

**REVIEW**

HIDEAKI OHBA, YOKO OTSUKI & MARK GRIFFITH: **Endangered plants of Japan – A Florilegium**. Aboc-sha & Co., Kanagawa-ken, Japan, 2004. 201 pp., 182 colour illus. ISBN 4-900358-58-4. Price: Yen 25,000 (limited numbered edition in luxury case); Yen 9,800 (paperback).

This *Florilegium* of 182 endangered plant species from Japan is an initiative of the Japanese Association of Botanical Artists. Seventy five botanical artists thereby draw attention to the beauty of these species (about 10% of the total number that are endangered in Japan): art in the service of conservation. Excellently reproduced colour illustrations on loose sheets are accompanied by a volume of bilingual texts (Japanese and English) containing names, synonymy, concise descriptions and notes on the distribution, uses and conservation status (usually defined by progressive loss of the already limited natural habitats) for each of the species. Brief biographical notes on the individual artists are unfortunately printed in Japanese only. The membership of the Japanese Association of Botanical Illustration ranges from enthusiastic amateurs to skilled botanical artists. A great diversity in artistic quality and style of the plates is the logical outcome. However, produced under the supervision of an experienced botanist (Professor Ohba) the information content of the illustrations is rich, and most plates can compete with the best in botanical literature by internationally famous professionals. The botanical text is contributed by Hideaki Ohba, Yoko Otsuki is responsible for the English translation assisted by Mark Griffith as translation technical advisor.

Hopefully, this publication will contribute greatly to the awareness of the beauty and value of endangered plant species among the Japanese public. For botanical libraries this *Florilegium* is a welcome source of information on interesting, and rarely pictured representatives of the Japanese flora.

PIETER BAAS