

### Book Review

Merrill, Elmer D. *Plant Life of the Pacific World*. Macmillan, pp. i-xv, 1-295, *illus.* 1945. Price \$3.50.—Although it is scarcely to be expected that any single book can comprehensively discuss the vegetation of a region which contains upward of 50,000 species of plants, the reader of this remarkable volume will agree that its author has come close to accomplishing the feat. From this statement one is not to assume that the subject is presented in any dry or technical sense; on the contrary, this book is eminently readable and, to anyone with the slightest interest in plants, even exciting. Due to the inclusion of a lucid chapter on the principles of botanical classification, to a glossary, and to 256 well prepared text-figures, the non-botanical reader can understand and appreciate every statement in the book. Yet, this is not a book entirely for the novice; actually it will be read with great pleasure and profit by professional botanists, for many of whom the Pacific is a strange area. Certainly no other living botanist can write of this region with the authority of Dr. Merrill.

Following an amusing introductory chapter exploding certain fictions pertaining to the “dangerous” tropical forests, the author takes us on a tour of various ecological habitats (in chapters entitled *Plants of the Seashore*, *The Mangrove Forest*, *The Secondary Forests and Open Grass-lands*, and *The Primary Forest*). Additional chapters on weeds, cultivated plants, emergency food plants, problems of plant distribution, the significance of local names, etc., round out a surprisingly complete picture of a highly complex region.

This book should be of very particular significance to service men stationed in the Pacific area; it is one of the most distinguished of an excellent Pacific Handbook Series which has appeared under the auspices of *The Infantry Journal*, Washington, D.C. The restricted edition, for the armed forces, is identical in content but smaller in format and paper-bound. Not only service men garrisoning our Pacific bases, but also prospective travelers to the region will find their experiences vastly enriched by a perusal of *Plant Life of the Pacific World*.

A. C. SMITH



Smith, A C. 1945. "Review of Merrill, Elmer D., Plant Life of the Pacific World." *Arnoldia* 5(9), 64-64.

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