Flora of Java. The first volume of Backer & Bakhuizen's Flora has already been reviewed (Notes R. B. G. E. xxvi, 66 : 1964): the second volume* has now appeared and completes the treatment of the Dicotyledons. There is also an important introductory essay entitled Concise Plant-geography of Java by C. G. G. J. van Steenis, with the assistance of Mrs. Schippers-Lammertse. The whole of this volume maintains the high excellence of the first.

For those of us who have never visited Java, the account of the plant-geography (in effect a summary of much of van Steenis's earlier work with additions) forms a valuable and fascinating introduction. It highlights not only the patterns of distribution on Java, but the differences between the Javanese flora and the floras of neighbouring islands. These are great, partly because much of the surface of Java has a relatively shorter geological history as dry land; but in part because the eastern end of the island has a monsoon climate (with a marked dry season). This climate may give Java a greater diversity of vegetation than is on Borneo, for instance, but it is not nearly so rich in species (especially in endemic species) as the ever-wet rain forest. These plants of the seasonal area mostly have wide geographical ranges between Asia and Australia and little differentiation has taken place on Java itself.

But the poverty of the flora of Java is purely relative: 70 species of *Ficus*, 67 genera of Acanthaceae and 75 of Rubiaceae are, for instance, riches enough to satisfy any flora-writer. If a typical rainforest genus like *Cyrtandra* has only some 20 species on Java compared with perhaps 120 on Borneo, that is just one of the factors that makes this Flora a possible achievement. The other, of course, is the vast amount of work that botanists of the Netherlands have put into the study of Javanese plants over a matter of 150 years.

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* Flora of Java by C. A. Backer & R. C. Bakhuizen van den Brink Jr. Vol. 2. Groningen, P. Noordhoff. 1966. (72), 641 pp. Price: seven pounds, fifteen shillings.