

REVIEW

Flora of the British Isles. BY A. R. CLAPHAM, T. G. TUTIN and E. F. WARBURG. Cambridge University Press, 1952. Pp. Li+1591. Price 50 s.

This is an up-to-date account of the British vascular plants and takes into full consideration the advances in the field of taxonomy during the last 50 years, and especially since 1920. The introduced plants, both naturalised as well as of frequent occurrence, are included. Besides the usual descriptions, information is given in many cases about the time of flowering, fruiting and germination of seeds, the mechanism of pollination and seed dispersal as well as the life form and chromosome number.

The families are arranged with minor exceptions according to the system of Bentham and Hooker. The account begins with the Pteridophyta. This is followed by Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons and ends with the Monocotyledons. An artificial key to the families has been added, which permits their identification even by an amateur.

The nomenclature follows in general the check list of British Vascular Plants issued by the British Ecological Society in 1946. The small initial letter has been adopted for all specific epithets.

Plants which are morphologically similar but differ cytologically or in geographical distribution or ecological habitat have been described as subspecies. Authenticated hybrids between species have been mentioned. Another special feature of the book is the inclusion of references to easily accessible illustrations.

Sometimes characters have been used for identification which are not commonly considered. Two examples are the number, size and distribution of the lenticels on the fruits in the Genus *Sorbus* and sculpturing of the testa of seeds in *Chenopodium*.

After brilliant work by British and other European botanists in the 19th century, taxonomic studies in India have been languishing for various reasons, among which lack of a National Herbarium and good regional herbaria are the most important. Most of our States are still without good manuals of plants. This hampers progress in many fields of botany. The need for the writing of up-to-date regional and local floras, therefore, is very great. The present volume can serve as a good example of what a modern Flora should be.

A. C. J.

