

other thrush species that you might confuse it with. Side A finishes with a brief discussion of other calls that you might confuse with nocturnal thrush calls, such as the call of the Bobolink, giving cuts of those calls. Evans even admits that there are some calls he cannot yet identify, and gives examples of them. Finally Side A ends with three practice sequences, which mix and match various species' calls. (Answers are given on the cassette's liner notes.)

Side B consists of four long cuts, unedited, from nocturnal recording sessions. You hear thrush notes against typical night sound backgrounds—insect noises, owls, cows lowing, distant trains and airplanes. In each case the thrush notes are faint at first, then gradually increase in volume as the birds descend from migration at dawn. You find yourself saying, "Hey, there's a Gray-cheek", or, if you listen from a comfortable couch, you fall fast asleep. In either case the effect is fantastic.—Robin Carter.

## COLLINS GUIDE TO TROPICAL PLANTS

W. Lötschert and G. Beese. William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., London. 1981 (reprinted 1988 by the Stephen Greene Press, Lexington, Massachusetts; distributed by Viking Penguin Inc., 40 W. 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10010). ISBN 0 00 2191121.

This introduction to tropical plants will prove a good companion for the traveler first visiting the tropics or tropical botanical gardens. Although the book purports to address both professional and amateur botanists, the amateur will find it much more useful as a colorful introduction to the diversity of tropical ornamental and economic plants. These are the plants that the tourist is most likely to encounter on a visit to the tropics. The plates and brief descriptions vividly portray the plants most commonly seen in markets and streets in many tropical countries. For these reasons this book could serve as an interesting memoir of a vacation. As a guide, it will provide an instructive companion for a visit to one of this country's tropical botanical gardens, such as Fairchild Tropical Garden (Miami) or Waimea Falls Park (Oahu, Hawaii). Timber trees and medicinal plants have been excluded from the book, which is just as well considering the enormous number of plants in these two categories and the infrequency that they are seen by the amateur botanist.

The book is divided into three main sections: Introduction, Ornamental Plants, and Economic Plants. In addition, there are 274 color photographs that fill just under one third of the pages. The first section introduces the reader to the general features of the tropics and of tropical plants. Sections on tropical plants in mythology, art and stamps are included. Each of the other sections consists solely of descriptions of individual plants, keyed to their photographs. In addition to a non-technical description of each species, information is provided on flowering time, origin, distribution, and ecological requirements.

Unfortunately, no key is provided, making it difficult to identify unknown plants despite the authors' protestations to the contrary. Despite this shortcoming, Collins Guide to Tropical Plants can serve as a stimulating introduction to the diversity of tropical ornamental and economic plants.—Bruce K. Kirchoff