

## Plant resources of South-East Asia 4 Forages

Eds L. 't MANNETJE and R.M. JONES, Pudoc Scientific Publishers, Wageningen, The Netherlands, 1992. 300 pages, Hardbound. Price £275.00/US\$183.00 (excluding postage).

The hard cover edition of Forages is distributed by Pudoc but a soft cover, low priced, edition is distributed by Prosea only in the developing countries of South-East Asia and the Pacific.

This is the fourth in a series of handbooks planned by the Prosea Foundation on the plant resources of South-East Asia. Others have or will cover such subjects as Pulses, Edible Fruits, Dye & Tannin Plants, Timber Trees, Rattans, Bamboos and Vegetables.

Forages contains an Introduction (18pp) to the forage and livestock industries of the area and their production systems, limitations and means of overcoming these limitations and a brief outline of future prospects. Nine species primarily in use as food crops, such as lablab, cassava, rice and pearl millet, are briefly covered in the introduction. Of the c. 600 species thought to be eaten by animals in the region, 114 are dealt with in detail in the main section (198pp) of the book. Concluding chapters list: Chap. 3 — Minor Forages (9pp) and Chap. 4 — Forages With Other Primary Uses (9pp). These two chapters cover a further c. 500 species.

The 114 species dealt with in detail in Chap. 2 were selected after consultation with specialists throughout the region. Provided sufficient agronomic and ecological information was available, important native and naturalised forage species were included while the commercially available species from Australia, South and

Central America, as yet little used in the region, were included. Also, some temperate and subtropical legumes, showing potential in highland areas, were included.

Treatment of each species in the main section is in alphabetical order of the genera, regardless of family. Handling is essentially to a standard format. Name, Reference to original publication, Family, Chromosome No., Synonyms, Vernacular names, Origin and geographic distribution, Uses, Properties, Description, Growth and development, Other botanical information, Ecology, Propagation and planting, Husbandry, Diseases and pests, Harvesting, Yield, Genetic resources, Prospects and Literature. A line drawing is included for each entry. Authors have been selected from authorities on the particular species world wide, some 46 being used.

The editors and authors are to be congratulated on producing such a useful handbook. Each entry is clearly and concisely presented and the format used makes for ready extraction of specific items of information whenever these are required. The quality of that material is also of a high order, as would be expected from the authors used. The illustration of each species, while only a ¼ page in size, is clear and useful.

The only complaint I would have is the price. While a very useful and well presented book, I would find it very difficult to justify, if my calculation of the local price from \$US183 is correct, an investment of \$A260+ for the hard cover edition.

*D.G. Cameron*