

Book Reviews

(edited by B. M. SPOONER)

S. Castroviejo, C. Aedo, C. Gómez Campo, M. Laínz, P. Montserrat, R. Morales, F. Muñoz Garmendia, G. Nieto Feliner, E. Rico, S. Talavera & L. Villar (Eds). *Flora Iberica. Plantas vasculares de la Península Ibérica e Islas Baleares. Vol. IV Cruciferae-Monotropaceae*. Pp. liv + 730, 198 text figures, 1 map as end papers. Spain: Real Jardín Botánico, C.S.I.C. Servicio de Publicaciones del C.S.I.C., Vitruvio, 8, 28006 Madrid, 1993. Price 4,000 pesetas. ISBN 84-00-07385-1 (Vol. IV). 84-00-06221-3 (complete work).

There has been no flora of the Iberian Peninsula since that of Willkomm and Lange, published 1861–1880. The present volume is one of a series which provides a comprehensive modern flora for the very large land mass of mainland Spain, Portugal and near islands, and the project promises to emulate for the western Mediterranean the monumental achievement of the late Peter Davis (1965–1988) in producing the Flora of Turkey in ten volumes. The challenge is certainly equal, if not, in the opinion of some, greater, in that the Iberian Peninsula covers very varied climatic and phytogeographic areas. The floristic types range from the high Pyrenees to the Mediterranean, which includes a strong North African link, and from the western Atlantic-Lusitanian elements to the large and varied inland land mass, with many isolated, often comparatively high altitude, mountain ranges, each with a rich flora which includes a significant number of endemic taxa.

The project is being undertaken by a highly experienced and qualified editorial team of eleven, with two assistants and some twenty-five advisers, paralleling the organisation of the successful Flora Europaea (Tutin *et al.* 1964–1980).

The first volume of Flora Iberica appeared in 1986 covering the *Pteridophyta*, *Gymnospermae* and *Angiospermae* up to *Papaveraceae*, following the system of Stebbins (1974). Volume 2 covering *Platanaceae* to *Plumbaginaceae* in part, appeared in 1990 while Volume 3 included the remainder of the *Plumbaginaceae* to *Capparaceae* and was published in 1993. The editors in taking on this formidable task have made commendably rapid progress.

Each volume begins with a list of authors of genera included, followed by a general index, introductory material which explains such items as the geographical divisions, abbreviations and herbaria consulted. Eleven "basic floras" have been selected as the main standard reference works covering the region. The selection of the "basic floras" cannot have been an easy task and, inevitably, some works have to be excluded, but the accuracy of some of the distributional and habitat information for taxa in the Balearic Islands could perhaps have been a little

better if careful reference was made to recent works as, for example, Bonafè's (1977–1980) *Flora de Mallorca*.

Every volume has a complete dichotomous key to all the vascular plants. There is a full description for each family with a brief note on number of genera, species and the geographical distribution, followed by a key to the genera in the region. The genera are also fully described and, frequently, there is a useful discussion of the main problems encountered in taxonomy of the group, followed by relevant and often rather extensive bibliography. The keys to species are well prepared and generally easy to use. The original place of publication is cited for each species with minimal synonymy and the basionym is cited where relevant. There is a reference to the type locality and to an illustration. There then follows a full description followed by brief habitat notes, and the geographical distribution of the full range of the species with more detailed records of it in some 60 regions corresponding to the provincial boundaries within the area of the Flora. These are helpfully shown on maps inside the front and back cover. There are frequent illustrations of both endemic and widespread taxa. The illustrations are delightful, simple, clear and informative and the artist E. Sierra Ràfols must be congratulated.

The present volume, with contributions from some forty-one authors, is primarily devoted to the *Cruciferae*. It is pleasing that, following historic usage, the name *Cruciferae* has been chosen in preference to *Brassicaceae*. Some 74 genera and about 300 species and subspecies are recognised and the treatment corresponds closely with the *Flora Europaea*, ed. 2 (Tutin et al., 1993) and *Med-Checklist* (Greuter et al., 1986) treatments. Traditionally this is a family where generic delimitation has been often a matter of opinion and it is pleasing to see a consensus between recent major treatments in Europe. The inclusion of *Dentaria* within *Cardamine*, and *Nasturtium* within *Rorippa* are established practice. Interestingly, *Neotorularia*, recorded only from Murcia in the European Mediterranean, has been probably more correctly placed near to *Sisymbrium* in contrast with other workers who suggest its relationships are with *Malcolmia*. *Hormathophylla* is segregated from *Alyssum* and the now accepted fragmentation of *Hutchinsia* is retained.

The treatment of *Resedaceae* is perhaps more controversial with a narrow species concept adopted in *Sesamoides*, 6 species being recognised. Likewise, some 17 species of *Reseda* with more than a dozen subspecies are described. The remainder of the volume is devoted to the *Ericales*, which are clearly and simply treated.

This volume, as does each of the earlier ones, has extensive appendices and indices much in the style of *Flora Europaea*. There are appendices giving expanded author, journal and book title abbreviations used throughout the text. The merits of translating the bibliographic references of non-Spanish works into Spanish, is perhaps questionable to librarians working on an international scale. Appendix IV is a "dictionary" to the origin of specific names and is extremely interesting, but reference to the internationally recognised authoritative *Botanical Latin* by W. T. Stearn (1992), perhaps might enhance the accuracy. There are helpful separate indices to illustrations, to vernacular names and to scientific names. The latter follows the often rather complicated and confusing practice adopted in *Flora Europaea* of citing synonyms used in eleven "basic floras", giving only a reference to the page and species number in the text. The reviewers

do not find this method of citation easy and cannot help wondering if the size of the work would really have been increased very greatly if all the synonyms with bibliographic references had been cited in the appropriate place in the text.

This must be regarded as a fundamental scholarly treatment and an essential reference work, not only to students of the flora of the Iberian peninsula, but of interest and relevance to a much wider spectrum of the botanical and horticultural community in temperate and Mediterranean climates throughout the world. It is very modestly priced and thus can be available to many individuals. Nothing but praise can be lavished on the energy and enthusiasm that has promoted such a worthy project.

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