Bookreview

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FLORA OF THE BRITISH ISLES. SECOND EDITION.

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1962 [reprint 1985]; 1269 p., 87 Figs. Price (paperback) £ 19.95

The second edition of the well-known basic manual on the flora of the British Isles edited in 1962 has now been issued by the above publishing house. With regard to its critical approach, very careful elaboration and quantity of information, the book was once classed with the best flora manuals of this type and distinguished as an example of such publications (see the Czech review by the present reviewer in *Preslia* 35: 179–180, 1963). The first edition of this book was published in 1951 and after eleven years a fully changed and substantially far more enlarged second edition was published, which now after a further 23 years has been reprinted without any change (also not mentioning the publication year of this reprint and not giving any introductory words). In the meantime, many important books have been published such as "Atlas of the British Flora" (and its "Critical supplement"), five volumes of "Flora Europaea" (the edition of which was led by Prof. TUTIN, the only one of the three authors of the British flora manual under review to be still with us), several manuals on the flora of West Europe (having the closest relation to the British flora) and many special publications on taxonomy, nomenclature and chorology. All this represents an amount of new data which should be employed by this flora manual. However, this has not happened, and the book has been published at the level of our knowledge in 1962. Though it does not seem that the book has lost very much of its high standard during this time, a mere reprint is certainly not the best solution. If it was not possible for various (especially financial) reasons to incorporate corrections directly into the text of the manual, a list of important corrections should have been added, directing the user's attention to at least some necessary changes in the book.

Some brief remarks may be mentioned here: use of a very broad (even unnatural) circumscription of some genera (*Anemone* — incl. *Hepatica*, *Pulsatilla*; *Corydalis*; *Gnaphalium*; *Lycopodium*; *Polygonum*; *Sedum*); omission of important changes in certain taxonomic groups (*Antirrhinum*, *Euphorbia*, *Galeobdolon*, *Montia*, incl. *Claytonia* p. p., *Sisyrinchium*; *Aphanes microcarpa* agg., *Atriplex "hastata"* agg., *Dryopteris borreeri* agg., *Juncus bufonius* agg., *Lotus uliginosus* agg. etc.); important changes in names of genera, species and subspecies (*Chamaenerion*, *Dactylorchis*, *Kohtrauschia*, *Thelycrania*, *Zerna*; *Athyrium alpestre*, *Carex filiformis*, *Dryopteris borreeri*, *Epilobium adenocaulon*, *Filago apiculata*, *F. germanica*, *F. spathulata*, *Leontodon taraxacoides*, *Ophrys fuciflora*, *Phragmites australis*, *Plantago indica*; *Juniperus communis* subsp. *nana* etc.); changes and corrections in the authorship of some species names (*Equisetum variegatum*, *Helictotrichon pratense*, *Lycopodium issleri*, *Petroselinum crispum* etc.). In the meantime several species have certainly been found as new for the flora of the British Isles. New knowledge on the distribution of plants in the British Isles and on their total distribution areas as well as on the number of species in some genera has appeared; determination of taxa in some groups has been substantially improved etc. All this could be given in an appended list of corrections. A disadvantage of this reprint is the fact that earlier classifications and names are here renewed and their use can thus be continued in new literature, which may not contribute to a certain unification in taxonomy and nomenclature. The present reviewer sees this as the greatest disadvantage of the publication of this uncorrected reprint of a work which itself has not lost much of its importance (and therefore could be reprinted in this form). However, complemented with a Correction list the present reprint would be perfectly substantiated.

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