BOOK REVIEW

Flowers of Sahyadri - Field Guide to 500 Flowers of North Western Ghats by Shrikant Ingalhalikar. Shrikant Ingalhalikar, Pune - 411 051, India. 15.5 × 21.5 cm, i - x. 1 - 210. 2001 HB and PB.

After the interesting publications of Flowers of Himalaya, Supplement to the Flowers of Himalaya and Concise Flowers of Himalaya published during 1980's by Oleg Polunin & Adam Stainton-serving as pictorial field guides for botanists and nature lovers, a publication on the equally diverse and rich Western ghats was long over due.

Sahyadri - the north western ghats, focus of this publication mainly lies along the western part of the state of Maharashtra. The hills of Western ghats from Mumbai to Panaji and the adjoining areas covering an area of around 50,000 sq km are treated as Sahyadri for the scope of this field guide. The contents have been carefully planned and arranged under 15 subheadings. After providing interesting insights into the art of flower watching and information about Sahyadri region, author discusses about the types of habitats, (profile of the flora of the region is an interesting interpretation), seasons, locations, hints and how to proceed with the identification, followed by account of some families and rich illustrated glossary. Text on 500 species has been fully illustrated with excellent photographs of close up of flowers. Text has been divided into 4 parts with colour tags, based on the habit e.g. Trees. Shrubs, Climbers and herbs. In fact all the species in the book have been so arranged that they can be searched by habit (plant type), flowering season, colour, and flower size. Text for each species includes A-serial number as per index; B-scientific name as per Flora of Maharashtra in 3 vols. published by Botanical Survey of India; C-synonym, if any corresponding to name in Flora of Bombay Presidency by T. Cooke; D-name of the family as per Flora of Maharashtra, BSI; E-local name in Marathi; F-a short description followed by a line about habitat; G- Two scales at bottom of text showing months of flowering (in red) and months of vegetative growth (in green). Textual information for each species is illustrated with excellent photographs of close up of flowers (6.2 × 6.2 cm). Within each major group, species have been arranged as per flowering season provided with colour tab for easy reference. Index to local names and scientific names are provided at the end of the book.

However, there are few quibbles. *Hiptage benghalensis* (p.63) and *Maerua oblongifolia* (p.57) should have been listed as 'climbing shrubs' instead under "Shrubs". *Tribulus terrestris* (p.173) seems to be *Tribulus subramanyamii* and *Asclepias* has been misspelt as *Asclepius* (p.193). *Lagasca* should be *Lagascea* (p.191) and *Burmannia caelestis* should be *Burmannia coelestis* (p.177). *Verbascum chinens* should be *Verbascum chinense* (p.107), *Legerstroemia* should be *Lagerstroemia* (p.41), *Grewia asiaticia* should be *Grewia asiatica* (p.58), *Carallum* should be *Caralluma* (p.120). *Ceiba pentandra* (p.28) – a native of tropical America and planted in various parts of the country finds mention as "occasional in deciduous forests", as if part of natural vegetation.

Though a Mechanical Engineer by profession, Shrikant Ingalhalikar certainly deserves congratulations for setting new standards in publishing field guides to flowers, particularly in India. A truly world class, well thought of, well designed and beautifully illustrated publication on flowers of Sahyadri ushers a new beginning of revival of interest in floristic studies in the country.

Paramjit Singh & M. Sanjappa
Botanical Survey of India,
Kolkata