

Paleobotany: Plants of the Past, Their Evolution, Paleoenvironment and Application in Exploration of

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BOOK REVIEWS

definitions of 33 in some way, which is not a good recommendation for beginners and suggests that the glossary was not a carefully prepared part of the book. For workers in the field, who might only have one book, the glossary can be vitally important in allowing them to work alone successfully. One does not expect to have terms defined using other technical terms which are not themselves defined, e.g. follicle by carpel.

In the selected literature it is a pity that P. S. Ashton's *Manual of Non-Dipterocarp Trees of Sarawak Vol. II* (Forest Dept Sarawak, 1988) is not recorded; this is a much more useful book than many of those listed. It is also regrettable that the abbreviations in Brummitt and Powell's *Authors of Plant Names* (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 1992) have not always been followed, but this will not be noticeable in the forest! It would have been nice to have had a little more discussion about species in the manner of E. J. H. Corner's *Wayside Trees of Malaya* (3rd ed., Malayan Nature Society, 1988) which can bring the species alive for people reading the book. The very formal description of the common species *Pometia pinnata*, for instance, fails to note such conspicuous characters as the highly plicate leaflets, or the continuous pink flushing of the leaves which usually makes the tree easy to pick out in the forest. The most frustrating aspect of the book is, inevitably, its incompleteness for which the authors can hardly be criticised, but one hopes that accounts of further species might be produced for a supplementary volume. This is undoubtedly a welcome step forward in our knowledge and understanding of the trees of Borneo.

G. C. G. Argent

Paleobotany: Plants of the Past, their Evolution, Paleoenvironment and Application in Exploration of Fossil Fuels. Shripad N. Agashe. Lebanon, New Hampshire: Science Publishers Inc. 1995. vii+359pp. ISBN 1 886106 08 8. US\$55.00 (hardback).

Four contrasting palaeobotany texts have been released during the last decade (for a comparative review see Bateman, 1994). Of these, two are relatively expensive and either densely detailed (Taylor & Taylor, 1992) or technically challenging (Meyen, 1987). Thus, the student market relies more heavily on the often interesting but incompletely integrated text of Thomas & Spicer (1987) and the balanced, well-illustrated synthesis of Stewart & Rothwell (1993). To these is now added Shripad N. Agashe's attempt to remedy 'the dwindling [student] interest in Paleobotany' (page v).

As its cumbersome title suggests, this book spans an astonishing range of topics in 359 pages. Six introductory chapters cover basic geological information such as dating methods and modes of plant preservation, together with a brief account of the history of palaeobotanical research and an outline classification. The following 14 chapters each give a brief account of the fossil

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planktonic foraminifera settle to the bottom and can be. Paleobotany: Plants of the Past, Their Evolution, Paleoenvironment and Application in Exploration of Fossil Fuels. R. A. STOCKEY: PALEOBIOLOGY OF.