

Reviews

TREES AND TIMBERS. Herbert L. Edlin. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973. Line-drawings and photos, pp. 78. Price £2.

THIS short book would not hold the interest of the adult reader. It is aimed squarely at students of Primary and Secondary school ages and it succeeds admirably in its intention.

Trees and Timbers is one of a number of books in the Local Search Series whose aim is more to stimulate rather than to teach. The main ambition of this book is to guide school children in project works relating to trees and their habitats.

In brief this short volume identifies with the help of excellent line-drawings the more common species of trees. A chapter devoted to woodland vegetation and on the effect which the dominating tree canopy has on such growth forms. Another chapter explains the process of converting a standing crop into commercial lumber. A third chapter skilfully leads the reader from the woodlands of the British Isles into the exotic forests of other lands. One section on "trees in landscape, art and literature" deserves a high degree of praise for its originality. Too few books of a forestry nature attempt to confront this important aspect of trees and forests in relation to human spirituality.

As has been mentioned the author's aim is not primarily to inform but to stimulate in his reader ideas for school projects. A book of this size could not possibly supply adequate answers to all the questions which the author raises. He expects from his readers that they will seek such answers in books of a more specific nature. On a number of occasions perhaps this technique has been carried to a fault: where answers have not been supplied to the most important questions raised, I feel that the author could have been more helpful in suggesting possible sources of information. After all his readership is of a tender age!

In chapter two it is suggested that by counting the number of branch whorls on a pine tree one can estimate the age of the tree. It is not mentioned that this method is only possible with relatively young trees. Omissions of this sort could prove irritating to the serious young reader who may accept such facts as gospel and attempt to apply them in practice.

In conclusion, considering the readership it is aimed at, perhaps this book is rather expensive at £2. However, without hesitation, I would recommend that school libraries consider purchasing a copy of *Trees and Timbers*. It will prove itself a most worthwhile addition to their shelves.

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