



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN



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of the new breed, who rarely venture out of their laboratories to encounter natural plant phenomena, will put this book on their shelves for occasional inspirational reading to remind them of other basic problems in biology as exciting and yet intractable as, for example, the chemistry of plant juice. Further, although again it declares no pretensions in this direction, the book clearly would provide an admirable accompaniment to an introductory undergraduate course in plant geography. (I am assuming rather blandly that plant geography is still presented in universities.)

Over 200 monochromatic photographs of vegetation and of individual plants make this one of the most lavishly illustrated books in the field. The photographs have been chosen with care, and they add greatly to the enjoyment as well as to the usefulness of the book. On the other hand, the authors have been somewhat parsimonious with line illustrations; it is probable that a few carefully selected plant distribution maps would have helped clarify certain matters.

This is a rich delightful book that provides the reader, as all good books should, with a repository of enduring rewarding experiences.

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Les Plantes Médicinales. Y. Trouard Riolle. 322 pp. illus. Flammarion, Paris, 1964. F 19.00.

We have here another book on medicinal plants for the amateur and herb-lover. As part of an encyclopedia collection called *La Terre*, it treats of the gathering, cultivation, and therapeutic use of many common European plants—plants known generally to the ordinary citizen. Little new material is presented—indeed, no claim is made that novel information is offered. Unusual in this type of book, the author has advised those intending to treat themselves with herbs to submit to a medical examination since “what is good for one person may be fatal for another.”

The book is well written for its purpose, and the information is trustworthy. The tone of the writing happily lacks the mis-

sionary zeal usually found in works of the herb enthusiasts. The book will be welcomed by many who find the material brought up-to-date and presented in a matter-of-fact style. Although I presume that pharmaceutical and medical scientists will wax enthusiastic over it, there are few, I trust, who will find much in the book to condemn.

The plants are taken up according to their supposed medicinal value as “antispasmodics,” “diuretics,” “vermifuges,” “depurgatives,” etc. The second part of the book deals with the procurement of medicinal plants, giving special attention to their cultivation in France. There are a short bibliography, naturally almost wholly in French; a good index to common and scientific names of plants; and an extremely abbreviated list and definition of technical medical terms. The line drawings of plants are crude in the extreme; without much trouble, they could have been greatly improved.

The value of this book lies principally in whatever use it may have to the popular audience in France—and this is precisely the purpose for which it was written.

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Our Plant Resources. Plants and Their Economic Importance. Frederick L. Fitzpatrick. 173 pp. illus. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1964. Paper, \$1.28; cloth, \$2.50.

An important contribution towards the teaching of economic botany in secondary schools has appeared. There is no claim that this book is meant for any other audience. The author is Professor of Natural Sciences and Chairman of the Department of the Teaching of Natural Sciences at Columbia University Teachers College. For a book directed towards this audience—and certainly we must interest pre-college students in, above all things, economic botany—I consider the contents and style more than adequate.

In a recent review, Fitzpatrick's book was characterized as dull and full of errors. There are a number of errors of statement

and some typographical errors, but in view of the contribution as a whole, they seem, at least to me as a teacher of economic botany on the university level, trivial and worth overlooking instead of elaborating in detail (and, in so doing, perpetrating, in the review, other errors!) and magnifying out of all proportion. I found the style readable (without being exciting) and capable of sustaining the reader's interest, so I could hardly term it dull.

While we must applaud Fitzpatrick for this effort, we might wish that he had offered a stronger bibliography than the rather poorly chosen one of only 15 titles. The technical glossary is likewise inadequate. One thoroughly immersed in economic botany might wonder at the unusual and often inexplicable method of grouping categories of useful plants. Why, for example, are fibres, oils, tobacco, and rubber arranged together in one chapter? I do not intend, however, to belabor these criticisms for fear that their insignificance be amplified and distorted. *Our Plant Resources* is a good book. It never purports to be a manual of economic botany, for the author himself has written that "in general, the more important items have been emphasized, for it is impossible to include in these pages references to all plant materials that men use or have used." I would venture to say that many a high school teacher of biology will be thankful for such a readable, elementary, and reasonably priced introduction to economic botany.

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Phantastica, Narcotics and Stimulating Drugs.

Their Use and Abuse. Louis Lewin. New ed., with foreword by Bo Holmstedt. 335 pp. illus. E. P. Dutton, New York, 1964. \$5.95.

One of the most spectacular fields of economic botany and one which has enjoyed, during the past quarter century, a most dazzling advance is the study of plant narcotics employed in primitive societies. Amongst the most widely attractive of these narcotics are the hallucinogens which, in very recent years, have stirred the interest and fired the imaginations of people in

many fields—ranging from the "beatnik" and those in the fringe "sciences" or pseudo-sciences to well qualified and critical investigators in several scientific disciplines, in sociology and psychology, and even in theological philosophy. We may say, almost without fear of contradiction, that all of this was started by that most remarkable and versatile scientist and writer, Louis Lewin. The publication in German of his *Phantastica—Die Betäubenden und Erregenden Genussmittel* can be signalled as the real beginning of the stir of man's interest in the multidisciplinary investigation of the narcotics of primitive man, even though Lewin did not confine himself to primitive man but discussed the use and abuse of morphine, alcohol, coffee, cocaine, and many other "drugs" in civilized society. This book was published in English in 1931. The English version—as well as the German—has become a collectors' item, virtually unobtainable, especially during the past 15 years when interest in these strange substances has increased so rapidly. In fact, copies of the English version have systematically disappeared from several libraries in one of our American universities.

We must, therefore, welcome the publication of this new English edition, an exact copy of the former English version but with a very instructive and appreciative foreword on Lewin—his contributions, his fame, and his teaching and lecturing methods—by Professor Bo Holmstedt of the Karolinska Institutet of Stockholm. It is, in fact, due to Holmstedt's pressure that this new edition was published. Lewin is so well known, so basic, so modern, so perceptive, and so forward looking that it would be not only superfluous but naively presumptuous of me to "review" the book. I must emphasize, nonetheless, that true scientific progress in our varied studies of those most fascinating of the narcotics which Lewin called "phantastica" and which we now refer to as "hallucinogens" or "psychotomimetics" will be most handsomely encouraged by the easy and inexpensive availability of the book that did so much to start it all.

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