



Book review

Zambian Plants: Their Vernacular Names and Uses, D.G. Fowler. Kew Publishing, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, UK (2007). 298 pp., references, index, £50.00, \$107.50 (pb), ISBN: 978-1-84246 212 6

This is a reference book on vernacular names and uses of Zambian useful plants. It is written by a Methodist minister who spent eight years in Zambia and became intrigued by the country's biocultural diversity. Aside from a short introduction, the book includes five parts which essentially list the relevant information:

- Families and species with local names and plant uses.
- Species without local plant names, with uses.
- Local names of plants not yet identified, with uses.
- Local names linked with scientific names.
- Ailments and remedies.

It is encouraging to see that the importance of vernacular names is recognised in botanical circles, too. It is not possible to

assess how comprehensive the information is, but overall about 8200 examples of plant uses are included. As far as I can tell the botanical nomenclature is up to date, but this certainly is to be expected from a book published by one of the world's leading botanical institutions. However, only very limited information on how the vernacular names were obtained and transcribed is provided. Since this is essentially an ethnofloristic list, the reviewer has to content himself to saying that it is of interest in anyone who is involved in research on Zambian plants and their uses. As importantly it is a repository of knowledge about local and traditional uses and plants currently used in Zambia.

Michael Heinrich*

*Centre for Pharmacognosy and Phytotherapy,
The School of Pharmacy, University London,
29-39 Brunswick Sq., London WC1N 1 AX, UK*

* Fax: +44 20 7753 5909.

E-mail address: j.ethnopharmacol@pharmacy.ac.uk

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