

BOOK REVIEWS

Ne'eman, G. & Trabaud, L. 2000. **Ecology, Biogeography and Management of *Pinus halepensis* and *P. brutia* Forest Ecosystems in the Mediterranean Basin.** xii + 412 pp. Backhuys Publishers, Leiden. ISBN 90-5782-055-2 (hardcover). Price: USD 120.00

This and the recent Richardson book (*Ecology and Biogeography of Pinus*, Cambridge, 1998) reflect a renewed interest in this very important arboreal component of Northern Hemisphere ecosystems and alien threat to the Southern Hemisphere. Ne'eman and Trabaud's book is a highly focused treatise on two pines important because their center of distribution lies within a region of high human population density.

The forward by Zev Naveh is a call to arms to the Mediterranean community to recognize their valuable pine resource and the threats to this important taxon. What follows are 29 chapters filled with the most up to date information presented by an outstanding cast of experts on the subject. The book has extraordinary depth in some areas of pine biology, e.g., evolution, systematics, postfire recruitment. The emphasis is heavily focused towards the eastern end of the Mediterranean Basin and there is only limited information presented on the ecophysiology of pines. More input from studies in the Iberian Peninsula would have provided better balance to the book.

If it was not for the fact that the book is of sufficient length as is, one might be tempted to complain about the fact that other Mediterranean Basin pines are largely, but not completely ignored. However, "the proof is in the pudding" and clearly there is more than enough known about *P. halepensis* and *P. brutia* to fill a single book.

Topics cover a broad range. The first section includes genetics, evolution, palaeoecology, and reproduction (including factors driving cone initiation, seed physiology, and seedling establishment, and alien invasion of the Southern Hemisphere). In the second section the book title lives up to its name in covering the 'ecology' of these pine ecosystems. This section comprises chapters dealing with diverse topics from species diversity, water balance, seed banks, mycorrhizae, soil arthropods, phytophagous insects, birds and small mammals. The third section is on fire ecology and provides the gamut of perspectives from those of ecologists to land managers. The final chapter is of particular importance in a region such as this, namely anthropogenic impacts, including forestry and pollution issues.

The book excels in two important respects, the number of high quality graphs and other illustrations (see particularly chapters by Thanos) and, consistently in all chapters, the thoroughness with which the literature has been reviewed. This book is clearly a wealth of references for anyone interested in the subject of these two dominant Mediterranean pines.

Relative to the extraordinary merits of this book, criticisms are all rather minor. There are no abstracts, which in

light of the diversity of topics and level of overlap between chapters, might have been of value. Readers are only slightly short-changed by the index, which, for each topic, gives only the page number for the first mention of that topic within a chapter. Clearly, finding faults with this book was not easy.

Associated with this book is an electronic network of scientists and resource managers interested in issues of Mediterranean Basin pines (List Server: MED-PINE@POST.TAU.AC.IL) that promises to lead to even more productivity in the future. The editors have done a fine service by this book. It seems likely that we will see future volumes from the Mediterranean pine group, hopefully focusing on other pines of the Mediterranean Basin.

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Short reviews of Nordic publications by Jonas E. Lawesson



Jonsell, B. (ed.) 2000. **Flora Nordica**, Vol. 1. Lycopodiaceae to Polygonaceae. xxii + 344 pp. The Bergius Foundation and Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm. ISBN 91 7190 033 0 (hardcover). Price: 50 USD.

New, updated and visionary floras for most parts of the world, including the Nordic countries are for obvious reasons few, since sources of financial support for these kinds of publications are few. Public opinion and the thinking of people in granting agencies is that we know the vascular flora of northern Europe so well, that basically no further work is needed. Most botanists know all too well the recurrent frustrations of the lack of good and modern descriptions of native and alien taxa. Many modern floras have keys dealing only with floral characters, which is a major problem if only sterile material is available, e.g., in most applied ecological studies.

It is thus of much comfort to see the first, much awaited volume of the prestigious and ambitious *Flora Nordica* (*Lycopodiaceae-Polygonaceae*). The chief editor of the flora, Bengt Jonsell, Stockholm, and staff, are to be congratulated on successfully obtaining the funding required for such an enormous enterprise, and for orchestrating the more than 30 taxonomists and 15 illustrators contributing to this flora (in English).