

## REVIEWS

# The Useful and Ornamental Plants of Trinidad and Tobago (Revised Fourth Edition)

BY

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THE revised fourth edition has brought this useful publication up to date and the authors are to be congratulated on making such a success of it in spite of its having been prepared in Zanzibar, far away from Trinidad. It is unfortunate that the hope to include illustrations had to be sacrificed in order to meet popular demand for a cheaper book. The cheapness should make a larger public use it than would otherwise have been possible. It is hoped, however, that illustrations will be included in a future edition.

The original edition of this book was under the authorship of W. G. Freeman and R. O. Williams, and published in 1927. It must have been deservedly popular, meeting a long-felt need, for a second revised edition to have been published the next year (1928). Its object, as stated in the preface to the second edition, was to give general information about the plants, whether native or introduced, of interest in Trinidad and Tobago, for their useful and ornamental qualities. Such information lying scattered in numerous publications has been brought together in a form with appeal to a wide public.

The lists of plants under various headings such as "Major Plantation Crops", "Fodder Crops and Grasses", "Medicinal Drugs and Narcotics", under which the botanical name, common name, and uses are tabulated, are a commendable feature. These lists at the beginning of the book show at a glance the subject-matter in summary, and detailed information may be obtained by reference to the botanical name to which also cross-reference is given against the common name. While in the main the arrangement is alphabetical and detailed information is given under each botanical name, plants belonging to certain groups such as Orchids, Ferns, and Grasses, are treated under the group heading. Taking for example Grasses, the information is given under the sub-divisions (I) Grasses, Fodder, (II) Grasses for Lawns, and (III) Grasses, Pasture.

The addition of keys in simple language referring to easily observable diagnostic characters is very helpful in identification of the plants and is a much desired feature, though usually lacking in similar works. The help of several authorities has been secured for their special subjects, as for example Prof. E. E. Cheesman for the notes on *Musa*, and this enhances the value of the work. The cultural notes at the end of the book are given mainly to assist local gardeners and particularly those who are anxious to grow more food for home consumption.

Most of the world's wealth of useful and ornamental plants suited to a particular climatic region have been successfully introduced to practically every country with a similar climate, and many of the plants dealt with in the book are familiar to the people of Ceylon as well as to those of other tropical countries. To such people, interested in useful and ornamental plants, whether as professional planters, foresters, and horticulturists, or as amateur gardeners and vegetable growers, this handbook will be a useful addition to the available literature.

Peradeniya, August 28, 1952.

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