Book Review

Cedrus in India. This little book* sets out to be a monograph of the genus *Cedrus*, placing particular emphasis on the work undertaken in India. It contains chapters (in order of length) on embryology, morphology and anatomy, regeneration, economic importance, fungal diseases, time relations and distribution. There are introductory notes on the historical usage of cedars and a key to, and brief descriptions of, the four species.

The chapters dealing with morphology and anatomy (32 pp) and especially embryology (53 pp) contain useful and detailed notes. Numerous line-drawings and half-tone plates are presented here; these are informative and maintain a pleasingly high standard of presentation.

In India, only one of the four generally recognised species of *Cedrus*—*C. deodara* (Roxb.) D. Don—is native and, in the western Himalayas, it is a commercially important timber tree. It is understandable, therefore, that the authors should put particular emphasis on this species, of which they have first-hand knowledge. However, the treatment which the other species of cedar have correspondingly received is regrettably sparse: the chapter on 'Distribution', for example, is devoted entirely to the local range of *C. deodara*.

Within this taxonomically limited framework, the book further disappoints the reader expecting (as the title implies) a general monographic study of the genus. There is an exceptionally heavy bias towards embryological work and nearly half the book is devoted to this aspect. Other topics are treated correspondingly sparsely, and many that might have been expected are passed by extremely briefly or unmentioned. The inclusion of palaeobotanical, phylogenetic, evolutionary, physiological and genetic aspects, with a critical account of the taxonomy of *Cedrus*, would certainly have created a more balanced account.

Each topic is dealt with in the form of a series of notes, largely presenting data without discussion or conclusions. A critical assessment of the value of the information presented for comparative purposes or otherwise would have greatly increased the value of the work.

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*Cedrus. Botanical Monograph No. 5. P. Maheshwari and Chaya Biswas, C.S.I.R. New Delhi. 1970. 115 pp. 55 figs. $8.00.