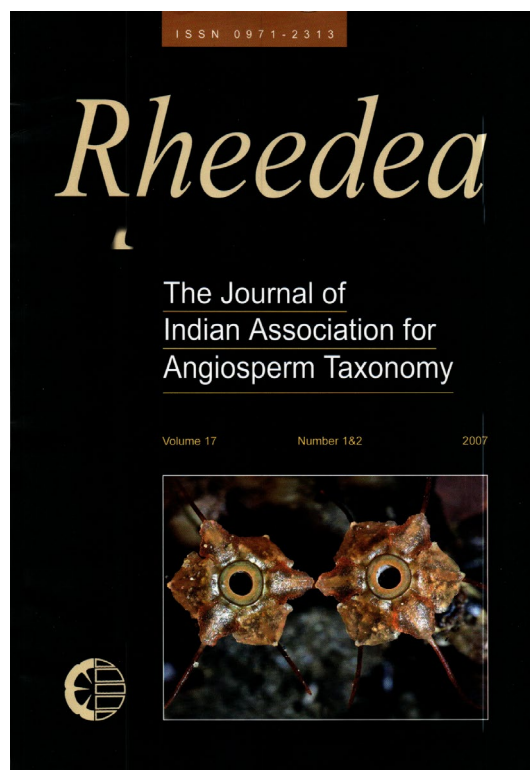




Book Review: Sedges & Grasses of Eastern Uttar Pradesh

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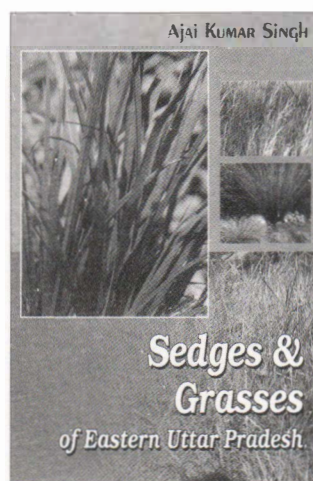
Book Review

Ajai Kumar Singh 2007

Sedges & Grasses of Eastern Uttar Pradesh

Daya Publishing House, Delhi 110 035

ISBN 81-7035-463-3(set), ISBN 81-7035-464-1 (Vol.1) p.1-456; ISBN 81-7035-465-X (Vol.2), p.457-852. Indian Rupees 4000 (set).



Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), the most populous state in India with an area of 240928 sq.km, lies in the floristically rich Upper Gangetic plain located between the Himalayas in the north and the hill plateau in the south. This region is extensively cultivated due to high fertile soil. The eastern region has high concentration of

wetlands and naturally, the Sedge and Grass flora of this region is very rich. Many members of these two groups fall under the category of 'weeds'. The knowledge on these groups is definitely useful for the effective management of such a vastly cultivated region. 'Sedges & Grasses of Eastern Uttar Pradesh' by Ajai Kumar Singh, therefore, is a welcome addition and can be a precursor to the Flora of U.P.

The book deals with 326 taxa belonging to two monocot families Cyperaceae (86 species and 4 subspecies) and Poaceae (234 species and 2 varieties) of Eastern U.P. It accommodates 293 plates of line drawings to support the text. Division of the book into two volumes makes each very handy. With multicolor jacket, the volumes have an appealing look.

The work contains five chapters: Introduction, General Description and Climate, Methodology, Previous Work and Systematic Treatments. This is followed by Bibliography, Appendices and, Indices to Botanical names and Vernacular names. Appendices include 13 tables which are lists of Sedges and Grasses of seven districts of U.P.(Table 1-7);

Sedges of Upper Gangetic plain(Table 8,9); Sedges of U.P (Table 10); Grasses of U.P (Table11); Sedges of India (Table 12); Grasses of India (Table13) and a list of taxa added after 1997.

The systematic part (chapter 5) begins with keys to the two families Cyperaceae and Poaceae. Detailed general accounts of families and keys to subfamilies, tribes, genera and species are included. For each species, correct name, synonyms, detailed description, flowering and fruiting seasons, habitat and distribution are given. The keys are workable and the illustrations that appear along with the description are helpful in the easy identification of a species. Students of taxonomy will find the detailed accounts of the two families (morphology, spikelet structure, embryo development etc.) more useful.

The idea of providing illustrations for each species makes the book user friendly. However, while comparing the quality of illustrations with that appearing now in standard journals and Floras, the drawbacks like the line diagrams drawn without scale or magnifications; hairiness, an important character in Sedges and Grasses, drawn out of proportion; erroneous representation of characters e.g. *Bambusa* Schreber., pl. 95 D, E, F etc. could have cautiously been avoided had the author taken the help of a botanical illustrator or an artist.

Similarly, professional expertise would have been sought for language and technical editing. Such an attempt would have taken care of some of the serious concerns of the book such as repetitions (cf. p. vii, para 1; p.4, para 2, and p.15, para 3), grammatical errors (e.g. p. viii, last sentence; p.17, para 1, line 4, 5; p.19, para 2, line 4) and complicated usages (e.g. p.3, para 2). Sincere efforts, if made in proof correction, would have eliminated many spelling errors crept in

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even in technical terms [e.g. 'clusteres' for clusters (p.17, line 4); 'scambring' for scrambling (p.24, para 6, line 3)]. Many cited references are missing from the Bibliography (e.g. Santapau 1958a; Johri & Doreswamy 1970; Venu 2004; Jain 1984; Pal 1981; Vohra 1980b; Nair 2004; Sharma 1998; Nair & Nair 1977; Dhakre & Sharma 1998; Khanna *et al.* 1999; Uniyal *et al.* 1999; Mishra 1946a, b; Tripathi 1964; Rao 1968; Shankar 1970; Gupta 1979; Singh & Maheswari 1985a, b; Singh *et al.* 1987, 2004; Shah 1967, 1972; Cronquist 1968; Metcalf 1971; Nijalingappa & Nagaraj 1980; Tiwari 1978; Johanson 1950).

The chapter 2 could have been made more precise and compact if physiography and climate of the entire area were given instead of district wise accounts. Specimens were not cited. This would have added more authenticity to the work and

helped future workers. There was no need for repetition of preface, contents and list of illustrations in Volume 2. It would have helped the users if the 13 tables given in Appendices were listed in the Contents.

The price of the book, I feel, is very high. It may thwart students, teachers and scholars from having a personal set.

Dr Ajai Kumar Singh, the author of the book, is a Reader in Botany at Udai Pratap Autonomous College in Varanasi. The book is the result of his and his students' eight years of dedicated work. It is remarkable that the author could bring out the two volumes without depending on any research funds.

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