

Book Review: J. H. Beaman and P. J. Edwards. 2007. **Ferns of Kinabalu, an Introduction.** Natural History Publications (Borneo). 198 pp. ISBN: 983-812-122-3. Price: Sing \$53.

Mt. Kinabalu in Sabah State of Malaysia is a paradise of plant diversity. In recent years, there have been many introductory pictorial guidebooks published for various groups of plants grown on this highest mountain in the Asian tropic. To my knowledge, this seems to be the first one on the fern diversity.

This beautifully executed book with vividly coloured photo plates of the more commonly seen fern species around the Kinabalu Nature Park Headquarter and the several popular trails from 600 to 2,800 m, is very well written by J. H. Beaman and P. J. Edwards, two knowledgeable botanists who have studied the flowering plant and fern floras of Mt. Kinabalu for a number of decades.

The book starts aptly with a succinct introduction describing the life cycle of fern, a discussion of the latest system of classification of ferns based on the molecular phylogeny, and a brief summary of the fern distribution in the region from the point of view of the Mt Kinabalu flora.

More than a hundred pages of coloured photos and illustrative line drawings, with short description for each of the species chosen to represent 29 recognized families arranged in alphabetical order, follow the Introduction. And the book ends with a useful and updated checklist of all known ferns from Mt Kinabalu, a Glossary, the Acknowledgements and an Index to the Scientific Names.

What is new in phylogenetic interpretation published in this guidebook is the inclusion of *Psilotum* and *Equisetum* in the ferns, and not the traditional fern allied plant group. For *Equisetum*, the authors reported that the recent DNA evidence indicated a close relationship to the *Marattia* ferns. Eight endemic Bornean ferns are shown in very nicely reproduced photos, namely *Aglaomorpha brooksii* Copel., *Alsophila ramispina* Hook., *Elaphoglossum heterolepium* Alderw., *Grammitis reinwardtioides* Copel., *Loxogramme ensifrons* Alderw., *Mesophlebion dulitense* Holttum, *Selliguea murudensis* (C. Chr.) Parris, and *Sphaeropteris capitata* (Copel.) R.M. Tryon. Likewise, five Mt. Kinabalu endemic fern, *Dicranopteris clemensiae* Holttum, *Diplazium atosquamosum* (Copel.) C. Chr., *D. poiense* C. Chr., *Odontosoria veitchii* (Baker) Parris and *Sphaerostephanos lithophyllus* (Copel.) Holttum, are included with well taken closed up photos showing also the fertile fronds.

Other nomenclatural and taxonomical novelties encountered in this book are the use of *Odontosoria* for the genus *Sphenomeris*. The split genera in the family Cyatheaceae, Hymenophyllaceae, Thelypteridaceae

and Grammitidaceae are recognized, while the recently proposed new genera of Vittariaceae and the Polypodiaceous genera of *Phymatorus* (= *Microsorium*) and *Crypsinus* (= *Selliguea*) are not accepted. *Diplazium* and *Athyrium* are placed in the family Woodsiaceae.

Although the book illustrated only 100 taxa of common ferns seen on Mt. Kinabalu out of the 590 known taxa of the mountain fern flora, the book is a useful guide to have while visiting the mountain either on an excursion at leisure or on a more seriously planned botanical exploration visit. Since the majority of the species are widespread in the region, sure enough, the book can also serve as a good reference, used with monographs and floristic publications, in the identification of the ferns in tropical SE Asia. The authors and the publisher are to be thanked for producing this timely and useful pictorial guide to the Kinabalu ferns.

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