

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-