
Coming at a time when the supply of traditional building timbers is waning, and when closer attention is being paid to the utilization of secondary species, this excellent publication will prove most valuable to timber users.

The two tables of mechanical properties include results of 40,000 tests on 26 indigenous timbers with data on 21 overseas species included for comparison.

Although as a reference book it is the tabulated information that will be most popular and useful, the surrounding text describing the method of conducting the tests, the formulae used, and variability in timber is written in an easily understood style which will serve as a useful text book to the uninitiated and as a clear statement of the modus operandi of the tests to the engineer or the architect.

Books of this nature generally end with the tabulated results, but the last three chapters of this publication devote sixteen pages with several tables, illustrations, and graphs to the practical interpretation of results for the timber user. In the absence of data on the consequence of defects in New Zealand woods, overseas information on strength ratios for knots, shakes, wave and sloping grain is provided, and an example of the application of this data is set out.

A short bibliography is appended to the text.

The strength tables have two omissions, in that strength data for Pinus radiata and rewarewa are not included. Although the book is a study of New Zealand woods, the inclusion of overseas timbers widens its scope and the reader is almost sure to pencil in the figures for P. radiata so that he has all his major information, for the first time, in one book.

F.J.M.


This book, which has only recently come to hand, is a product of 20 years study and a large quantity of published and unpublished information has been collected and sorted to form a valuable encyclopaedia of the seed of the trees and shrubs of the United States.

The first part deals in general terms with all aspects of seed handling and behaviour. In the second and larger part of the book a wealth of information is given on the seed of 444 woody species,
both native and introduced. "Information on the seed" is possibly an underestimation as for each genus there are data on the distribution and uses of the main forest species, the seed habits, the frequency of seed crops, collection extraction and storage methods, and the results of weight, purity and germination tests. Recommended pretreatment methods are set out; germination and the growth of seedlings are illustrated by a series of drawings; and notes are given of nursery and field practice and possible diseases. The lay-out of the book is excellent and the standard of drawings and photographs is high. Genera are dealt with alphabetically—where there is more than one species the facts are given in tabular form.

Many of the species and genera dealt with in the manual are never likely to be grown in New Zealand except by arboriculturists. But the preponderance of North American conifers in our exotic forestry is such that this publication is of first class importance to those concerned with seed and nursery practice. It may also be of assistance in introducing a wider range of species for protection work. Certainly the manual has the auxiliary function of showing up the serious lack of collated information on the species used in New Zealand forestry, not only on seed but on all aspects of silviculture. It should serve for many years to set the standard to be aimed at in a manual on the native and introduced forest species of this country.

K.M.B.

The Pines of Mexico and British Honduras—By E. E. M. Loock. Bulletin No. 35 of the Union of South Africa Department of Forestry. 244 pp., 4 maps. Pretoria, S.A. Price 17/6d.

Continuous efforts have been made to introduce Mexican tree species into South Africa and small importations of seed dating from the beginning of the century gave promising results. But two factors militated against introduction on the scale contemplated—firstly the difficulty of obtaining seed in sufficient quantity and of correct botanical identity, and secondly the fact that the existing botanical descriptions were inadequate to describe many of the trees grown from Mexican seed.

In 1947-48 the author spent a year in Mexico and British Honduras on behalf of the Department of Forestry of the Union of South Africa. His mission was to settle the confusion of botanical nomenclature and to arrange for further importations of seed of desirable species, notably of Pinus pseudostrobus which has produced very promising stands in South Africa.

The bulletin contains a regional description of Mexico and British Honduras, a description of the forests by physiographic divisions, and chapters on forestry practice and on the systematics of Mexican and British Honduras pines. The botanical classification is very