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Folklore and Symbolism of Flowers, Plants and Trees. Ernst and Johanna Lehner. 128 pp. illus. Tudor Publishing Co., New York, 1960. \$4.75.

The authors of this book are famous collectors of pictorial symbols and are enthusiastic amateur botanists. This, coupled with their clear and concise, yet fascinating style of writing has made it possible for them to put out a volume which will hold the reader from beginning to end. The amount of quaint and seldom cited information on the religious, magical, and legendary significance of symbolism and folklore surrounding plants is astonishing. Many books have been written on this subject, but I know of none that can match this in combining utility and entertainment.

The book is organized according to the following sections: "Introduction"; "Sacred Plants"; "Flower Lore and Legend"; "Strange and Wondrous Plants"; "Flower Calendar"; and "Language of Flowers." Of particular interest are many of the "sacred plants"—some mythical, some real—such as the tree of life, tree of knowledge, yggdrasil, fig tree, oak, soma, resurrection flower, and others. The section on lore and legend is a veritable compendium of beliefs held in the past about some of the economic plants still of importance to us. The remarks on the flower calendar bring out the interesting ways in which man has used plants to keep track of seasons and of activities, such as sowing and harvesting, governed by the seasons.

As we might expect from collectors of pictorial symbols, the illustrations form the major and most valuable part of the book. They include curious and ancient drawings of the plants themselves as well as unusual representations of uses of and beliefs about the species in question. The choice of these more than 200 illustrations, drawn from sources from all parts of the world, is in itself a masterly achievement.

The usefulness of *Folklore and Symbolism of Flowers, Plants and Trees* will be somewhat limited to the technical and practical botanist, but it should be in the library of anyone interested in the philosophical part which plants have played in the evolution of man and his society. The book may also be highly recommended as a reliable source of information to those interested in horticultural

and other aesthetic aspects of the study of plants. As the Lehnners state: "In the mind of these primitive creatures [early man], they [plants] become the exponents of some unseen higher spirit who provided mankind with feast and famine. No wonder that man endowed these plants with sacred properties and dedicated providential and supernatural powers to them." Here, it seems to me, we get quite close to the heart of man's relation to his useful plants and, therefore, to the very throbbing pulse of what laid the earliest foundations of our science of economic botany.

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Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of the Southwest. Robert A. Vines. 1104 pp. illus. University of Texas Press, Austin, 1960. \$25.

This massive tome—it weighs 6½ pounds and measures 12 by 8 by 2 inches—"represents an effort to describe and illustrate the native and naturalized woody plants of the southwestern United States," which, as curiously defined by Mr. Vines, are Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The region covered is a vast one, accounting for about 18% of the total area of the 48 contiguous states. It includes such diverse vegetation types as alpine tundra and desert grassland of New Mexico, tall grass prairie of Texas, southern river bottom forest of Arkansas and Louisiana, and the outliers of the Caribbean subtropical flora along the Gulf of Mexico. Since 1956 Mr. Vines has been science supervisor for the Spring Branch Independent School District of Houston. For the prior 15 years he was director of the Houston Museum of Natural History. To the study of woody plants of the "southwest" he has devoted some 25 years, during which time he has travelled over 250,000 miles in the course of field work. His *Native East Texas Trees* appeared in 1953.

The 1231 species included in *Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of the Southwest* are grouped into 102 chapters, each devoted to one plant family. The families are arranged according to the Engler system; the genera are arranged alphabetically under the family; species are arranged phylogenetically