BOOK REVIEW


The book represents results of the 35 years long work of geneticist and horticulturist Richard Janes - a pioneer in growing, breeding, and selecting new cultivars of *Kalmia*. The author shows history and all important aspects of recent domestication of the genus.

The genus *Kalmia* L., phylogenetically relatively primitive member of the family *Ericaceae*, consists of seven species growing exclusively in North America and Cuba. One of its species, *K. latifolia* is widely cultivated now as ornamental shrub and introduced in gardens of west and central Europe.

The book consist of 16 chapters. The first chapters describe botanical characteristics of *Kalmia* and information about determination, taxonomy, diversity, and distribution of all wild growing taxa of this genus (written by J.E. Ebinger), as well as all named selections of *Kalmia* known up to now. Each of about 80 cultivars is described from the point of view of morphology, origin, and horticultural properties. Most of other chapters are devoted to cultivation, propagation, landscaping, and disease protection. Chapters 14 - 16 deal with interspecific crossing ability, techniques for controlling crosses, and inheritance of flower and foliage traits. The text is excellently supported by 140 colour plates with photographs documenting not only beauty of many *Kalmia* cultivars, but also character of natural localities of most of *Kalmia* species.

All in all again a brilliantly written monograph based on career-long work of the author, surely able to encourage others to pursue further improvements in cultivation, selection, hybridizing, or even scientific investigation of *Kalmia* species (cf. questions and tasks postulated in an appendix of the book, e.g. Why the first-generation crosses between *Kalmia* species are so variable?, or Much needs to be learned about mycorrhiza of laurel, as well as other ericaceous plants...).

J. ŠTĚPÁNEK (Praha)