

## THE BOTANY OF VITI LEVU.

The vegetation of the largest island (Viti Levu) is greatly influenced by the central dividing range, the distance from the coast, and height above sea level.

A striking feature of Suva is the intensity of colour produced by flowering trees and shrubs, mainly exotic plants. Included in these are hibiscus plants of every colour and shape, Poinciana (Flamboyant) trees, red Ixora, red and yellow Caesalpinias, pink Bauhinia, Bougainvillea, Crotons, Dracaenas and Caladiums.

Amongst fruits one finds coconuts, papaws, (*Carica papaya*) Breadfruit (*Artocarpus*) Mangos, pineapples, bananas, custard apples, passionfruit, soursops and many citrus fruits.

Root vegetables include taro (dolo), Kumara, tapioca and yams. Sugar cane is plentiful, the plantations being worked by Indians. Indians also grow rice, maize, peanuts and eggfruit.

The road around the coast passes through bush, coastal communities, open land, native villages and gardens, coconut plantations and mangrove swamps. The bush is superficially very like that of N.Z. with many similar genera. There is a prevalence of tree ferns and lianes. Timber trees include the Fiji kauri (*Agathis vitiensis*) and the ivi (*Inocarpus edulis*). Rubber plantations are now being worked again.

Coastal scenery is typified by pandanus trees, coconuts and casuarinas. Many beaches are almost covered with a purple convolvulus and the climber *Entada scandens* (Fam. Leguminosae) is common. Other trees include *Tournefortia argentea*, *Excaecaria agallocha* and species of *Barringtonia*.

A fringing reef follows the coastline except near the mouths of rivers. No naturalist in Fiji should miss a trip out on one of the reefs. They contain a wealth of marine fauna and seaweeds, corals, coelenterates, echinoderms and corries predominating.

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