



Ferns and Fern-allies of Sikkim: A Pictorial Handbook, Part-II. B. S. Kholia. Department of Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management, Government of Sikkim and Botanical Survey of India, Gangtok. 2014. ix + 291 pp. Price not mentioned.

The field botanists working in the Eastern Himalaya would be happy to know that the part-II of the *Ferns and Fern-allies of Sikkim* has come out. The first part of this book was published in 2010. Incidentally, I wrote a short review about part-I in *Current Science* (volume 99). The first part became very popular among the botanists, naturalists and conservation agencies. It has helped in creating general awareness about the ferns and fern-allies which are otherwise a neglected group of plants. Other reviews about part-I can also be seen in *American Fern Journal* (2010) and *Indian Fern Journal* (2010). The most important

highlight of part-I is the user-friendly illustrations and descriptions of the species along with colour plates for about 150 species of ferns and lycophytes found in Sikkim Himalaya.

The book under review includes a total of 262 taxa of ferns and fern-allies from Sikkim Himalaya which were not described in part-I. Diagnostic features of all the taxa for easy field identification have been given along with colour photographs. Other information for each species includes authentic scientific name; available English name, common and local names; habitat and distribution; field characters; and good quality field photographs (2–6 per taxa) highlighting diagnostic characters. The ecologists and naturalists working in the eastern Himalaya including parts of Nepal, Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh, China, Myanmar, Thailand, Taiwan will find this volume an excellent companion in the field, as many species of ferns are common in these regions.

The author, in a brief preface, has explained the purpose of the volume along with a few notes, referring to some corrections required in the first part. In the main body of the book all the taxa are enumerated alphabetically for easy use in the field. The book also describes a few novelties for the state, viz. *Pichisermolodes fraserjenkinsii* (sp. nov.), two new varieties, viz. *Thelypteris mollissima* var. *truncata* and *Tectaria coadunata* var. *elongata*, and one new forma *Polystichum thomsonii* forma *himalayensis*, all described as new to science from the state of Sikkim.



Equisetum diffusum D. Don.

In a nutshell, the present book is an important contribution to science. This book will definitely enthuse the students and teachers of plant taxonomy alike. It is a timely addition to the literature on plant taxonomy, as most of the earlier books on Indian pteridophytes are based on old nomenclature.

The author Kholia deserves complements for his excellent work based on dedicated field work in the state of Sikkim. It would be desirable that the next edition of the field guide would combine both the parts for much easier use in the field. It is hoped that the author will continue and extend his area of operation across other phytogeographic regions of India with the same zeal and devotion.

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