Keys to genera or groups of genera (in cases of large families) are provided. Keys to species have been excluded because of the constraint of space and because, "many useful keys to species are available in the regional literature" (pg. xxii). This is a pity as keys specific to the species from Singapore can quickly lead to their identification. Not many readers will have access to the relevent regional literature and in some cases practical keys are not even available.

At the back, before the index, Keng has provided separate keys to the families of Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. These are useful keys that have been adapted form his earlier book, "Orders and Families of Malayan Seed Plants" (3rd ed. 1983).

The author and illustrator must be congratulated for putting together this very practical and useful manual. Users will be looking forward to the companion volume on the Monocotyledons.

A Flora is a permanent record of plants, and though plant names may change, the plants do not. This book will remain useful for many years to come and users will refer to their copies repeatedly. It is indeed a great pity that the printing, binding, cover and paper used do no justice to the value of the book. The herbarium copy is already battered and dog-eared, the cover picture fading, the binding becoming lose and pages threatening to come apart; all through heavy (but normal) use. Let us hope the publishers do a better job with the companion volume.

2. The Bamboos of Sabah.

Soejatmi Dransfield, 1992, Sabah Forest Records No. 14. Forest Department Sabah, Malaysia. 94pp. ISBN 983-9554-03-4. M$40, postage extra. Available from, Senior Research Officer, Forest Research Centre, Sepilok, P.O. Box 1407, 90007 Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia.

Bamboos are giant grasses, typically woody and with hollow stems. They are found throughout the tropical to temperate regions of the world, except Europe and Western Asia, between 46° north and 47° south, from the lowlands up to 4000 m. The majority occur in the lowlands in the tropics of Asia and America with very few in Africa. Their natural range has been greatly extended by cultivation for use as a technological material and as ornamentals. It is perhaps in Asia that bamboos are put to the greatest use; from angklungs to house-posts, and windmills to xylophones. The young shoots of many species are used as food.

In an age of rapid loss of tropical forests, bamboos, fast growing and with multiple uses, offer a way of producing both food and woody material for technological and industrial uses. The first stage is the documentation of the species so that users and others interested can tell one bamboo from another. This book by Soejatmi Dransfield, a leading bamboo specialist, describes all the bamboos found in Sabah. There are 10 genera (one still unnamed) and 35 species (4 still unnamed). Most species have a very limited distribution and the author predicts that more species can be expected to be found. An introductory part provides an outline of bamboo morphology. This is followed by a key to the genera. Subsequently, the genera and species are treated alphabetically. Under each genus there is a key to species. All genera and species are provided with a fairly

comprehensive description and additional information is provided under the subheadings: Distribution, Local names, Uses and Notes.

Thirty-one of the species are illustrated, 30 with a full-page figure each and one with two full-page figures. The figures are of a good quality, attractive, very clear and show many of the diagnostic features required for identification.

The book is beautiful and generously produced with the signature well sewn and bound and the paper of relatively heavy weight and of a good quality.

The few comments offered are with regards to making the book easier to use. As indicated in the blurb on the dust-jacket and in the preface, this is a practical guide. It is not written only for other bamboo specialists. As such a slightly expanded section on the morphology of bamboos with well labelled illustrations would be a great help. In this book the discussion on morphology is made with some reference to the text figures on the various species; this method is helpful, but specific, well-labelled illustrations are necessary to help the non-initiated come to grips with bamboo morphology, irrespective of whether these may appear repetitive to the specialists or can be found in another book. In addition, a glossary of terms might also be useful. A guide such as this should always strive to educate as well as to inform.

The key to genera is essential in the process of identifying a Sabah bamboo. Yet the average user will most probably be frustrated at the first lead where inflorescence characters are used, as the user will most likely be confronted with a non-flowering specimen. In the same key at lead 8, the pair of contrasting statements are not contrasting enough, viz:

"sheaths usually covered with dark hairs, blades usually erect
..... *Bambusa*

"sheaths usually covered with white or light brown to dark brown hairs, blades spreading or deflexed..... 9."

In practise it may be difficult to differentiate between "dark hairs" and "dark brown hairs." Although the clum sheath blades are usually erect in Bambusa, they can, as in B. blumeana, be "erect first, then spreading..." (pg. 11), as in Fig. 1, where the blade of B. blumeana is shown to be deflexed.

There comments do not detract from the fact that this is a well produced, attractive and valuable documentation of all the bamboos of Sabah; the first such account to be written. The author, the Forestry department of Sabah and the editor have made a very useful contribution to an important resource

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