

The author deserves the genuine gratitude of the user community for his dogged perseverance in achieving this low profile but essential, user-friendly *vademecum*. Ensuring a wide net of assistance has been decisive for success: resourceful benefactors took care of the finances (only his sympathetic wife may know how much has been siphoned off from the family budget to fill in gaps!), the regional herbaria for plant identification, preparation of text figures and photographs. I shall indicate a number of positive features and conclude with some points for attention for the future.

The keys are conventional, but carry the stamp of a practitioner. The nomenclature is generally up to date (till about 2001), and mentioning of the more common synonym(s) helpful. The descriptions are methodical and generally comparable. Giving the duration of only the flowering (and not of fruits) vouches for authenticity of information! The photographs are carefully chosen and are a help for identification, despite indifferent colour reproduction in some cases. The text figures, by and large, represent the less known species, though in some genera like *Lindernia*, *Murdannia*, etc. several species are illustrated. All in all, a worthwhile contribution.

The following remarks are less a criticism than an aid for improvement. The work, being truly a 'pocket flora' (covering only a taluk, and without the nomenclatural apparatus), can dispense with the family and generic characters, or at least have them considerably shortened, in favour of enriched species descriptions. This will significantly shorten the text without sacrificing essential information. The text figures have suffered from smudging probably owing to excessive reduction from the original plate and/or heavy shading. Indication of the scale of the figures would have been helpful. Exposing the draftsman to some good recent illustrations would have made for comparable plates as also avoiding diagrammatic sketches, especially of stamens and

pistil(s). All *genera* being illustrated may be kept as an ideal. Separate indices to text figures and photographs would have been helpful. The herbarium, as the resource base, should be carefully curated. A 'consultation herbarium' with 1 or 2 sheets per species can serve the uninitiated user, and avoid damage to the resource herbarium.

Though the price is not excessive, the book is beyond the ordinary means of the user community (students and teachers, etc.). Well-wishers contributing towards a subsidy for publication costs is essential to ensure that such a really useful work does not largely remain confined to library shelves.

These suggestions can be taken into account in preparing a vernacular edition since reaching out to the non-English speaking public door-delivery of knowledge of plants to the commoner is ever more decisive in involving the wider community to the care of nature.

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Standard Model for Beginners. K. K. Sinha. Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd, A-104, Mayapuri Phase II, New Delhi 110 064. 2002. 113 pp. Price not mentioned.

The current standard model of particle physics is a partially unified quantum gauge field theory for electromagnetic and weak interactions, which exhibits a broken $SU(2) \times U(1)$ symmetry together

with the $SU(3)$ symmetric quantum chromodynamics (QCD) of strong interactions. It gives a satisfactory account of the interaction of fundamental particles, which are quark, leptons and gauge bosons.

K. K. Sinha has made timely and worthwhile attempts to describe the above features of the standard model to beginners. However, there should have been more step-by-step derivations of some of the important results, if the text is for beginners. Perhaps the author expects the students to work out the underlying steps. The review of the recent electron-positron collider experiments to confirm the standard model, exploration to prove the existence of Higgs boson and the problem of mass generation are nicely given in this abridged version of the standard model.

Again, a book written for beginners must follow the historical chronology of the development of the subject. For example, the gradual refinement of the form of current-current interaction originally suggested by Fermi, the discovery of parity violation which led to the vector minus axial vector ($V-A$) structure of current and Cabibbo's hypothesis that the weak currents of hadrons have definite $SU(3)$ transformation properties required for the description of decay of strange particles in the current-current coupling scheme, are not dealt in proper sequence. The author has mixed elementary and advanced topics, which makes learning difficult. The book contains some misprints as well. Graduate students will find the book useful because there are few books written at an elementary level on this difficult subject, avoiding the complexity of quantum field theory.

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