

Nordic Journal of Botany

Review

Castroviejo, S., Aedo, C., Ciruano, S., Laínz, M., Monserrat, R., Morales, R., Muñoz Garmendia, F., Navarro, C., Paiva, J. & Soriano, C. (eds), 1993. Flora Iberica. Plantas vasculares de la Península Ibérica e Islas Baleares. Vol. 3 (730 pages) and Vol. 4 (also 730 pages). – Real Jardín Botánico, C.S.I.C. Madrid. ISBN 84-00-07375-4 & 84-00-07385-1. Price pr. vol.: ESP 4.000.

The first two volumes of this new flora of the Iberian Peninsula (including the Balearic Islands with Portugal and Spain but excluding the Canary Islands and Madeira) were published in 1980 and 1986. The present two volumes reach from the Plumbaginaceae (in part, as 3 genera were treated in vol. 2) to the Capparaceae and from the Cruciferae to the Monotropaceae. Such important families as the Plumbaginaceae with the genus *Limonium*, Malvaceae, Violaceae and Cistaceae are dealt with in vol. 3 and the Cruciferae, the Resedaceae and the Ericaceae are the larger families in vol. 4.

The Flora Iberica is a splendid modern flora of one of the most diverse Mediterranean floristic regions. While the Apennine Peninsula has been covered by several floras up to the present, the Iberian Peninsula has lagged behind with only one basic flora: Prodrromus Florae Hispanicae (1870–1880) by the German botanist M. Wilkomm and the Dane J. Lange. The Balkan Peninsula is still waiting for its modern treatment by the Danish-German-Greek team.

Each volume has introductory chapters dealing with abbreviations and the administrative division of the area treated. This is followed by a key to all families of the Angiosperms (the Pteridophytes and Gymnosperms are treated in vol. 1). The families are treated in the classic way with a family description, usually 1–2 pages, and a key to genera. The generic descriptions are thorough, and the most important literature is quoted. The species descriptions are long and critical, almost in the style of Hegi, and taxonomic and biological observations are included, as well as chromosome numbers.

One of the really alluring features of the Flora Iberica is the excellent line drawings which embellish all the volumes. All genera are illustrated as are the majority of species. In some families all taxa are documented in full page drawings. We have seen few floras so lavishly illustrated.

Each volume is concluded by several appendices, covering authors, cited periodicals and a literature list arranged alphabetically by authors. There is also a dictionary of botanical terms (in Spanish) and of course a general index to all taxa inclusive synonyms.

It is indeed fascinating reading. Take e. g. the genus *Limonium* (in vol. 3), among the most difficult genera in the Mediterranean flora and with the highest diversity in the Iberian region. The flora lists 107 species and 137 hybrids among which are several triple hybrids. The genus is illustrated by 39 full page line drawings. An other example: the Cruciferae in vol. 4 (how good to see that someone still dares to use the old, classic name instead of the "modern", streamlined Brassicaceae). The family treatment covers 439 pages with 163 pages of illustrations, each of these a masterpiece with details of petals, fruits, seeds, etc. Two other phytogeographically important families are treated in these two volumes: the Cistaceae, with 64 species, and numerous hybrids (the reviewer gave up counting) covers 158 pages. It is a pity that we have to change the name of *Tuberaria* to *Xolantha*, but such is the life of a botanist. The Ericaceae represented in the region by 9 genera and 26 species, are treated on 39 pages with 14 pages of illustrations.

The technical quality of the work is first class and with a hard cover in a nice green cloth. There is an informative map of the area with the administrative divisions and abbreviations on the inside of the cover. The paper quality is excellent and the fine, slightly yellowish tint underlines the beauty of the illustrations and enhances the pleasure of reading. The reviewer can only recommend this fine work, obtainable for the very modest price of about USD 25.00 pr. volume. It is hard to wait for the sequel.

Kai Larsen