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Yale University School of Forestry

TROPICAL WOODS

NUMBER 7 SEPTEMBER 1, 1926

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Yale University School of Forestry

TROPICAL WOODS

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A technical journal devoted to the furtherance of knowledge of tropical woods and forests and to the promotion of forestry in the Tropics.

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THE EDITOR VISITS CENTRAL AMERICA

The editor had the privilege of visiting British Honduras and Guatemala last winter (January–March) under particularly favorable circumstances. As the guest of the Forestry Department of British Honduras he was afforded every facility for studying forest conditions and making collections in different parts of the Colony. He is especially indebted to his Excellency, Governor John Alder Burdon, to Conservator of Forests J. N. Oliphant, to Asst. Conservator Duncan Stevenson, in charge of the Northern Districts, and Asst. Conservator Neil S. Stevenson, in charge of the Southern Districts.

Forestry work, notably the improvement of young mahogany, "banak," and a few other species, was seen to good advantage in the Middlesex area and Silk Grass Reserve, Stann Creek District. Experiments with local hardwoods for crossties on the British Honduras Railway were explained by

present day" is by Mr. Ralph Erskine. Here, as elsewhere, the text is beautifully and lavishly illustrated.

The two appendices include a "Technical description of mahogany" and "Architectural hints on mahogany," the latter by Mr. Kenneth M. Murchison.

Forestry in Haiti. By Wm. R. Barbour. *Yale Forest School News* 14: 3: 44–45, July 1926.

"In 1924 the Service Technique, a Department of Agriculture for the Republic, was organized under the direction of Doctor Geo. F. Freeman, and an American staff was assembled, including a chemist, a plant pathologist, an entomologist, a veterinarian, a horticulturalist, etc., their duties falling under the direction of a Director of Agronomy and a Director of Agricultural Teaching.

"In January, 1925, a Division of Silviculture was formed with the writer as Director, and in February practical work began. Appropriations totalled $25,000 which included both Forestry and the introduction of sisal."

"The first step in forestry proper was to make a reconnaissance of the island and study the existing species, the soil, topography, rainfall, and other factors. This has not been completed, but a great part of the republic has been covered, partly on foot, part by automobile, part on horseback, and some of the least accessible portions by aëroplane. The latter method has proven especially valuable in preliminary work."

"Haiti's commercial development has been so retarded that it is believed that forestry work has been begun in time to produce merchantable timber when needed. Fast growing species like wattle can produce firewood in seven years, before any shortage of fuel is apt to develop. It is not believed that Haiti will ever have to import firewood, as do the sugar centrals in Porto Rico, Barbados, and other islands. Logwood also grows rapidly, and new stands can probably be matured before the existing supplies are exhausted, at least at the present rate of exportation.

"There are in Haiti large areas of 'gommier,' whose wood is light, soft, and fairly tough. It has not been used because artificial drying methods are necessary to prevent warping and staining. It is hoped that a sawmill and dry kiln can be bought next year, and experiments carried on to produce 'gommier' lumber for construction purposes, crating material, and other uses to replace imported pine. Eventually, with improved transportation facilities, the pine regions should supply goodly amounts of rough lumber.

"During the ten remaining years of the American occupation, if appropriations continue adequate, it is hoped that great progress in forestry can be made. The silvicultural problems are complex, and there are few available data, but tropical rotations are so short that exact data on growth and silvicultural requirements can be obtained much quicker than in temperate regions. Haiti is centrally located in the Caribbean region, with a flora representative of the entire region from Venezuela to Florida and from the Leeward Islands to Mexico, so that data obtained here will be applicable over a wide territory. This is especially true on account of the widely varying topographic, soil, and climatic conditions. From a forester's viewpoint, there probably is no more interesting region in all tropical America than the backward, but potentially rich and important, Republic of Haiti."

Arbol del balsamo, *Toluifera Pereirae* (Klotzch) Baill. By Maximino Martínez. *Boletín de la Dirección de Estudios Biológicos* (Mexico) 3: 3: 49–51, May 1926.

Contains a description of the tree which produces the so-called "balsam of Peru," the various common names, methods of collecting the balsam, the uses of the material, analyses of the balsam, brief history, and bibliography.

