist, Mr. K. M. WONG.

The project will last for at least five years. It will start with a general collection by staff of BRUN and visitors from K. The first set will remain in BRUN, duplicates will go to the herbaria K, SING, L, SAN, SAR, A, KEP. Collecting has been started in June 1989. At K a search has been initiated for all Brunei collections present to enter the label data into a database.

Tree Flora of Malaya. — The concluding volume 4 saw the completion of a 24-years project which was initially assisted by the British Government and later continued by the Malaysian Government. It was edited by Dr. F. S. P. NG. of FRIM. Volume 1 contained 28 families, volume 2 another 30, volume 3 covers 17 families, while volume 4 has 25. Fullest detail is provided for large trees while smaller ones are dealt with more briefly. Climbers and herb species in the families are summarily treated with full references to authoritative accounts published elsewhere. These volumes are intended to provide a new standard reference source for the families covered. Keys are based on leaves and twigs which are usually available. Full descriptions are given for the bole, bark, and crown of the living tree, as well as notes on its distribution and ecology, seedlings, saplings, silviculture, and economic uses.

The nuts of the false sago palm, *Cycas circinalis*, are the cause of the **Guam disease** that destroys the central nervous system leading to dementia, paralysis, and death. Its is caused by a free amino acid with the acronym MeDAP which does not occur in proteins. This toxin is an avid scavenger of copper and zinc, which metals are found in the brain and spinal cord. When incorporated by MeDAP permanent damage to the nerve is caused.