

## BOOK REVIEW

BY

LOUIS O. WILLIAMS

Catálogo Descriptivo de las Orquídeas Cubanas [Descriptive Catalogue of Cuban Orchids], by Julian Acuña Galé. Boletín Técnico No. 60, Estación Experimental Agrónomica, Cuba. 221 pages. Dated June 1938, issued about June 5, 1939.

Mr. Acuña's descriptive catalogue of Cuban orchids will be welcomed by his compatriots and by others who are interested in this delightful family of plants. The catalogue gives an artificial key to the seventy-nine genera of orchids which are accredited to Cuba. Each of the genera is characterized and a key to the component species is given, if there is more than one. Bibliography, synonymy and a specific description, as well as Cuban localities and often distribution outside of Cuba, are given for each species.

It is the hope of the author that his little book will help beginners so that more people will become interested in botany and so that there will be more botanists in Cuba. With this objective in mind, one might have expected a more conservative treatment of generic entities. One "feels" for the beginner (or the mature taxonomist for that matter) who attempts to key out a Cuban *Spiranthes* to one of the six segregate (or synonymous) genera which are given, by means of a key which makes use of rather recondite and none too accurately stated characters. Likewise one might possibly entertain doubts about the usefulness of the eight segregates of *Epidendrum* which will be encountered, to only one of which Ames, Hubbard and Schweinfurth accorded even sub-generic rank in their recent monograph on *Epidendrum*.

If the taxonomic outlook of the author may be said



to be provincial in the case of generic entities, as would seem to be indicated by the paragraph above, it is no less so in the case of the treatment of some of the species. One case will illustrate this point. On page 85 a new name, *Auliza Wilsoni* Acuña is given; a name based on *Epidendrum variegatum* Hooker, not Swartz. Distribution in Cuba is given but no external range is indicated. Now the species upon which Acuña's name is based was Brazilian in origin therefore the new name, historically, applies to a Brazilian plant. If one turns to Ames, Hubbard and Schweinfurth's work, which covers the species of continental North America, he will find at least four specific names, under *Epidendrum crassilabium* Poeppig & Endlicher, that have precedence over the name proposed by Acuña.

Mr. Acuña has proposed five new species in his catalogue, *Habenaria palustris*, *Corymborchis cubensis*, *Malaxis Brittonii*, *Spathiger Roigii*, and *Cattleyopsis guanensis*. These proposals lack any attempt at Latin diagnoses and hence may not be considered as validly published in accordance with present rules of botanical nomenclature.

It should be noted, in passing, that through some slip of the pen the title page is dated "Junio 1938". The actual date of publication is possibly about June 5, 1939.

The body of the text of the catalogue is in rather pleasing and convenient form. Perhaps a little more attention to proof reading would have eliminated many typographical errors and inconsistencies in citations and have made the catalogue more authoritative.



Williams, Louis O. 1939. "Book Review." *Botanical Museum leaflets, Harvard University* 7(10), 181–182. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.295138>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/31894>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.295138>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/295138>

**Holding Institution**

Missouri Botanical Garden, Peter H. Raven Library

**Sponsored by**

Missouri Botanical Garden

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.