

A number of species suspected of poisoning, or with a potential for poisoning (e.g. *Chilocarpus australis*; *Vinca minor*) have been included but some (e.g. *Lavatera plebeia*; *Petalostigma quadriloculare*) have been omitted. Readers may find themselves wondering if the omissions are intentional and warranted or due to an oversight (the latter cause of omission is a problem which every compiler has to struggle with, but no one completely overcomes). No doubt some of the plants which have previously been recorded as possibly poisonous have now been shown to be only very doubtfully so or else completely above suspicion. A list of these would have been an aid to any reader noticing their absence from *Poisonous plants of Australia*.

In summary—a well-produced, clearly written, information-packed book which fills a long-time gap in the list of authoritative reference works on varying aspects of Australian botany.

—HELEN I. ASTON

Author and Classified Catalogues of the Royal Botanic Gardens Library, Kew, England. (Author 5 vols., Classified 4 vols.) Published by G. K. Hall & Co., Boston, Mass., U.S.A., 1974. Recommended price (outside U.S.A.): Author catalogue \$462.00; classified catalogue US\$374.00.

The Library of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is one of the largest botanical libraries in the world. Scientific research in the Gardens is carried out in various fields, particularly in taxonomy and phytogeography in the Herbarium and in cytology, anatomy, physiology and biochemistry in the Jodrell laboratory.

These volumes give a reproduction of its Author and Classified subject catalogues and thus give a valuable (and for taxonomic work close to complete) guide to the works published by individual authors and to the literature available on many botanical subjects. The library is particularly rich in early botanical works and in works on plant taxonomy and distribution. It also covers economic botany, botanical travel and exploration as well as other disciplines of botany.

Owing to the high cost of the work the publishers have distributed only the title page, preface and first 32 pages of the Author Index for review. This much is enough to show that the work will be a mine of information for workers in smaller Herbaria with less extensive libraries. Much time will be saved by workers who discover the names of existing works on the

subject in which they are interested at an early stage of their investigations. They can then seek the work or, as will be necessary for many of rarer works, photocopies of the relevant parts.

An idea of the scope of this publication can best be given by an extended quotation from its preface.

"The Author and Classified Subject Catalogues cover the Library's holdings of books, pamphlets and separates (reprints). The Classified Catalogue includes an alphabetical subject index to its main systematic subject section.

"Some analytical entries are included, notably the biographical section of the Classified Subject Catalogue. Because the Classified Subject Catalogue has been compiled relatively recently, a small section of earlier separates has not yet been classified and therefore appears only in the author catalogue . . .

"The subject order of the Classified Catalogue has been specially adapted to the needs of the staff at Kew. Those familiar with the Dewey Decimal Classification will notice that much of the material is arranged by that scheme, but that for systematic works, the Bentham & Hooker Botanical Classification has been used; also for floras, the basis is a special geographic schedule used in the Kew Herbarium."

The publishers state that the approximately 102,000 cards in the Author Catalogue and 80,000 cards in the Classified Catalogue have been reproduced by offset on permanent/durable, acid-free paper with overlapping cards on 10" x 14" pages and that the 5-volume Author Catalogue and 4-volume Classified Catalogue have been bound in Class A library bindings.

It seems likely that many taxonomic botanists in smaller Herbaria will be grateful for this access to the catalogues of the very extensive literature available in the Library at Kew.

—MARY A. TODD