

FLORIDA WILD FLOWERS AND ROADSIDE PLANTS. By C. Ritchie Bell and Bryan J. Taylor. Laurel Hill Press, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982. xxi+308p. \$18.50.

For years I have kept an eye peeled for a comprehensive book on the flora of Florida. **Florida Wild Flowers and Roadside Plants** is a selection of 500 color plates, with descriptions, of native and naturalized plants found throughout Florida. An outstanding advance toward filling the gaps on the flora of Florida, and commendable effort by the authors: Richie Bell, a botanist from North Carolina and Bryan Taylor, photographer, naturalist and native Floridian.

The introduction is sufficiently detailed without becoming herculean. It quickly reviews Florida's floristic history, nomenclature, habitats, geographic distribution, and a guide on how to use the key character summary code.

The text illustrates 500 species representing 137 plant families. An additional 215 species are mentioned; thus approximately one fifth of Florida's estimated 3,500 native and naturalized plant species are included. Common names as well as scientific names are given for each species along with an often breathtaking photograph, a straightforward and informative text, and a key character summary code. The code is a noteworthy feature packed with additional information on plant habit, leaf and flower characteristics, further references, season of bloom, and distribution in Florida. Use of the code will require reviewing the introduction and referring to the inside and back covers where the code is illustrated.

To make the field guide as useful as possible to all who might be interested in Florida's varied plant life, easy to use identification keys based on easily observed plant characteristics are included. A better-than-average glossary is provided covering all botanical terms found in the text.

Outstanding merits of the book include its portable size (6" x 9"), excellent color reproduction, fine balance of text and photographs, the key character codes, cross referencing the glossary with examples in the text, identification keys that can be used without the aid of hand lens or microscope and the inclusion of representative plants from all of Florida.

I, personally, do not care for an index that lists items by entry number rather than page number, which this

book does. The fact that the authors are not Florida residents is sometimes recognized in their choice of common names and representative species, such as red cedar instead of the more widely distributed Florida species, southern red cedar (*Juniperus silicicola*), and their indications of frequency of occurrence. The authors list loblolly bay (*Gordonia lasianthus*) as infrequent when, in reality, it is a very common species throughout Florida. An effort is made to list additional species that occur in Florida of a represented genus; however, this is often incomplete and sometimes nonexistent, which could be misleading to the lay person.

The problems mentioned above detract little from the overall high quality of the book. **Florida Wild Flowers and Roadside Plants** is a beautiful cocktail table addition and valuable resource in the library. It will doubtless proceed through edition after edition, each more comprehensive than the last. Carol S. Lotspeich (**Florida Wildflowers and Roadside Plants** will be available for purchase at the FNPS Conference in Naples, April 22 - 24 for \$17.50. It can also be purchased from FNPS, 935 Orange Ave., Winter Park 32789 for \$18.50 which includes postage.)

The Biology of Trees Native to Tropical Florida, P.B. Tomlinson. pp. v + 480 (including 166 pages of black-and-white illustrations by Priscilla Fawcett

The flora of South Florida is, in part, an extension of the rich tropical flora of the adjacent Caribbean and Bahamas. Tropical forest vegetation is represented by mangrove swamps, rain forest in the form of "hammock" communities, and a distinctive kind of pineland.

This tree flora produces one of the most distinctive tree regions of the continental United States, but has never received any extensive biological description. This book aims to remedy this deficiency and describes these native and a number of common introduced trees, largely by extensive illustration, emphasizing dynamic features of growth, reproduction and dispersal.

(P.B. Tomlinson is Professor of Botany at Harvard University.)

\$22.50 per copy, postpaid, from the author, Harvard Forest, Petersham, Massachusetts 01366. Also available at Fairchild Tropical Garden Bookstore, and in quantities at discount.