Book Review

Plants for Mediterranean Gardens. The title of this small volume* is rather misleading in that within its covers there is very little indeed about Mediterranean native plants and very little about Mediterranean gardens as such. By far the bulk of the book, in fact, is devoted to a pictorial directory of some of the cultivated plants one is likely to encounter in gardens of the Mediterranean. This is flanked by a short account by the Viscomte de Noailles (to whom the book owes its inception) of his own gardens, a brief introduction to the Mediterranean climate and gardening in it, a speedy tour of some of the gardens of the Côte d'Azur and a list of additional plants suitable for growing in the region. It is therefore very much an introduction to some of the species that are so widely planted that they have become characteristic features of the Mediterranean landscape, and frequently naturalize.

Within its limited scope, and accepting its inherent shortcomings and omissions, this is a pleasant book to browse through and handle. For some it might be a spur to visit the gardens of the Côte d'Azur and admire the lush growth and flowering of species which do not flourish so well further north.

In an essentially pictorial book such as this, the visual impact of the illustrations is at least as important as the text. Here we have about 200 colour photographs most of which are excellent, many beautiful, and only a few which are less than very good. The photographer, Michael Warren, must be well satisfied with the standard of colour reproduction and presentation.

I. C. Hedge

* Mediterranean plants and gardens by Viscomte de Noailles & Roy Lancaster. Claverton, Nottingham. Floraprint Ltd. [ISBN 0 903001 23 3] 144 pp. £4.95.