

BOOK REVIEW

FLORE DES MASCAREIGNES, LA REUNION, MAURICE (MAURITIUS), RODRIGUES. PTERIDOPHYTES, 1.PSILOTACEES A 26. MARSILEACEES. Published by Institut de Recherché pour le Developpement, Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute and Royal Botanic Gardens (Kew), Paris 2008. *Pteridophytes* by F. Badre. Pp. 452, 69 full page black and white diagnostic plates, 4 pp. col. Plates. 240 x 170 mm. Available from RBG Kew, UK price unspecified but European price is 40 euro. ISBN: 978-2-7099-1647-9.

Floras of far off tropical islands are always interesting but given that the BPS held a full excursion to La Reunion only two years ago this flora is one of the most welcome new publications in recent years. How unfortunate it could not have been published three years earlier!

Floras of these islands seem to be few and far between. Apart from J. G. Baker, *Flora of Mauritius and Seychelles: Description of flowering plants and ferns of those islands*, 1877, and Jacob de Cordemoy, *Flore de l'isle de La Reunion. Fascicule 1: Cryptogames vasculaires*, 1891, no complete fern catalogues seem to have been published. Although about 25% of the fern flora is endemic to the three islands many of the remaining taxa occur in Madagascar where floras by Tardieu-Blot and others give good coverage. The current volume would have been improved by a full history of fern research on the islands and a full fern bibliography. For a good review of all botanical research over the three islands see *Botanical History of the Mascarene Islands* by Wendy Strahm in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, Vol.13, Part 4, November 1996, pp. 217-228.

The format here is concise with a very brief introduction on the classification of ferns, a key to families, then under each family a key to genera with species keys under each genus. In the body of the book the genera follow a standard systematic order with the lycophytes included at the front. There is a glossary at the end and finally a very comprehensive 38 page index. The text is in French throughout.

Each species entry gives full synonymy with authors, first publication, full description, plate number and page (if illustrated) and full distribution on the three islands. The authorship of each family varies. F. Badre is the major author but here and there specialist authors have written chapters. For example, the treatment of the *Cyatheaceae* by T. Janssen is very comprehensive, much of it based on his recent research, as is the treatment of *Lomariopsidaceae* by D. Lorence and G. Rouhan. Other major contributors include the late Prof. Holttum, the late M.-L. Tardieu-Blot (proof of the long gestation period of this volume) and J. P. Roux.

Happily I can find no discrepancies between the full species list given here and that prepared by Edmond Grangaud for the BPS excursion. I can only conclude that this volume is an accurate, concise and very welcome addition to the world's fern floras.

This volume is part of a multi-volume set covering the complete flora of these islands; so far 25 parts have been published since the first part appeared in 1976. Currently still in production are volumes on Cyperaceae, Orchidaceae and Gramineae.

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