

BOOK REVIEWS

The Common Ground of Wild and Cultivated Plants: Introductions, invasions, control and conservation. Botanical Society of the British Isles Conference Report No. 22. Edited by A. R. Perry and R. G. Ellis. Cardiff: National Museum of Wales. 1994. x+166pp, 14 colour and 26 black and white photographs. ISBN 0 720004 08 X. £25.00 (paperback).

This is the proceedings of a conference organized by the National Museum of Wales under the aegis of the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) and the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) in 1992, partly to mark the Welsh Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale in the same year. It invites comparison with two other expeditions over this 'common ground' – the former BSBI/RHS symposium volume 'Plants Wild and Cultivated' (Green, 1973), and the recent measured and assured 'Wild and Garden Plants' by Max Walters (1993). Perry and Ellis's book is a much livelier volume: neither of the other books manages to bring in folk music, the temperate rainforests of Truro, or Dylan Thomas. It has new ideas and stimulating comment. Although the volume contains plenty of modest and workaday contributions, of little merit on their own, when they are all thrown into the pot a rich stew results.

To my mind the most important papers in this book are those that sound a note of caution about the genetic consequences of ill-informed contamination of the British genetic landscape with inappropriate provenances (a topic not mentioned in Max Walters' book). Akeroyd cautions against the flood of eastern European and agricultural germplasm of grassland species and the potential damage being done to biodiversity below the species level, while White does the same thing for woody plants with a fascinating examination of *Salix*. When county councils plant 'native' *Salix*, which are in fact Dutch cultivars, into historic landscapes, it is astonishing that this happens without comment. The fact that the study of infraspecific variation is all but extinct in plant science departments of British universities may have something to do with it.

REFERENCES

- GREEN, P. S. (ed.) (1973). *Plants Wild and Cultivated*. London: BSBI.
WALTERS, S. M. (1993). *Wild and Garden Plants*. London: Harper Collins.