

BOOK REVIEW

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Flora of China. Volume 6: Caryophyllaceae through Lardizabalaceae. 2001. ISBN 1-930723-05-9. 512 pp. Volume 8: Brassicaceae through Saxifragaceae. 2001. ISBN 0-915279-93-2. 506 pp. *Flora of China Illustrations*, Volume 4: Cycadaceae through Fagaceae. 2001. ISBN 0-915279-91-6. 419 pp. Volume 24: Flagellariaceae through Marantaceae. 2002. ISBN 0-930723-00-8. 449 pp. Wu Zheng-yi and Peter Raven, eds. Science Press, Beijing, and Missouri Botanical Garden Press, P.O. Box 299, St. Louis, MO 63166-0299.

The *Flora of China* is the English-language version of the *Flora Reipublicae Popularis Sinicae* (FRPS), the soon-to-be completed 125-volume monumental work that has taken almost a half century to compile. The *Flora of China* is not simply a translation of FRPS. It is a taxonomic revision of this vast work that has been virtually inaccessible to anyone outside of China. Even where available, the FRPS still has a limited readership, since those not familiar with the Chinese language cannot take advantage of this valuable resource for one of the world's richest floras.

The two most recent, of the projected 25, volumes of the *Flora of China* (FOC) were published in 2001: Volume 8 in June and Volume 6 in December. Volume 8 includes eight families, 151 genera, and 1204 species, of which 12 genera and 599 species (50%) are endemic to China. The families treated are Brassicaceae (102 genera, 412 species), Resedaceae (2 genera, 4 species), Moringaceae (1 species), Bretschneideraceae (1 species), Nepenthaceae (1 species), Droseraceae (2 genera, 7 species), Crassulaceae (13 genera, 233 species) and Saxifragaceae (29 genera, 545 species).

Volume 6 includes thirteen families, 88 genera, and 1382 species, of which eight genera and 832 species (60%) are endemic to China. The families treated are Caryophyllaceae (30 genera, 390 species), Nelumbonaceae (1 species), Nymphaeaceae (3 genera, 8 species), Cabombaceae (2 genera, 2 species), Ceratophyllaceae (2 genera, 3 species), Eupteleaceae (1 species), Trochodendraceae (1 species), Tetracentraceae (1 species), Cercidiphyllaceae (1 species), Paeoniaceae (1 genus, 15 species),

Ranunculaceae (38 genera, 921 species), Circaeasteraceae (1 species), and Lardizabalaceae (7 genera, 37 species).

Chinese botanists have collaborated with their colleagues from the United States, Western Europe, the United Kingdom, Russia, Japan, and Australia on the treatments of each taxon and are credited at the beginning of each family. Editors and reviewers are acknowledged in the introductory pages. The format of the work is similar to that of the Chinese original, and the sequence of families is a modified Englerian one. In the body of the treatments, currently accepted botanical names are in bold typeface. Equivalent names are represented with Chinese characters and in Pinyin, a romanized transliteration of the Chinese language. Synonyms follow in italics. The approximately 10,000 taxa endemic to China are indicated with a bullet before the habitat and elevation details.

Distribution within China is given only to the provincial level, with a 1:18000000 map of China showing the administrative divisions included in the endpapers. This map should perhaps be updated to indicate the municipality of Chongqing. If a taxon extends beyond China, it is noted to country, continent, or region in brackets. Although distribution maps are noticeably missing, these are available online in a *Flora of China* checklist (<http://www.mobot.org/MOBOT/TROPICOS/China/welcome.html>). Economic importance and ethnobotanical uses of more than 8,000 species are included. Discrepancies in taxonomy are noted in italics at the end of each description.

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All published treatments, as well as manuscript drafts and those in review are available electronically on the FOC Newsletter website (<http://flora.huh.harvard.edu/china/mss/news.htm>). Although the cost of each volume (\$85.00 to 100.00) is not exorbitant, the decision to make the work available online has clearly made the information accessible to a larger and broader audience.

Volume 8 is dedicated to the memory of Jane Davenport Jansen, who was the founder and benefactor of the Quarryhill Botanical Garden located in Sonoma County, CA. Under Mrs. Jansen's guidance, this garden, established in 1987, was developed into a major collection of temperate Asian plants. All of the plants at Quarryhill were raised from seeds collected on expeditions sponsored by Mrs. Jansen. Many other gardens and arboreta have made additions to their own collections from the seeds and plants distributed by Quarryhill, and the herbaria at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew received herbarium specimens collected on those expeditions. Because Mrs. Jansen recognized the richness and diversity of the Asian flora, she also supported conservation efforts in the region.

Unlike the FRPS, no illustrations are included in the FOC. Twenty-five separate volumes of *Flora of China Illustrations* that will cover more than 40 percent of the vascular plants of China, however, are being published to accompany the taxonomic treatments. To date, six volumes of illustrations have been published. Most of the illustrations are taken from the FRPS, but many of them have been redrawn to reflect the revisions, the new sequences of species and updated nomenclature made in the FOC. Species and genera treated in the FRPS but not in FOC are listed at the end of each genus and family, respectively, to which they belong. As in the text volumes, recognized taxa are given in bold typeface and are followed

by the Chinese name and Pinyin transliteration. References to the accompanying text volume of FOC, as well as to the FRPS are made in the caption of each page of illustrations. The artists of the original FRPS illustrations are credited, as are the artists who modified the drawings. Four indexes are included: to Chinese names (sorted by stroke numbers); to Pinyin names; to scientific names; to families in the FOC and in the FRPS. As with the text volumes, the *Flora of China Illustrations* are available online at <http://flora.huh.harvard.edu/china/>

Volume 4 of the *Illustrations* was published in 2001, two years after the accompanying text volume. It includes 394 figures representing a total of 816 species in twenty families. Volume 24, which was published in 2002 (also two years after the accompanying text volume) includes 423 figures representing a total of 782 species in twenty-two families. The larger format and heavier paper of the FOC makes the overall appearance and details of the illustrations sharper than those in the FRPS. The absence of scale bars, though, is surprising for such a comprehensive work.

The richness and diversity of the Chinese flora has been described in western literature since the days of Christian missionaries and intrepid explorers who penetrated into the wilds of that country. Although those sources served to open the doors to a mysterious people and land for the western world, most of the technical literature written by Chinese botanists has been unavailable to anyone outside of China, due to the inaccessibility of the Chinese language for most westerners and for political reasons. The *Flora of China* and the *Flora of China Illustrations* represent a giant step toward more openness and collaboration between Chinese and western botanists and has no doubt prompted the dissemination of other scientific literature out of China. Everyone involved in the revision of this treatment of one of the world's richest floras should be commended.