

BOOK REVIEW

THE CULTIVATION OF NEW ZEALAND TREES AND SHRUBS

L.J. Metcalf

Firstly, the dust cover pleases, with its subtle combination of the practical and the beautiful. The title does not indicate all that lies within. No matter. Whether one's interest is centred in nature study, botany or horticulture, there is an exhaustive, clear and stimulating fund of information, presented in a very readable form. The author is no dabbler. All this material is drawn from his wide practical experience, and from acute observation during many years of study. The amateur begins to feel he may approach even the coprosmas with some hope of coming to terms with them. The expert will not find it easy to be critical.

Chapter 2 on nomenclature makes a clear statement on plant naming that should help the puzzled amateur. All will agree that a euphonic name will be accepted and remembered much more readily than an ugly, awkward one. The author should be allowed his tilt at *Hiemerliodendron* and the like.

The beautiful illustrations, both photographs and sketches, have been carefully selected, and are of high quality reproduction. The sketches are particularly informative, both of detail and of plant character. For example, look at *Hebe raoulii* (p.134) - identity unmistakable. The less botanically inclined will be charmed with the pictures in colour. Those interested in photography will appreciate especially the quality of the black and white illustrations.

By careful arrangement of subject matter, the author has avoided the tedious repetition common in books of this nature. Cultural directions are so worded that they can be applied throughout New Zealand, not just in a particular province.

Through apposite reference to historical and geographical detail, as well as to interesting incidents, a touch of romance has crept in - and welcome too. Gardeners, if they do as bid, should have satisfying success. Scientists will find their fields enriched. One even hopes that the average New Zealander may begin to awaken to the richness and interest of his botanical heritage. The completeness and accuracy of this book place it far ahead of any of its rivals - a book to use, to enjoy and to keep handy.

Peg Aiken

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