

## Book Reviews

### *THE INTRODUCTION OF EXOTIC SPECIES: ADVANTAGES AND PROBLEMS.*

Proceedings of a symposium (4-5 January 1979).  
Published by the Royal Irish Academy 1980.

This interesting symposium report contains fifteen papers discussing aspects of the introduction of a wide variety of plants and animals into Ireland and succeeds in giving a fairly well balanced view of the subject. Unfortunately it suffers from the lack of introductory background information, especially since the editors have favoured an arrangement which produces a logical progression from plant to animal subjects without regard to differences in the specificity of the individual papers. In particular I would have liked to have seen an introductory mention of the relative impoverishment of our native flora and fauna *vis-à-vis* those of continental Europe and N. America, and of the potential ecological instability of our species mix in the face of both natural migration and human mediated introductions. Nevertheless a fair amount of background information is available in the introductions to some of the papers and even the non-scientific reader could get a reasonable overall picture by the time he had finished the report.

The two papers that are directly relevant to forestry concern 'The role of introduced forest tree species in Ireland' (J. O'Driscoll) and 'Exotic deer in Ireland' (R. Harrington), are both fairly general. The first of these provides a concise history of Irish forests and the importation of exotic tree species and highlights the importance of a few of the latter to current forestry. However, whilst he explains the importance of genetic variability in the seed source, he fails to underline the reasons why N. American exotics such as lodgepole pine and Sitka spruce should grow well here, or why they should be superior to recent or pre-glacial 'natives' such as Scots pine and Norway spruce. His brief discussion of timber pests mentions the advantage of importing species that are resistant to endemic diseases (Japanese larch and larch canker), and the disadvantages of unwittingly introduced exotic pests (Dutch Elm disease), but he missed the interesting variant whereby the introduction of a more susceptible host might encourage the proliferation of an established, but non-epidemic, pest (Sitka spruce & Green Spruce Aphid). Harrington's paper similarly gives a concise history of Irish deer populations together with population 'guesstimates' and an indication of the pressures that they face, but I feel that foresters would probably have liked to have seen more discussion of their destructive potential and of the possible role of the Forest and Wildlife Service in their management.

Overall I found the most interesting paper to be 'Immigrant seaweeds' (E. Lambe) since this combined a consideration of the ecological effects of natural migration, accidentally aided spread and deliberate introductions in an ecosystem where control measures are very difficult to effect and thereby highlighted the complexity of the whole subject.