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BOOK REVIEW

El Bosque Mesófilo de Montaña de Tamaulipas. By H. Puig and R. Bracho. Instituto de Ecología, Depto. de Publicaciones, Apdo. Postal 18-845, Deleg. Miguel Hidalgo, México, D.F. 11800, Mexico. ISBN 968-7213-07-8. 1987. 186 pp. \$30 (cloth).

Along the Sierra Madre Oriental of eastern Mexico and south into Guatemala is a narrow zone of “bosque mesophilo” or temperate cloud forest which has held an especial fascination for botanists from the eastern United States. The coastal plain to the east has tropical or subtropical forest or thorn forest while the high plateaus to the west are arid. This mid-altitude zone supports a forest of familiar genera: *Quercus*, *Pinus*, *Magnolia*, *Liquidambar*, *Platanus*, *Ostrya*, *Carpinus*, *Carya*, *Fraxinus*, *Acer*, *Juglans*, and *Fagus*.

The Biosphere Reserve El Cielo, west of the town of Gómez Farías and just below the Tropic of Cancer, is the northernmost such forest in Mexico and a wide gap (ca 500 km) of more arid vegetation separates it from the similar temperate deciduous forest beginning in eastern Texas. A number of biologists have visited this region and the present volume presents recent research by the authors on the ecology of the forest.

The general setting is covered in the first chapter: geology (limestone karst), fauna (rich), human activity (lumbering but very little farming or permanent settlements because of lack of surface streams), and vegetation (semideciduous tropical forest at the base, cloud forest at mid elevations, pine-oak woods above 1800 m, and semi-arid scrub in the rain shadow to the west). The soils and climate each merit separate chapters. Fold-out maps of vegetation and soils are provided.

Most of the research is concentrated in the cloud forest and details are given on its floristic composition and structure, including many details on the regeneration of the dominant tree species in relation to their life histories. Gap replacement in tree falls is important; hurricanes are not infrequent and must play an important role. A chapter is devoted to the germination and growth of *Hoffmannia strigillosa* (Rubiaceae) in relation to light and temperature and why this understory shrub is restricted to primary forest.

This book is a welcome addition to the literature on the area. Past studies pointed out the biological interest of El Cielo and continuing interest will ensure its preservation.—MICHAEL NEE, New York Botanical Garden.