

PROGRESS WITH THE FLORA OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Since our last meeting in 1966 a further volume of the Flora of Southern Africa has been published — actually only two weeks ago, so it is practically “hot off the press”. This is Volume 13, which consists chiefly of the family Cruciferae revised by Mr. W. MARAIS. The only other large family in Vol. 13 is Capparaceae, which was dealt with by Dr. L. E. CODD and Mr. L. KERS (*Cleome*), Mr. H. R. TÖLKEN (*Boscia* and *Capparis*), Miss J. MARSH (*Cadaba*) and myself (*Maerua*, *Bachmannia*, *Thilachium* and *Cladostemon*). The remaining smaller families were completed by Mrs. A. A. OBERMEIJER-MAUVE (Droseraceae, Roridulaceae, Podostemaceae, Hydrostachyaceae) and Dr. O. LEISTNER (Resedaceae, Moringaceae).

Four volumes are in the course of preparation, namely Volumes 9, 16, 21 and 22. In Vol. 9, only the family Myricaceae has been completed — this by myself (1969). The huge task in this volume is the Proteaceae. Considerable progress has been made by Mr. I. WILLIAMS with *Leucadendron* and Mr. J. ROURKE has published an account of *Sorocephalus* (1969) and has completed *Spatalla* and most of *Leucospermum*. Professor H. B. RYCROFT is dealing with *Protea*, and Professor DE WOLF with *Ficus* in Moraceae.

Vol. 16 comprises the family Leguminosae. Dr. Ross has almost completed *Acacia* and has started some of the other genera of Mimosoideae. In Caesalpinioideae Dr. K. GORDON-GRAY has agreed to tackle *Cassia*.

Vol. 21, consisting of four families with about 400 species, is nearing completion. Dr. H. WILD of Salisbury completed the Tiliaceae some years ago. In the Malvaceae Dr. EXELL has completed *Hibiscus*, *Allenia*, *Thespesia*, *Cienfugosia*, *Fugosia* and *Gossypium*. Dr. LEISTNER, in collaboration with Professor MEEUSE of Amsterdam, is putting the finishing touches to *Abutilon*, *Wissadula*, *Althaea*, *Malva*, *Sida*, *Pavonia*, *Lavatera* and *Modiola*. Dr. BATES of Cornell University has completed *Sphaeralcea*, *Anisodontea* and *Malvastrum*. Dr. I. C. VERDOORN has completed the Bombaceae and in the Sterculiaceae has completed *Melbania*, *Dombeya*, *Waltheria* and *Cola*. *Hermannia* is being tackled jointly by Drs. B. DE WINTER and VERDOORN. Sixty-two of the 130 species have been written up in Flora format. Mr. J. LANDMAN has completed *Sterculia*. It is probable that this will be the next volume to go to the press.

Vol. 22 is a small volume of 14 families and 112 species. The largest

family is Flacourtiaceae consisting of 34 species. I have completed this family except for the genus *Dovyalis*, which has been the subject of an M. Sc. thesis by Mrs. J. LANGENEGGER. Dr. GORDON-GRAY has volunteered to tackle Violaceae and Dr. O. HILLIARD, Begoniaceae. Dr. W. J. J. O. DE WILDE of Leiden is dealing with the world species of *Adenia* in Passifloraceae and I am hoping that he will prepare an account for us of the South African species. I am proposing to revise the family Guttiferae in collaboration with the specialist in that family, Dr. N. K. B. ROBSON of the British Museum.

Several revisions of groups not included in volumes being currently tackled have been or are being undertaken. Notable in this connection is Dr. CODD's revision of *Kniphofia*, which appeared in print last year. Among the others are BURTT and HILLIARD's revision of *Streptocarpus*, HALL's revision of *Eulophia* and JESSOP's revision of *Asparagus*. Mrs. OBERMEIJER-MAUVE is at present continuing the revision of *Gladiolus* started by the late Dr. LEWIS.

This then, is the state of the progress of the Flora of Southern Africa. In bald figures about 1100 species out of a total of over 17,000 species i. e. 7% have been revised since the F.S.A. project started in 1957. The first volume (26) appeared in 1963. At this rate the Flora will take another two centuries to complete. Dr. B. DE WINTER (1970) has estimated that with a team of five fully-trained taxonomists dealing with 150 species per year, it would take only another 18 years to complete the F.S.A. The fact is that, though the Flora team consists of seven professional taxonomists, there is not a single taxonomist working full-time on the F.S.A. Contributions are chiefly made on a part-time basis — a most unsatisfactory state of affairs to be sure.

Apart from the Flora, two other works are in hand. Dr. R. A. DYER's revision of PHILLIPS's "Genera of South African Flowering Plants" is making considerable headway. Most of the work on the dicotyledonous families has been completed and it is hoped to issue drafts of the families for the testing of keys by the end of the year. The other work is a revision by Dr. J. H. ROSS of BEWS's "Flora of Natal and Zululand". This is essentially a checklist with keys to families and genera. Dr. Ross hopes to complete this work by June 1971.

Professor LÉONARD has asked for information about recent collecting in the different A.E.T.F.A.T. countries. In South Africa collecting is proceeding apace in numerous areas particularly the Highveld Region of the Transvaal (Messrs. J. C. SCHEEPERS and J. W. MORRIS), the Orange River Valley (Dr. WERGER), Natal generally (STREY, MOLL, HILLIARD, KILICK and VAHRMEIJER), the Mariepskop area of the Eastern Transvaal (Prof. H. P. VAN DER SCHIJFF, Mrs. E. SCHOONRAAD and Mr. P. VORSTER). Dr. A. JACOT-GUILLARMOD continues collecting actively in Lesotho.

In an effort to speed up work on the F.S.A. we have introduced several taxonomic aids. The first is a card index to author abbreviations. This information is now available as a roneoed list. Also, we have a card index to abbreviations of periodicals and books; again, this is available as a roneoed

list. The third aid is a card index to location of type specimens; this is arranged alphabetically according to collectors and herbaria. Workers are encouraged to add information to these card indexes. The fourth aid is the gazeteer of "South African Place Names" prepared by the Botanical Research Institute. This eliminates the drudgery of searching for the precise location of localities on maps.

In spite of the somewhat gloomy picture I may have presented of the progress with the F.S.A., we continue to be optimistic and hope that our taxonomic resources and output will improve in the near future.

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