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BOOK REVIEW

GEESINK, R., LEEUWENBERG, A. J. M., RIDSDALE, C. E., VELDKAMP, J. F.: THONNER'S ANALYTICAL KEY TO THE FAMILIES OF FLOWERING PLANTS. Leiden Botanical Series Vol. 5. — Leiden University Press, The Hague—Boston—London 1981, Martinus Nijhoff-Publ. BV., The Hague, The Netherlands. XXVI + 231 pp. Paperback Dfl. 38.50, US \$ 21.00.

With some experience, the plant families commonly encountered in one's area of interest can soon be learnt, but it is more difficult to identify specimens from other places, notably those from the rich subtropics and tropics. Basically, only a few keys to the families of flowering plants of the world have ever been produced, the best known of which at present is Hutchinson's Key to the Families of Flowering Plants (1967, 1973). The excellent key prepared by the Austrian Franz Thonner (Anleitung zum Bestimmen der Familien der Blütenpflanzen, ed. 2, 1917), has now been translated and brought up to date by four prominent Dutch botanists. The number of key couplets has increased from 812 in the 1917 edition, to 2117 in the present one. On the whole the key is as simple as possible but highly technical questions which need some botanical experience and a good dissecting microscope could not be avoided. Some will therefore find it at first a difficult book to use. Nevertheless, the key provides a useful means for plant identification, and it forces the student to make a clear and careful analysis and logical interpretation of the various parts of the plant.

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