

Orchid Genera from Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, by Andre Schuiteman and Ed de Vogel. National Herbarium Nederland, Leiden, Netherlands (2000), 118 pages including 33 pages of color plates. NLG 50.00 (EUR 22.70); with English + Thai, + Lao, + Khmer, + Vietnamese editions. Order from National Herbarium Nederland, P.O. Box 9514, 2300 RA, Leiden, Netherlands; e-mail: zoelen@nhn.leidenuniv.nl

At last! A key to Thai *et al.* native orchid genera—a very necessary and most welcome addition to my library. The first revisional work on Thai orchids, published by the Siam Society, was done by Seidenfaden & Smitinand (1959–1965). All of this initial work was subsequently revised by Seidenfaden—a prodigious task—and was published periodically in two Danish journals.

Until a few years ago, I used mostly Holttum's *Orchids of Malaya* (1964) as a general key to determine Thai genera. This book cannot be used for many Thai genera which are outside of its range. Seidenfaden's *Orchids of Indo-China*, published in Copenhagen in 1992, proved to be very useful, especially for orchids from northern Thailand.

Schuiteman & de Vogel have finally produced a book that can be used for Southeast Asian orchids. The four countries include 174 genera and about 1400 species. The introductory pages include succinct notes on orchid diversity, distribution, conservation, and classification, a glossary, a page of orchid flower diagrams, and the key. To use this key properly, which is based mostly on flower characteristics, one must be quite familiar with orchid flower morphology and botanical terminology. The actual key is not a strict dichotomous one since it follows the general format of the generic and species keys found in the *Flora of British India* (1872–1897). The reader is given a choice of several (often more than 10) genera for basic leads, each with a few diagnostic notes applicable to each genus. Following the key, each alphabetically arranged genus has a short description, with notes on distribution, number of species, habitat, etc. The 132 color plates at the end of the book are mostly of flowers of many of the genera included in the book.

This book is exactly what Thailand has needed for years—a relatively simple and inexpensive reference that botanists and students can use in the first step to identify local orchids. A basic problem for all users is the next step after the genus has been determined. A list of references for each genus should have been included. Fortunately, Alain Mauric completed his final version of *A Bibliography of Taxonomic Revisions For Vascular Plants in Thailand* in July 1999 (see my review of this vital reference in *NHBSS* 46: 209, 1998). This work also includes references for Indo-China, Malaysia, Malesia, China, an even some world-wide revisions. References for each orchid genus, following Mauric's example, are recommended. I would have preferred a more detailed dichotomous key or one in which there are fewer genera to select from in the ultimate leads. A few more flower diagrams instead of pictures of flowers, which are of marginal taxonomic value, would certainly clarify some terms, e.g. spur, mentum, and column foot, which are not illustrated.

The authors are to be complimented on not only providing a very handy book which has been translated into four languages, but one which also continues the high standard of professionalism of the Leiden herbarium. Until all of Seidenfaden's *et al.* work is compiled for Thailand, I must still rely on my library for specific identifications.

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