

BOOK REVIEW

Pollen: Illustrations and Scanning Electronmicrographs:
by YOZO IWANIMI, TETSUO SASAKUMA and YOSHIO
YAMADA, Kodansha, Tokyo and Springer, Berlin, 1987,
198 pp. DM 120.

This book is a strange compilation of a rather elementary (dare one say, banal?) introductory text (Genesis of Pollen and Pollen Morphology of Plants), a collection of scanning electronmicrographs which are quite independent of the text, two more advanced chapters entitled 'Pollination and Pollen Growth' and 'Physiology of Pollen', and finally three very brief chapters on Genetics of Pollen, Pollen in the Air and Pollinosis, and Pollen in Soil.

The text is full of spelling errors and nomenclatural errors of botanical names, of which I noted more than thirty, such as *Saxifnaga stelonifera* and cactus (*Cactacea* sp.). Reference to Rose bay (*Rhododendron Metternichii*) and *Tradescantia* (*Lilium*) leave one wondering which plant is being referred to. The first chapter sacrifices scientific accuracy for the sake of attempting to simplify the subject matter; for instance, we are told that the nucleus changes to become chromosomes. Amongst the illustrations, which are nicely arranged in systematic order as Figs 2.23 to 2.114, only one of the pollen morphs

of *Armeria vulgaris* (obsolete name) is featured. In the chapter on Pollination and Pollen (tube?) Growth, migration and sedimentation rates are not differentiated and we are told curtly that little is known regarding the mechanism of self-incompatibility. On page 162 it says that Fig. 4.32 shows pollen germination after 10 years in ethylalcohol (sic.) but in the legend to Fig. 4.32 it appears to have spent 10 years in butyl-alcohol. Errors such as this, which abound, do little to boost one's confidence in the text.

The two chapters on 'Pollination and Pollen Growth' and 'Physiology of Pollen', the latter of which is essentially about the physiology of pollen tube elongation, contain some useful information, and might, suitably augmented, have made a useful little book on pollen germination and pollen tube growth. The illustrations, with an appropriate text, could have made the basis of a useful pollen flora. Together they make a rather unsatisfactory compendium, neither of them fully serving its purpose.

Thus all-in-all this is not the textbook we have all been waiting for, and apart from these two chapters and the illustrations, which are both worth a quick glance, it would be difficult to recommend this book for purchase, especially in view of its comparatively high price.

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