Amapa prieta. By Jesus Gonzalez Ortega. *Mexico Forestal* 4: 3–4: 31–35, Mar.–Apr. 1926.

The "amapa prieta" (*Tabebuia Palmeri* Rose) is a tree 20 to 40 feet high and 8 to 24 inches in diameter, growing in all parts of the State of Sinaloa at altitudes of from 30 to 1300 feet. It requires from 100 to 150 years to reach maturity. The foliage, which is dense from July to October, is cast at the beginning of the flowering season. From November to March the trees are covered with beautiful white, lilac, or rose-colored

flowers which render the crowns conspicuous at long distances. The wood, which is obtained in pieces 16 to 20 feet long and 16 inches square, is of a greenish brown color and very dense (sp. gr. 1.02 to 1.10) and strong. The vessels contain abundant deposits of lapachol and the dust arising in milling operations produces reddish stains on the sweat-moistened portions of the laborers' clothing and also gives rise to a mild form of dermatitis. The timber is highly valued for house posts, beams, sills, and door and window frames; also for railway ties, fence posts, fuel and charcoal.

Tabebuia chrysantha (Jacq.) Nicholson yields a wood similar in properties and uses to the foregoing and is often confused with it in the timber trade. *Tabebuia pentaphylla* (Juss.) Hemsl., known as "amapola" or "amapa rosa," has a wood lighter in color and softer which is very good for cabinet-making. This wood is free from lapachol.

Report on the forests of British Honduras with suggestions for a far-reaching forest policy. By C. HUMMEL. Reprinted for the Forest Trust, Belize, 1925. Pp. 122; 5½ x 8½; 1 map. Price $1.00, postpaid.

"As this report constitutes the standard work on the forests of British Honduras, and the basis of the accepted forest policy of the Government, it was decided by the Forest Trust to reprint it in more convenient form, with the addition of an index. Revision has not been feasible. The report, written about four years ago, still gives an accurate presentment of the economic and forest problems of the Colony, and of the lines on which it is hoped to solve them. Substantial progress has been made, and some of the potentialities indicated, notably the pine and secondary woods industries and the silvicultural development of Mahogany and Sapodilla forests, have since become realities."—Introduction by J. N. OLIPHANT, Conservator of Forests, March 6, 1926.

Manual de las plantas usuales de Venezuela. By H. PITTIER. Caracas, 1926. Pp. 458 + xvi; 6½ x 9½; 42 half-tone plates.

This large volume is a notable contribution to the knowledge of Venezuelan plants and represents years of careful investigation on the part of the author. Dr. Pittier is also well known for his work in Central America, and those interested in tropical forestry are especially indebted to him for his contributions to the knowledge of the trees, particularly in Panama and Costa Rica.

This manual begins with a prologue by Dr. Lisandro Alvarado and a short preface by the author. The introduction covers 92 pages and is divided into three sections: (1) Investigation of the flora of Venezuela and the present status of our knowledge with regard to the same; (2) Outline of the distribution of the plants in Venezuela (with reference to topography, climate, and various formations); (3) The common plants of Venezuela (with reference to their uses and economic importance).

The enumeration of the common plants of Venezuela requires 320 pages. The arrangement is alphabetical on a basis of the common names. The information given includes the scientific name, the family, and synonyms; brief description of the plant; locality of growth; uses. There are numerous illustrations showing forest scenes, trees, leaves, flowers, fruits, etc.

The manual concludes with a list of the scientific names with their vernacular equivalents (pp. 415–452), and a bibliography (pp. 453–8).

Anatomical characters and identification of the important woods of the Japanese Empire. (In Japanese.) By RYOZO KANEHIRA. Report No. 4, Dept. of Forestry, Gov. Research Institute, Taihoku, Formosa, 1926. Pp. 297; 7½ x 10; 31 plates, mostly photomicrographs; keys, tables, indexes.

A comprehensive work, the first half of which is concerned with anatomical details, the second with descriptions of the woods by families and keys for their identification. Those who cannot read the text will nevertheless find the many excellent photomicrographs and sketches and the various tables exceedingly useful.