

BOOK REVIEWS

"INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF FORESTRY RESEARCH" Volume I, edited by John A. Romberger and Peitsa Mikola, 1964. Academic Press, New York and London. 404 pages.

For some time now, members of various scientific disciplines have been trying to seek efficient ways of indexing or summarizing the vast volume of literature that is being published each in their chosen subject. In these days when time is so valuable, some ready reference to the literature is essential for research workers and teachers in particular. Forestry research is no exception.

Here is the first in a series of review volumes written primarily to help research workers, teachers, advanced students, administrators, economists and forest managers to determine research progress in forestry and forest science by reference to selected texts. Remember that it is a review only and does not present any new work.

The book is presented in the form of seven articles, each about a major forestry subject. The editors have asked one or two well-known research workers to contribute each of the articles and they have been assisted by an advisory board of 13 members, one of whom is Dr S. D. Richardson. In this way, the editors have attempted to obtain a full coverage of the literature and research done under the various subject headings. Because of the magnitude of the work to be covered there will naturally be many omissions, although too many would reduce the value of the reviews.

Article 1 deals with the history of forestry science, with particular reference to Europe. It is of value to historians.

Article 2 is about forest growth on peat soils. Again, it deals primarily with European conditions and research work.

Article 3 covers the determination of nutrient requirements of forest stands. Here is the first reference to work in the southern hemisphere; New Zealand gains a mention too.

Article 4 deals with the evaluation of forest site productivity. It compares the literature and discusses the best units for measuring productivity. The most popular unit is height on age. This article will probably be of greatest interest to the practising forester.

Article 5 discusses research into the properties, etc., of bark. It is surprising how much work has been done on bark when most people consider this part of the tree a waste product.

Article 6 covers maturation, storage and germination of forest tree seeds. It covers the subject in great detail but contains many references of practical interest.

Article 7 is on the harmonious control of forest insects. This introduces a new concept, to me anyway, in insect control and takes a very moderate view. It means that all known methods are used and it ensures that control techniques are also compatible with the concept of multiple-use forestry. It develops the idea that

a stable community is the most resistant to any type of attack and therefore everything should be done to promote stability.

The book is very well produced and indexed, ensuring easy reference. Each article concludes with several pages of bibliography which should enable the investigator to proceed to further references if required.

It would appear that the authors of each article have relied heavily on their own experience and personal contacts. This is perhaps understandable when considering the magnitude of the task they undertook, but it detracts from the value of a review that professes to cover all the recent research work in a particular subject. It is also a pity that more closely related subjects were not dealt with in the one volume; the physiology of bark is a long way from forest growth in peat soils.

The remaining volumes, when published, will complete a very valuable reference. They should be included on the library shelves of every forest research centre and university forest school.

A. W. GRAYBURN

"FANTASTIC TREES" by Edwin A. Menninger. 304 pp., 238 plates. The Viking Press, New York, 1967. Price \$8.95.

Fantastic Trees is not a textbook in any sense of the word, but a book of miscellaneous information about biologically curious, exotic or interesting trees in fact and in legend.

For a forester, this book is essentially about "other trees".

Mr Menninger says in his Introduction: "Perhaps this volume should be considered a gawker's handbook, with several hundred trees vying for attention, many of them enmeshed in myths and mysteries that are hard to believe or to understand".

A vast amount of information has been culled, which, though not profound, is interesting, informative and particularly readable. The illustrations are first class and each chapter is enhanced with bibliographical notes indicating sources.

The anthropocentric approach may irritate some readers, but the classification does bring together trees with similar characteristics, although they often make strange bedfellows. By and large, the book is excellently done within the space available and is the first time the information has been collected into one volume.

Some minor errors are apparent in the text, but these will surely be corrected in a future edition. Some occur in comment on New Zealand trees which have "honourable mention".

Fantastic Trees is good light reading and a welcome change from a too heavy diet of technical works.

I. W. DAVEY