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BOOK REVIEW

Acacias of South Australia, revised edition. D.J.E. Whibley & D.E. Symon (1992). pp. 328, 8 figs., 122 plates. (Government Printer, South Australia). Softbound. \$A39.95.

One of the most useful regional treatments of the genus has been David Whibley's 1981 book with the same title and it has set the pattern for this revised edition by David Symon. The revision includes the 97 species of the first edition with an additional 25 recognised for the State since its publication. The species treatments have the same structure: the correct Latin name, common name(s), bibliographic details, plant description, flowering time, distribution and notes on cultivation and affinity with other taxa. Each species treatment is on two facing pages, one of which is occupied by line drawings and (mostly) habit photographs, the other page by the description and a distribution map of occurrences in South Australia.

The first difference one notes in the revision is the additional nine pages of explanatory text that present summaries of *Acacia* biology, seeds and germination, seed dispersal, seedlings, hair types, phyllodes, cyanogens, gums, wattle bark, pollen and pollination, pigments, species distribution, chemotaxonomy, mistletoes that parasitise wattles and finally the taxonomy of the genus. These paragraphs are well-larded with literature references for those who wish to have further details.

The new edition is in a substantially larger format with a third more pages. Individual species treatments include notes on revisionary work since 1981, as well as data concerning additional uses by Aboriginal people, chemistry, etc., right up to 1991. It should be noted that recent changes in the nomenclature of the Mulga (*A. aneura*) group have been adopted but a competing taxonomy presented by Les Pedley, if adopted, would necessitate a change in the name of *A. ayersiana*. The original maps have been updated and the illustrations enlarged by about 20%. One of the most attractive parts of the new book is that the photographs in the original, many of which were poorly printed, have been replaced by high-quality colour photographs, commonly made of the plant in the field to show its habit and habitat. The same line drawings are used but with much improved definition because the lines appear much darker. Unfortunately, the line drawing of *A. pulchella*, which was not in the original, shows once-pinnate leaves instead of the bipinnate ones that characterise it.

Gardeners, nurserymen and other users will continue to applaud the simplicity of the descriptions which use a minimum of technical terms and these are defined in a glossary at the end of the volume. This is a thoroughly authoritative handbook in terms of its taxonomic coverage, botanical accuracy and clear presentation. It is well worth the price to those concerned with South Australian wattles.

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