

# **Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles. Volume I, A - C.**

W. J. BEAN. Eighth Edition.

John Murray. £8.

This book was published for the first time in 1914. Since then its immense popularity has required the publication of a fully revised eighth edition.

The first part of this introductory volume is comprised of an extensive historical account of the collection and intro-

duction of exotic trees and shrubs to these islands. The first-named authority is a William Turner, a herbalist, who in 1548 published his *Names of Herbs*, recording about thirty foreign trees and shrubs. Among the most notable collectors mentioned are Parkinson, Fraser, Douglas, Hooker, Veitch, Jeffry, Henry, Wilson and Forrest.

The cultivation of trees and shrubs is also covered. In this section considerable attention is given to propagation, hybridisation, nursery practice, pruning and the care of old trees. The actual operation of hybridisation is so well described that even the most hesitant amateur is given sufficient information to carry out this delicate operation.

The development of the taxonomy and nomenclature of plants is given in great detail. The difficulties experienced in nomenclature are appreciated when one considers the Douglas Fir saga; "Carriere, who was first to place the Douglas Fir in a separate genus, adopted the specific epithet under which it was already well known in combination with a new generic name: *Pseudotsuga douglasii*. Applying the rule of priority, however, the name was changed to *Pseudotsuga Taxifolia*, the epithet *taxifolia* having been published earlier than *douglasii*. For many years there was thus a choice of names according to one's views on priority. Subsequently an objection to the epithet *taxifolia* was found and the name *Pseudotsuga mucronata* enjoyed a brief reign. Then grounds were found for restoring *taxifolia* again, to be discredited by another means only a few years later and yet another epithet found, *menziesii*! On the basis of available evidence, *Pseudotsuga menziesii* is certainly the correct name at the time of writing, but for how long?" (p.95).

The descriptive list of genera and species includes all trees and shrubs which alphabetically range between the genera *Abelia* and *Cytisus*. The botanical description is accompanied by information on "native country, history, distinctive characteristics and merits and individual requirements." The amount of information in the book is enormous. In the genus *Berberis* 91 species are fully described with at least twice as many more varieties and cultivars of the species included. The volume also contains 77 photographs and 84 line drawings.

At £8.00, this book may be beyond the reach of most readers, but it should be made available in all libraries.

J. Dillon