



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN



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**The Genus *Tamarix*.** Bernard R. Baum. 209 pp. illus. The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem, 1978. \$25.00.

In *The Genus Tamarix*, Bernard R. Baum has produced an excellent account of an important and widespread genus of plants. Taxonomically, these are a difficult group to work with, due to the general lack of distinguishing external features. For proper determination, it is necessary to examine the rather small flowers. In his key, Baum uses the configuration of the disk of the androecium (whether hololophic, paralophic, or synlophic) as a major criterion for separation of species. Other criteria apart from the flowers are the occurrence of papillae on the young branches and inflorescence rachis and the shape of the small, scale-like leaves.

Species of *Tamarix* are varied in utility. They can be used for windbreaks, dune stabilization, ornamental hedges, and reforestation efforts, all in desert areas. In addition, one interesting use is as "manna." It is noted that the "manna" mentioned in the Bible was probably the sweet exudate of insects living on this genus. Bedouins still collect and use this "manna" today.

Each species discussed in this work is accompanied by drawings of important parts (e.g., flower, leaf, and twig sections), botanical description, list of specimens studied, phenological and habitat data, and distribution map. The monograph accepts 54 species out of a total of about 200 published binomials. Baum also considers evolution within the group and describes two new species, *Tamarix bengalensis* and *T. dalmatica*.

*The Genus Tamarix* is a fine reference work on a taxonomically difficult group of plants.

MICHAEL J. BALICK, THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN, BRONX, NY 10458

**Gather Ye Wild Things: A Forager's Year.** Susan Tyler Hitchcock. 182 pp. illus. Harper and Row, New York, 1980. \$10.95.

A pleasant, readable, fascinating book for an audience interested in what our North American landscape offers, Hitchcock's *Gather Ye Wild Things* will not fail to be a winner amongst the too-many "pot-boilers" devoted to "living off the land." For this charming book is full of interesting and odd bits of folklore and scientific fact skilfully interwoven into a relaxed, almost musical presentation. The reading is tremendously enhanced by the many line drawings of Gail B. McIntosh.

In the book's 182 pages, the plants are arranged according to their season for gathering: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The book is essentially a collection of 52 essays, one for each week of the twelvemonth.

The book is of high quality, a restful off-white; the binding is sturdy; and the type is very readable. The price seems reasonable for the pleasure that the volume will give to many devotees of a return to the use of many of the neglected plants of our own wild flora.

RICHARD EVANS SCHULTES, BOTANICAL MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

**Amber: The Golden Gem of the Ages.** Patty C. Rice. 289 pp. illus. Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1978. \$26.95.

Amber has long fascinated man—both primitive and modern—but there have been few popular or scientific treatises on this most mysterious gem, which is not a mineral but fossilized resin of plants. If only for this reason, Rice's authoritative, inclusive, and exhaustive book is welcome.

Rice has a Ph.D. in education, but her undergraduate training in science, her years of study and collection of amber, and her dominance of an extraordinarily wide range of