

I took considerable pleasure in this book, but also found considerable pain in the obvious message that this is where we, the New Zealand forest industry, should be, and could have been had we been more rational in our research and management emphases. Because, with our growth capacity and investment emphasis on silviculture, the sane and dispassionate use of techniques and data demonstrated to be available and, in most cases, easily translatable to New Zealand conditions, would pay off quickly. It is to be hoped the exercise of the Forestry Development Conference, which has triggered off wider interest in these fields, will provide the continuing impetus required to man and service adequately a planning unit to examine the complex questions given some airing by the authors of *Forest Planning*. To sum up, I think Shakespeare (1599) summarizes my thoughts on this book succinctly in the following quotation:

Benedict: You take pleasure then in the message?

Beatrice: Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point and choke a daw withal.

The quotation is, paradoxically enough, from *Much Ado About Nothing*.

P. F. OLSEN

FIELD GUIDE TO THE ALPINE PLANTS OF NEW ZEALAND, by J. T. Salmon. 1968. A. H. & A. W. Reed, Wellington. 327 pp. Price \$5.60.

"Trust not authority; pay no heed to the books, but go to the plants themselves." With the development of colour photography, this gap between the books and the living plants, though it still exists and always will, is narrowing. The quotation above comes from Dr Cockayne forty years ago, as advice given him still earlier in his botanical career. From his day onward the study of plants in their natural situation, "ecology", has become a peculiarly New Zealand interest and distinction. Appropriately, Dr Salmon adopted an ecological framework for his earlier publication, *New Zealand Plants and Flowers in Colour*, and this has proved an admirable form for casual reference, although the sheer size of that volume has limited its use, at best, to the roadhead. The book now under consideration, with its handy format for use in the field, is essentially a more detailed development of the alpine portion of that book.

The species are assembled according to the main half-dozen situations in which they grow. Where a number of species are closely related (as for instance koromikos, spaniards and vegetable sheep), comparison of similar forms is made easier by bringing them together within the appropriate sections in subdivisions, of which there are eight in all.

Some 400 species are illustrated in colour, representing a selection of perhaps three-quarters of the total alpine flora. People with special interests may note omissions, but on a general survey the completeness of the coverage is a noteworthy achievement, especially in view of the distances in-

volved and the remoteness of some of the locations. Succinct descriptions appear on the same opening as the illustration, an admirable convenience in the field, and these give geographical and altitudinal ranges, flowering dates and some indications of size, while the photographs themselves give the locality and month of taking, though no indication of scale. There are in addition 31 more general views of characteristic communities, illustrating ecological patterns, and ten pages of a brief general survey of mountain vegetation and its functions.

The maps at the beginning show what a wide range of localities Dr Salmon has had to visit in both islands in order to get pictures under suitable conditions of specimens in full flower or ripe fruit. The quality of most of the photos, and in particular those of magnified detail, is excellent; but, as in other work printed in Japan, colour renderings are occasionally quite odd — in this instance somewhere about one out of twelve, and markedly where scarlets or bright blues have been exaggerated at the expense of adjacent colours.

In one respect the book fails to achieve its purpose, that of christening alpine plants with popular names. The man who breeds an exhibition rose has every right to name it according to his fancy, for it is in a sense his creation. A wild plant is no-one's property. To invent a "popular" name for such is on a par with "inventing" a tradition — only a poet would have a hope of pulling it off, and Dr Salmon's choice of names hardly puts him in that category. Elongated names such as the "Curved-leaf Grass Tree" or the "Small-leaf Wet Rock Hebe" are hardly effective alternatives to "red inaka" or *Parahebe lyalli*. "Matipo", even if a corruption, is far too well established in common usage for "kohuhu" to avoid having a pedantic flavour; while to call three matipos in sequence "mapou", "kohuhu" and *Pittosporum*, far from making a distinction, merely introduces a meaningless mystification.

All this is unnecessary. There is no *tapu* on scientific names; quite uncultured gardening types may be heard nattering glibly about *Agapanthus* and *Mesembryanthemum*, while foresters specialize in sensible short-cuts, such as radiata pine. In the same way matagouri, *Pachystegia*, ball koromiko and "Hulkeana" are moving into common speech.

This is not the place to call attention to such minor blemishes as spelling errors, for these are infrequent and for the most part not of a nature to confuse the reader. These is, however, one clear mis-identification. Plates 67 and 68 show the mountain horopito, *Pseudowintera colorata*, with its unmistakable blotched upper- and blue-glaucous under-surface; while Plate 69 shows the glossy green leaf surface and red fruits of horopito, *P. axillaris*, all three being given the latter title. The two preceding plates, 64 and 65, look odd and do not lend themselves to precise identification with either species.

With this handbook one can now lay the image alongside the actual plant with a fair prospect of instant recognition.

N. L. ELDER