REVIEW

K. MALLETT (ed.): **Poaceae 3. Flora of Australia, Volume 44B.** ABRS, Canberra/CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne, 2005. xviii + 486 pp., illus. ISBN 0-64306-960-7 (hb), ISBN 0-64306-961-5 (pb). Price: AUD 120 (hb), AUD 99 (pb).

In the magnificent series Flora of Australia the long-awaited treatment of another part of the Gramineae has appeared. A previous volume, 43A, appeared in 2002. Here 5 subfamilies are included: Arundinoideae, Danthonioideae, Aristidoideae, Micraioideae, and Chloridoideae, with 55 genera, and over 450 species, a mixture of tropical and temperate taxa, many with economically and environmentally importance. The format is the usual one, listing data on original publications, synonyms, types, descriptions, line drawings of habit and spikelets, occasionally of their parts, references to previous illustrations, photosynthetic pathway, notes, keys, distribution in Australia with selected representatives, etc. New lectotypes, as far as I could detect, have been invalidly selected as it is not indicated that lectotypification was expressly made here.

In the larger genera the species are arranged to some kind of natural system, but it would have been more convenient, especially in the larger genera, when they had been in an alphabetical order. The leads of the keys I find too brief, often only a single character state is given, which in cases of absence or doubt in interpretation will lead one astray. With the uses of Pankhurst's PANKEY for DELTA or with LUCID certainly more informative ones could have been generated. At the end the new taxa proposed in the text are validated and an illustrated specialistic glossary is given.

In some instances I disagree with the delimitation and acceptance of taxa. This brings to mind the words of J.D. Hooker [Fl. Brit. India 7 (1896) 14]: '… As to the result, I am satisfied that no two botanists working independently over the same materials would arrive at the same (results), or agree in any other …'. Such is the case with *Sporobolus*, where the many forms of the *S. indicus*-complex are treated as distinct species. Others, like me, have been less optimistic and with many doubts have regarded them as varieties, while the distinction between some of them occasionally is like the flip of a coin. In *Eragrostis*, too, there are discrepancies in the treatment of some taxa, e.g. in the sorting out of the *E. brownii*-complex and that of *E. japonica*. Perhaps in the field the taxa are really distinct, but in the herbarium they do not seem so. Unfortunately, the name *E. elongata* has been maintained, be it in the correct sense for what I have called *E. diandra*, but this will not end the confusion caused by its application to at least 5 species in South-East Asia, as I have aimed to do. Analyses by Van den Borre & Watson [Austral. Syst. Bot. 10 (1997) 491] indicate that *Ectrosiopsis lasioclada* (Merr.) Jansen belongs to a distinct genus, but my own have shown that there are no real differences with *Eragrostis*. The presence of mucronate to awned distal lemmas may be striking in South-East Asia and Australia, but these also occur in some African species, e.g. *E. dinteri* Stapf, *E. rogersii* C.E. Hubb., and *E. variegata* Welw. Yet, here the species is retained in *Ectrosia* R.Br. As usual Buse is cited as 'Büse'. As is evident from the personal files in L the correct citation is without the Umlaut.

Otherwise a fine work, well-illustrated and documented, a worthy successor to Bentham's 1878 treatment. Hopefully, the other two volumes will appear soon.

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