

New Flora of the British Isles. 2nd edition. Clive Stace, with line drawings mainly by Hilli Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1997. 1132pp, including photographs (mostly from light or scanning electron microscope). ISBN 0 521 58933 5. £28.50 (plastic cover).

I reviewed the first edition of this work in *Botanical Society of Scotland News* No. 60, March 1993 and my favourable views on the book, which has become the standard work for British plant identification, have not changed. As was the first edition, this work is designed to be user-friendly and is an invaluable up-to-date database for botanists, ecologists, conservationists, biology teachers and students.

I have not had time to try out many of the keys but they all have been rewritten with the main aims of simplicity, unambiguity and accuracy. The plants included cover all natives, all naturalized plants, all crops and recurrent casuals. Technical terms have been kept to a minimum to allow the less technically minded to use it with ease. A hundred and sixty pages are devoted to illustrations: line drawings, electron micrographs or photographs of diagnostic parts of critical groups, and plant portraits of less familiar species and aliens for which illustrations may not be readily available. In all there is some kind of illustration for over half of the taxa treated. The text has also been thoroughly revised and adjustments made to drawings. Over 200 species and subspecies together with extra hybrids have been added since the first edition. Most of the illustrations are, as in the first edition, by Hilli Thompson and they were chosen selectively to illustrate differences between species.

The second edition complements Kent's *List of vascular plants of the British Isles* (1992) and the supplementary lists to this (1996). The taxonomic sequence, as before, follows Cronquist's *An Integrated System of Classification of Flowering Plants* (1981) and, for the pteridophytes, Derrick et al., *Checklist of European Pteridophytes* (1987). Greuter et al.'s *Mediterranean Checklist* (1984-) was followed for many of the aliens and Walter et al.'s *European Garden Flora* (1984-) and Clement & Foster's *Alien Plants of the British Isles* was used for horticultural and alien species. Abbreviations have also been changed to correspond with the standard list of Brummitt & Powell (1992).

A comprehensive index that now includes authorities will please many researchers who need to know the most detailed and up-to-date information. A reduction in the font size and the margins has allowed much more information to be included despite having 96 pages less than the earlier edition. A two-page bibliography is adequate to inform the reader of the more important works. The new work is 1cm longer and 1.5cm wider than its predecessor but is the same thickness in spite of the many additions to the text. Although too bulky for the pocket it could easily fit the side pocket of a rucksack. The plastic cover is a similar type as before and does give reasonable protection. I am happy to say that my first edition has stood up to fairly constant use and is still in good condition with the cover completely intact if a little concave down the spine.

I know that some botanists still prefer Clapham, Tutin & Moore's *Flora of the*

British Isles mainly because they do not like the brief species descriptions; but I think that these critics are a minority. The few criticisms that I had for the first edition were that some of the photocopies were poor. Some of them, such as the *Potamogeton* leaves in this edition, are still a bit hazy, and would have been better as line drawings as was the case with *Euphrasia* photocopies which did not reproduce well in the first edition. The new camera ready copy is certainly very clear and easy to read. I am sure this book will be even more popular than its predecessor.

References

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Fungi on Rhododendron: A World Reference. D. F. Farr, H. B. Esteban & M. E. Palm. Parkway Publishers Inc. 1996. 192pp. ISBN 18879 05006. £48.00 from Cardiff Academic Press (hardback).

This is the first worldwide list of all known fungi on the genus *Rhododendron*. Being part of a wider programme of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), it assembles information from a wide variety of sources mainly from the USA, and is designed to help in the assessment of the potential risk of introduction of exotic pathogens. This fact is both a strength and a weakness of this publication: it represents an excellent database for USDA purposes; on the other hand, non-US sources of information or concerns about exotic pathogens have been neglected. For instance only US herbarium records and literature available in US libraries were consulted.

The book is organized into six interrelated sections: