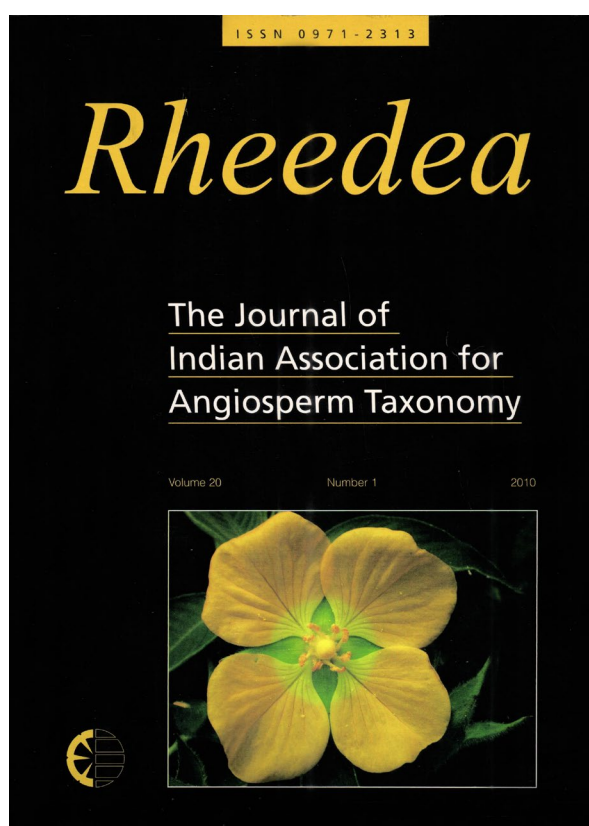




Book Review: Flowering Plants of India: Dicotyledons Volume 1 (Acanthaceae – Avicenniaceae)

Narasimhan D. & P. Dayanandan



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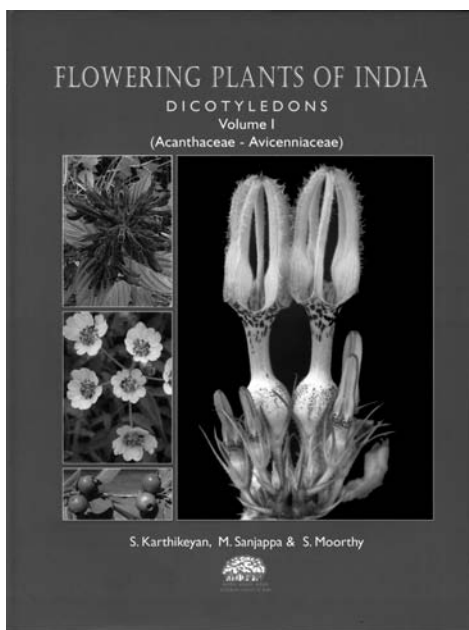
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Book Review

S. Karthikeyan, M. Sanjappa & S. Moorthy 2010

Flowering Plants of India: Dicotyledons Volume 1 (Acanthaceae – Avicenniaceae), Botanical Survey of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests, CGO Complex, 3rd MSO Building, DF Block, 5th and 6th Floor, Salt Lake City, Kolkata – 700 064, i – li + 365 pp. (all in art paper), HB, including 31 colour plates.

ISBN 81-8177-030-7, Price: Rs. 680/- (\$ 50)



A concise and authoritative checklist of Indian plants is a much needed and essential reference material both for specialists and others. Such a list also helps in developing a database of the biological wealth of a country. An earlier book, "*Florae Indicae Enumeratio: Monocotyledonae*" published in 1989 remains a very useful reference work on monocotyledons. This book on dicotyledonous plants of India is the first of its series that includes 18 families in an alphabetical order.

A total of 2509 species assigned to these 18 families are described in this first volume. In comparison, the Flora of British India (1872 – 1897) described only 1541 species for the Indian region. The book provides a brief but essential account of all the 18 families along with references giving access to up-to-date information for the users.

One of the most useful parts of the book is the nomenclature. Several genera and species have undergone nomenclatural changes and for various reasons, many Indian botanists have not had access

to this vital information. This volume bridges this gap for the 18 families and has set the trend for all dicotyledonous families to be published in this series. The authors have critically interpreted and applied the nomenclatural rules to propose 10 new names and 62 new combinations in this volume. This book also serves as a standard reference for abbreviation of authors' names.

Families are arranged in an alphabetical order. For each family the genera, species and any infraspecific taxa are also enumerated alphabetically. This is a practical and convenient presentation for all users. General distribution details for India have been provided for each species. Basic ecological notes and detailed geographical distributions are however omitted. For example, for several species the distribution is indicated as Peninsular India whereas the plants may be restricted to either Western Ghats or Eastern Ghats or to a few pockets. Perhaps the future volumes might somehow overcome the space constraints and provide more information on geographical distribution for at least the endemic species.

The introductory chapter provides a good historical sketch starting with the Flora of British India. More consolidated statistical tables of the current status of Indian flora could be provided in the future volumes thus constantly enhancing the usefulness of this series. The colour plates are of excellent quality. Since high quality plant photographs are now available with researchers and Botanical Survey of India, future volumes could be illustrated with more pictures to assist the users in identification. On the whole this book heralds the beginning of a monumental series written by three of India's leading, knowledgeable and experienced taxonomists. We hope that the other series will follow in quick succession to help a variety of end-users who require authentic information on Indian flora.

D. Narasimhan & P. Dayanandan
(Chennai)