

Book Review

by

THOMAS, A.: *Gardening in Hot Countries*

Faber & Faber, London, £1/10/—.

In writing a book on the subject of gardening in hot countries it is not possible to cover fully those aspects of horticulture which are peculiar or typical of each and every country. Even within the tropics there is a tremendous range in the climates and soils which to a great extent determine the types of gardening methods practised. In Singapore for instance where the soil is predominantly clay the traditional Chinese method of growing pot plants in burnt clay supplemented with dried cow dung and rotted soya bean cake is very typical of Malaysia and obviously the best form of pot plant culture in the region. One can also quote other examples which are typical of gardening of a particular country.

Nevertheless the publication is an excellent and painstaking effort on the part of the author to cover as much ground as one possibly can on the various forms of gardening as practised in the hot countries particularly in the African region.

The author has presented very vividly the difficulties and problems the gardener has to face in the tropics and many of his suggestions and ideas as a result of long experience of gardening in the tropics are very practical and would apply equally to the hot countries, be they in Africa, Asia, Australia or America.

A great deal of the book is spent on the precise descriptions of the many tropical plants. This is most useful, as the gardener must know his plants before he can grow them. Photographs to illustrate some of the plants are well taken but some of the captions need looking into. For example *Plumieria obtusifolia* should read as *Plumeria obtusifolia* and *Renanthera coccinea* is in fact *Arachnis maingayi*.

I am sure this book will prove of immense value to both the gardening enthusiasts and horticulturists alike.

A. G. ALPHONSO