#### Plants of Dhofar (The Southern Region of Oman, Traditional Economic and Medicinal Uses)

Anthony G. Miller and Miranda Morris

The Office of the Adviser for Conservation of the Environment, Diwan of Royal Court, Sultanate of Oman. 1988, 361pp., HB. In UK, available from Holmes McDougall Ltd., Allander House, 137–141 Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH6 8NS. £37.50 inc postage

The economic and medicinal importance of wild plant species are two of the strongest arguments for their conservation. Sadly, however, these arguments are rarely fully appreciated by those with the power to influence the future.

Oman would appear to provide an exception however.
Not only has Oman 1100 plant species but also a wealth of cultural knowledge of these species and a remarkably enlightened Royal Court in its appreciation of their value.

Under the patronage of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Sultan of Oman, the authors have produced a remarkable book covering these issues for a particularly interesting part of Oman where myrrh and frankincense trees are still found in profusion.

Dhofar lies at the extreme southwest of the country at a latitude of approximately 18 degrees. Covered for the most part by sparsely vegetated desert steppe, Dhofar also includes along its south coast a range of limestone mountains. Although even in these mountains rainfall is very scarce, south facing escarpments are covered from June to mid-September in moisture-laden clouds permitting the evolution of a remarkable woodland

flora, and vegetation unique in Arabia.

In the introduction to this book Anthony Miller provides a good summary of the habitats of the region and of the rather short history of scientific study of their plants. A fascinating introduction is also provided by Miranda Morris to the multiplicity of uses of plants to the people of the region—who themselves have contributed the bulk of knowledge on which the text of the book is based.

The 147 colour illustrations by Susanna Stuart-Smith, which with the accompanying taxonomic and ethnobotanical descriptions form the major part of the book, are of the highest quality. I hope they will ensure that the book is frequently referred to for it is indeed a splendid production and one that many other countries could learn from.

Mike Read.

#### Wild Flowers of the Falkland Islands

T. H. Davies and J. H. McAdam Bluntisham Books, Huntingdon, 48pp., SB £3.50 plus £1.00 postage from Dr Kate Thompson, East Mains Cottage, Tullibardine, Auchterarder, Perthshire PH3 1NU, UK

Wildlife holidaymakers with a predilection for wild flowers may feel that a trip to the Falkland Islands would hardly be worth the effort. Charles Darwin himself apparently described the islands as 'everywhere covered by a peaty soil and wiry grass of one monotonous brown colour'. All the more reason why the Falkland Islands Trust is to be congratulated for producing this attractive little book. In just 48 pages the authors provide a

very useful introduction to the flora of these islands. The islands have not only 163 native plant species, but also almost 100 introduced species. Wild Flowers of the Falkland Islands describes and illustrates 61 of these. An easily accessible key aids identification and a brief summary of five major vegetation types provides good background information. This colourfully presented book should not only encourage visitors to the Falkland Islands to take a closer look at the plants they encounter on their stay but also foster an interest in their ecology. Mike Read

# Indicator Plants of Coastal British Columbia

A. Klinka, V. J. Krajina, A. Ceska and A. M. Scagel University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver. 1989, 288 pp., SB \$36.95

This book is aimed specifically at those working to improve forest management in coastal British Columbia using detailed environmental and phytoecological analysis. It comes as part of the Canada–British Columbia Forest Resource Development Agreement, a 5-year programme costing \$300 million.

The acceptance of the science of ecology is a most worthy step forward for foresters and this book takes its task seriously. The authors choose the four variables of climate, soil moisture, soil nitrogen and ground surface materials and proceed to describe the range of each variable within which 419 species are normally found. Statistical analysis of the occurrence of species at a site then provides an environmental determination of a site on which forest management deci-

### BOOK BEVIEWS

sions can be based. While providing a useful if complicated tool to make such determinations, the book's usefulness for any other purpose, such as providing a field guide to ecologically minded naturalists, is limited. Although well illustrated with colour photographs, their quality is variable and the decision to illustrate plants by alphabetical order of their generic names make this unlikely to be of immediate use other than to those who already have considerable knowledge of the flora of the region. There are nevertheless other competent field guides to the region.

Two methods of statistical analysis are recommended by the authors. One, the 'individual-species method' being suitable for fast field diagnosis, the other, 'the spectral method' requiring more detailed information and statistical analysis. These methods should enable forest workers with sufficient expertise to establish the major ecosystem characteristics of any site in the hypermaritime, maritime and submaritime belts of British Columbia. Inferences for forest management can thereby be drawn although they are excluded from this book. Mike Read.

# Threatened Plants of New Zealand

M. Wilson and D. R. Given DSIR Publishing, 1989, 151pp., SB \$NZ 34.95 in New Zealand/Australia, \$US 39.95 elsewhere, from The Bookshop, DSIR Publishing, PO Box 9741, Wellington, New Zealand

With over 10 per cent of New Zealand's plant at risk there is an urgent need to ensure that these species are protected adequately. This guide was compiled in the hope that it will

result in further discoveries of populations of species at risk as well as encouraging the protection and cultivation of plants from known sites.

The introduction discusses the rationale behind selection of species for the guide, types of threats, conservation strategies and a justification for conserving wild plants. The main body of the book deals with broad groups of plants—trees,

shrubs, climbers, herbaceous plants, orchids, grasses, ferns, etc.—listing species within each group alphabetically. The entry for each of the 97 taxa dealt with includes a photograph or line drawing, a description, notes and a map on distribution, conservation status and additional comments. The result is an extremely attractive and easy to use book. *Editor*.



A page from the FFPS 1991 calendar, which features species that have been the focus of Society projects or of Oryx 100% Fund grants over the years: details and order form on insert in this issue.