Chromosome numbers of flowering plants.* This 926 page compilation of all chromosome counts, up to and including 1966, fills an important vacant niche in cytological reference literature. Before this volume became available anybody seeking information on chromosome numbers of a taxon had to follow a time-consuming procedure: first, Darlington & Wylie's "Chromosome Atlas of Flowering Plants" was consulted to discover counts existing prior to 1955, then the 'Index of Plant Chromosome Numbers' was referred to—a task which involved the examination of each of the annual parts for the years 1956–1967. The summation of data to 1966 provided by this new work now means that one has only to refer to this volume and to the Index for 1967 (indices for 1968 & 1969 are not yet available).

The volume is designed for both Russian and English speakers: prefaces are given in both languages and the rest of the text requires no knowledge of Russian whatsoever. Data are given for 35,000 species names belonging to 272 families and 4,669 genera; about twice the number of species represented in Darlington & Wylie's 1955 'Chromosome Atlas of Flowering Plants'—a reflection of the vigour of cytotaxonomy during the period between the two publications. The numbers published include those for about 1,000 species native to the USSR, which are reported for the first time. Useful tables are given for genera which include more than ten species studied cytologically; they show chromosome number distribution and number of species showing infraspecific variation. The synonymy of generic and specific names present in the original reports of chromosome numbers has not been reduced or eliminated; therefore the same genus or species is sometimes listed more than once. The authors' decision not to tackle any rectification of the synonymy is a wise one since, as they state: "If the authors or the editors of this reference book had pursued the policy of reducing the synonymy of the 35,000 specific names included therein with appropriate scientific accuracy, it would have taken too much time and would have delayed the publication of this reference book for several years."

The authors of 'Chromosome Numbers of Flowering Plants' and their collaborators deserve the gratitude of all cytotaxonomists for performing their arduous labour of compilation so well.

J. A. RATTER.

* Chromosome Numbers of Flowering Plants. Ed. An. A. Fedorov. Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Komarov Botanical Institute, Leningrad. 1969. 926 pp. 6 roubles 92 kopek.