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WOLFGANG STUPPY

Flora Malesiana, Series I. Volume 19. Cucurbitaceae. W. J. J. O. de Wilde & B. E. E. Duyfjes. Leiden: Nationaal Herbarium Nederland. 2010. iv + 342 pp. CD-ROM with keys constructed in LUCID PHOENIX by H. P. Nooteboom. ISBN 978 90 71236 72 3 (NUR 941). €75 (paperback).

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The latest volume of *Flora Malesiana, Series I – Seed Plants* is a revision of the Cucurbitaceae, including the cultivated and naturalised species along with the 121 native ones.

As expected, de Wilde and Duyfjes have written an excellent account which will allow easy determination of cucurbit material, both in the field and in the herbarium. Most of the characters used in the keys are macroscopic and can be observed without difficulty on good specimens. By carefully reading the introduction (pp. 1–15), plant collectors will learn how important it is to make complete collections which, at the very least, means not breaking the tendrils by dragging the plant out of the vegetation it climbs in.

The same two authors revised the Cucurbitaceae in the *Flora of Thailand* (vol. 9(4), 2008) and it is interesting to compare the two revisions. When a genus, such as *Gomphogyne*, occurs in both floras, the generic descriptions have been carefully adjusted to account for variation in the region being treated. Species accounts have also been edited, sometimes to follow the format of each flora, sometimes to describe features more clearly. For example, this *Flora Malesiana* revision distinguishes the margin from the edge of the seed in a way that improves understanding of the structures and allows more accurate usage in keys. The format of *Flora Malesiana* permits considerably more synonymy to be reported than that of the *Flora of Thailand*.

The book contains 98 elegant and informative line drawings, 97 of them made by J. H. van Os and the other by Ruth van Crevel. These drawings are the same as those in the *Flora of Thailand*, when the species is found in both regions, but more finely printed. The 32 colour plates show representative species of almost all the genera of Malesia, revealing the beauty of plants which can sometimes look rather scrappy by the time they reach the herbarium.

Accompanying the book is a CD-ROM, prepared by H. P. Nooteboom, which reproduces all the species descriptions and many of the images, with the addition of some that are not printed. Crucially, it also includes the keys, adapted for LUCID PHOENIX. While this is not a multi-access key, it does allow many of the character states to be illustrated which will help readers who are unfamiliar with the Cucurbitaceae.

If I have a criticism, it relates to the Taxonomy section (p. 3) which explains that generic limits in the Cucurbitaceae are in a period of rapid change following molecular phylogenetic studies. One sentence in this section reads: 'Various genera to be sunk by Schaefer, Heibl & Renner (2009) and Schaefer & Renner (in press (for Kubitzki)) are maintained on the basis of flower- and fruit-morphology.' I should like to have seen a little more discussion of this question. If new generic limits become commonly accepted and new combinations are made, then this revision will be less useful in naming species correctly than it is now.

The volume also includes valuable contributions on wood anatomy by Pieter Baas and on pollen morphology by C. B. Mennes & R. W. J. M. van der Ham. They are shorter than in some of the earlier *Flora Malesiana* accounts but, by judicious reference to the literature, they allow readers who are interested to go into these subjects in more depth.

The authors have now revised most of the Cucurbitaceae of SE Asia to a very high standard and are to be congratulated. This is not the end of the story, of course; while this revision is very thorough, it is plain that certain districts and islands in Malesia need further exploration urgently. Collectors will want to use this valuable reference to improve herbarium holdings of specimens and to explore those taxa which remain insufficiently known, with the aim of maintaining all species extant in natural forest.

MARK NEWMAN

Flora of Peninsular Malaysia, Series I: Ferns and Lycophytes, Volume 1 (Malayan Forest Records No. 48). B. S. Parris, R. Kiew, R. C. K. Chung, L. G. Saw & E. Soepadmo (eds). Kepong: Forest Research Institute Malaysia. 2010. ix + 250 pp., 12 black and white figures, 18 colour plates. ISBN 978 967 5221 24 8 (v.1). US\$60.

Flora of Peninsular Malaysia, Series II: Seed Plants, Volume 1 (Malayan Forest Records No. 49). R. Kiew, R. C. K. Chung, L. G. Saw, E. Soepadmo & P. C. Boyce (eds). Kepong: Forest Research Institute Malaysia. 2010. ix + 330 pp. ISBN 978 967 5221 32 3. US\$75.

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The *Flora of Peninsular Malaysia* is an initiative of the Malaysian government as part of its commitment to biodiversity conservation and to the training of a new generation of taxonomists. It is being produced in two series, Series I for the ferns