

BOOK REVIEW

DR. WILLIAM C. BURGER, *Families of Flowering Plants in Ethiopia*, 1967, 236 pp.
Experiment Station Bulletin No. 45, edited by Oklahoma State University
Press, Stillwater, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

DR. WILLIAM C. BURGER published as a result of his work in Ethiopia a fine book entitled "Families of Flowering Plants in Ethiopia". The book appeared as Experiment Station Bulletin No. 45, edited by Oklahoma State University Press, Stillwater, Oklahoma, U.S.A., 1967. The work was carried out in the College of Agriculture of the Haile Sellassie I University at Dire Dawa (Ale-maya), Ethiopia, where Dr. Burger was Assistant Professor of Botany from 1961 to 1965.

This large-size clear-print book is intended to help the student identify the family to which a particular seed plant belongs. The keys are based on Hutchinson's systematic publications. The descriptions of the taxa are adapted to their occurrence in eastern Africa. The book is further intended to supplement taxonomic books as "Plants Classification" by Lyman Benson or "An Introduction to Plant Taxonomy" by G. H. M. Lawrence. As such I think it very suitable indeed.

On realizing the fact that often students receive no taxonomical training enabling them to handle Benson or Lawrence, Dr. Burger has rendered botanical education in Ethiopia a very important service in writing this book. There is an introduction to the family descriptions, which is both clear and concise, although I would have preferred to have the figures pertaining to this text accompanying it instead of being referred to the final part of the book. This would more readily fix the picture in the student's memory. On the other hand, if one follows the author's instructions to look at the final part of the book, one meets at the same time with a very fine set of clear and detailed plant drawings which, for instructional purposes, leave nothing to be desired. There is sufficient detail and by their clarity and firm outline the figures are easily understood and interpreted.

The glossary of botanical terms is useful, and there is a small bibliography guiding to further literature. The descriptions of the families are short and to the point.

When reading through the book one feels in many places that the author has not tried for a balanced amount of literature and facts among the various groups. He brought together what he thought useful for a beginning student in taxonomical botany, and one has a feeling that it was not tried purposely to assemble more information if only a limited amount of data appeared to be readily available.

I feel that this book will lead to a much better understanding among students of Ethiopian taxonomy and prefer to see it as a start for possible developments in this field; it is a fine and reliable source of information both for teacher and

student. Perhaps the author will continue his work and arrive at a second edition which, I feel, should gain by adding somewhat more data from literature in a number of places, and perhaps some general information on nomenclature, botanical history in Ethiopia, and conservation of Ethiopian vegetation might not come amiss.

The author is to be congratulated by this timely and most useful publication and one can wish that many African countries were provided with books of this quality and scope.

The publishers also deserve praise for the way they produced the book which is, moreover, moderately priced.

H. C. D. DE WIT