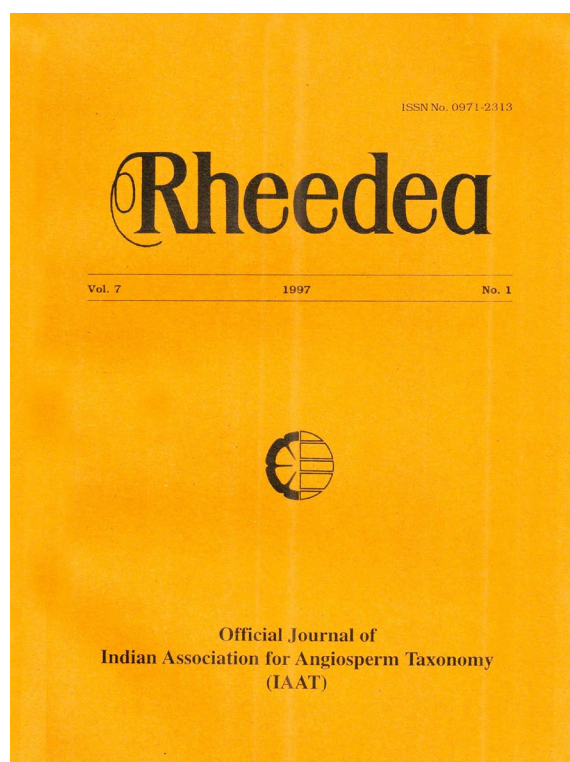




Book Review: The flora of Orissa

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Book Reviews

HOT SPOTS OF ENDEMIC PLANTS OF INDIA, NEPAL AND BHUTAN. M.P.Nayar. 1996. Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute, Thiruvananthapuram. pp.254. PB. Rs.600/-; US \$50/-; £ 35/-.

Endemic flora is the exclusive biological wealth of a country since they do not occur anywhere else on earth. The richness and uniqueness of the biodiversity of any country depends to a great extent to its endemic species and, therefore, it is essential that a clear understanding of the endemic flora and fauna as well as the megacentres of endemism are the first requirements for any effective measures aimed at the protection and preservation of biodiversity of any region.

In this book, Dr. M.P. Nayar has dealt with the endemic plants of India, Nepal and Bhutan, and their mega- and micro-centres in the three countries, in considerable detail. Comprehensive lists of endemic plants are given, pertaining to the various phytogeographic and climatic regions. The explanations of various common terms and other important matters connected with endemism, provided in the preliminary chapters would be helpful to students and non-biologists too, as a very useful introduction to the subject.

This is a scholarly work which would be valuable both as an introduction to the subject as well as a reference book for planners, policy-makers and biologists who are concerned with the protection and preservation of biodiversity.

Dr. K.S.Manilal

THE FLORA OF ORISSA, 4 Vols. H.O. Saxena & M. Brahman. Regional Research Laboratory, Bhubaneswar-751 013, Orissa, India, and Orissa Forest Development Corporation Ltd., Bhubaneswar-751 001, Orissa. (HB). Price: Rs.800.00 for complete set of 4 volumes. Available from the Divisional Manager, Commercial Division, Orissa Forest Development Corporation Ltd., Plot No.217/218, Satya Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India. Vol.1 *Ranunculaceae* to *Fabaceae*: April 1994, pp.I-LXIV, 1-633, 1 map and 16 plant drawings; Vol.2. *Rosaceae* to *Martyniaceae*: April 1995, pp.635-1322, 35 plant drawings; Vol.3. *Acanthaceae* to *Commelinaceae*: December 1995, pp.1323-2008, 16 plant drawings; Vol.4. *Flagellariaceae* to *Poaceae*, *Gymnoperms* and *Pteridophyta*; Statistical analysis of the flora, Bibliography, General indices: March 1996, pp.2009-2918, 8 plant drawings.

The titled book running in four volumes, deals with the flora of Orissa State which is endowed with a rich and varied flora due to its diversified topography and other physical features. The need for a comprehensive flora of Orissa has been felt ever since its formation in 1936. Haines' *Botany of Bihar and Orissa* (1921-25) written some 70-75 years back has not only become

nomenclaturally outdated but the entire southern part of Orissa remained outside its territorial boundaries. Mooney (1950) too, did not include this southern part of Orissa in his *Supplement to the Botany*. Gamble's *Flora of the Presidency of Madras* (1915-36) made only stray references to the collections from southern Orissa.

Total 2727 species of Angiosperms, Gymnosperms and Pteridophytes, including 166 species of cultivated plants have been described in the book. Arrangement of the families is broadly according to Bentham and Hooker's System of Classification except for Gymnosperms which have been dealt after Angiosperms. Concept of delimiting the families is after J. Hutchinson (*The Families of Flowering Plants*, 1973). Systematic treatment follows usual pattern with the keys to the families, genera and species; descriptions of the families and genera. Account of species includes the valid name with the original reference, common synonyms and references to J.D. Hooker's *Fl. Brit. India*; Haines' *Bot. Bihar & Orissa* and its Supplement by Mooney; Gamble's *Fl. Pres. Madras*; standard floristic works of the neighbouring region (Steenis, *Fl. Males.* and Dassan. & Fosberg, *Rev. Handb. Fl. Ceylon*); monographs and taxonomic revisions and standard published illustrations, followed by vernacular names (Oriya, Hindi, Telugu, Bengali, English and local tribal names), detailed description, notes on occurrence in the area, phenology and distribution in India and world. Taxonomic notes and important uses have been given in some cases. Old collections of plants from Orissa present in other Indian herbaria were also examined by the authors and a good number of species reported by the previous authors from Orissa on the basis of wrongly or doubtfully identified specimens have been excluded or listed as doubtful.

Nomenclature of the taxa is fairly up-to-date and eight new combinations of plant names have been made. Line drawings of plants, though only 75 in number, are good and of mostly interesting plants generally not illustrated in the classical works on Indian Botany. The list of endemic and threatened plants of the area is a useful addition from a conservation point of view.

Except for some spelling mistakes, the printing and overall get up of the volumes are quite good. The price is very reasonable. The book is an outcome of authors' dedicated work over a long period. The exhaustiveness of the work and fairly up-to-date nomenclature of the taxa make the book a contribution of high order. I am sure it will fully meet the long felt need for a comprehensive Flora of the State and would be a valuable asset to the libraries.

B.P. Choudhury