Book Review

The Flora of Moray, Nairn and East Inverness.* This is an excellent regional flora by an enthusiastic botanist for enthusiastic botanists. It is the result of a lifetime's field study and a great deal of painstaking research in library and herbarium. It will long remain as the standard reference work to the botany of the area. The citation of specimens is excellent and will make the work very useful to research workers. Up-to-date nomenclature and abundant consultation and collaboration with experts on difficult groups is also to be applauded.

I should have liked to see the book made a little more useful to the field botanist. The snippets of information on plant identification, interesting as they are, would never warrant this heavy book being carried into the field. Keys to many more genera could have incorporated many of these observations and would have been much more useful. For example four lines of description are devoted to *Equisetum arvense* and two to *E. pratense* without any comment on the distinction between them being included. The introductory chapters badly lack maps which would give much greater impact to the text. Only two maps are included: an excellent map inside the cover showing the vice-county boundaries and a small map showing rainfall distribution. A geological map at least might have been expected, but soils, land use and vegetation might also have benefited from mapping. Forty-one pages are devoted to spot distributions of many species; these showing a significant improvement in coverage from that of the *Atlas of the British Flora* but they are of only academic interest, lacking any comparison with distributions throughout the rest of Scotland or direct tie-up with climatic or edaphic factors.

Vernacular names for plants have been included, these following "J. G. Dony, C. M. Rob and F. H. Perring's *English Names for Wild Flowers* (1974); they are often preceded by local names taken from the old Floras of Moray". It would have been informative and useful to have differentiated between common names in use in the area and those merely introduced from other parts of the country.

The colour illustrations are generally good, showing off attractively many of the interesting plants and some nice views of the area. The black and white photos also show some of the grasses and sedges well but not all the line drawings are well chosen. For instance p. 499 is a whole page illustration of common grasses that is neither very decorative nor much of an aid to identification, whereas inclusion of drawings of the inflorescences of the three recorded *Vulpia* species (two, the sort of plants for which the keen botanist would be on the lookout) would have enabled most people to distinguish them. The drawings illustrating the characters of the different *Rosa* species, however, are excellent and very pertinent to the detailed treatment, including a key to the species, that this genus receives.

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* Flora of Moray, Nairn and East Inverness by Mary McCallum Webster. Aberdeen University Press, 1978, (ISBN 0 900015 42 X), 606 pp. £15.