

Book Review

HANDBOOKS OF THE FLORA OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA. Volume II. Edited by E. E. Henty, Senior Botanist, Office of Forests. Melbourne University Press (on behalf of the Government of Papua New Guinea) Pp. x + 276, text figures 62, 1 fold-out map, 1981. ISBN 0 522 84204. 6. Recommended retail price: A\$ 30.00.

This volume, the second in a new series (of which the first was edited by J.S. Womersley) continues the pattern of the first volume. Identical in size and only 2 pages shorter, attractively cloth-bound in green, and with a white dust-jacket with black print and a plant drawing in green (each drawing unique to a volume), the "Handbooks" series is both practical and good-looking. Taxonomic treatments of various families as they occur in Papua New Guinea are included, in alphabetical order within each volume, in no particular systematic order, but rather in the practical order of publication as and when research is completed. In volume 11, six authors contribute treatments of 14 families, these being BIXACEAE, BOMBACACEAE, COCHLOSPERMACEAE, HAMAMELIDACEAE, HERNANDIACEAE, and STYRACACEAE, by J.R. Croft; CHENOPODIACEAE by A. Kanis; CORIARIACEAE by B. J. Conn; DAPHNIPHYLLACEAE, JUGLANDACEAE, STACKHOUSIACEAE, and STAPHYLAEACEAE by W. R. Barker; and ELAEOCARPACEAE by M.J.E. Coode; and LORANTHACEAE by B.A. Barlow. The treatments vary greatly in length, that of the Elaeocarpaceae by Coode being about 150 pages long, i.e. over half the length of the book. The Loranthaceae, by Barlow, is a treatment of 48 pages and the second in length in the volume. Several of the treatments therefore are extremely short, treating one or only a few species. However, the formats are identical. A considerable part of the value of the book is the relative abundance and generally high quality of the illustrations, which are by several artists, including Faye Owner, Terry Nolan, S. Hitingnuc, Taikika Iwagu, and Bore Doviong. The absence of photographs, however, seems odd; the line-drawings are the best presentation of botanical detail, but the inclusion of some habit/habitat photos would have enhanced the utility of the book.

The treatment of Elaeocarpaceae is the "main course" and in it five genera are revised for Papua New Guinea: *Sloanea*, *Dubouzetia*, *Sericolea*, *Aceratium*, and *Elaeocarpus*. In *Aceratium*, there are 12 species; in *Dubouzetia*, 4; (possibly a 5th, undescribed, exists also); in *Elaeocarpus*, 69 species, plus 8 more mentioned but unnamed and not yet described (as well as a plethora of unknowable names based on type materials destroyed in the Berlin herbarium during World War II); *Sericolea*, 9, plus 2 unnamed but described species; *Sloanea*, 18 species. Thus there are at least 102 species, as well as those unnamed which would total another eleven, giving a grand total of 113 species. This is a thorough treatment (the outcome of long study by Coode, both in Papua New Guinea and later at Kew). It should be noted that a revision of *Sericolea* by M.M.J. van Balgooy of Leiden has recently appeared (*Blumea* 28: 103-141, 1982). In this work, van Balgooy supplements

Coode's treatment with the addition of two new species (one of this is the "Species A" of Coode, the other being the E. Highlands (Mt. Piora) specimen referred tentatively to *S. ridleyana* (Wernham) Schlechter by Coode. Balgooy also describes some other subspecies, and in a few minor ways further differs from Coode's treatment.

Barlow's treatment of Loranthaceae is the other larger component of the volume, with 12 genera and 55 genera and 55 species. The bulk of the species (27) belong to one genus, *Amyema*.

The volume includes an Appendix, listing ("Census") of the families of Flowering Plants and Gymnosperms known in Papua New Guinea. There are 210 families listed. There is good index to both scientific and vernacular names.

For each species text material is organized under several headings: name and nomenclature; description; field characters; distribution; ecology; and additional notes.

In general the standards displayed in the book are high, including the botanical research and the physical characters of the volume itself.

Undoubtedly it will play a useful role in Papua New Guinea, a developing country with a vast array of plant resources but which are often very poorly known, and with many insufficiently explored regions.

It can be expected that many of the species which occur in Papua New Guinea will also occur in West Irian, as the dividing line between these two political entities is entirely artificial. In addition, many Papua New Guinea species occur to the East in the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomon Islands; indeed, the former area is included in the flora (as it is politically).

The Handbooks series is a cooperative effort, well edited, and we look forward to further volumes in the series.

B.C. STONE

Department of Botany
University of Malaya
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia