

Reviews

Henry Duflot, *Le Frêne en Liberté*. Edition IDF, Paris, 1995. Pp. 192, 15.5 × 24 cm. Many colour photographs, figures and tables. Price FF170 (paperback). ISBN 2-904740-43-0.

Review by Pierre Binggeli

Most books on silviculture tend to be pretty ordinary, but Henry Duflot's on the silviculture of *Fraxinus excelsior* certainly isn't. The book is based on the author's life experience in producing high quality ash on the land of north-eastern France devastated during World War I. It is most original in mixing a wealth of information on ash with a plethora of anthropomorphisms and religion. For instance, the first three pages of text summarize the Old Testament's creation of the earth and life until God created the ash. Elsewhere much factual information is wrapped in flowery and strong human day-to-day language. Competition is expressed in terms of 'fratricidal war' poorly shaped saplings as 'irrecoverable delinquents' and ash is said to have 'suicidal tendencies'.

Although the book reads more like a novel than a scientific publication, Duflot makes a strong case for the use of quality broadleaves, and ash in particular, in forestry. He addresses the needs of private woodland and management while rejecting modern plantation forestry. The silvicultural methods he outlines are based on thorough understanding of ash and historical events. He considers in detail the factors affecting the production of high quality ash timber including pests, diseases, environmental and human factors. The importance of thinning and pruning are emphasized throughout. In the case of pruning the timing and intensity of the operation is well described and illustrated, and the importance of the June pruning is stressed. The control of the understorey vegetation, but bramble in particular, is unusual and crafty. An ancient iron cart-wheel tyre, formerly used to transport canons and still commonly found abandoned around old farmsteads, is dragged behind an old tractor which, if needed, can reverse without having to detach the tyre. Natural regeneration, species mixtures and harvesting are also looked into.

Due to the limited use of the literature (30 refer-

ences seven of which were not read) the book is, at times, clearly deficient in accuracy, but the author's style makes this somewhat acceptable. The description of the ash reproductive biology as 'whimsical for these amiable transvestites' may not quite reflect reality but nevertheless this is more tolerable than the inaccurate description given in most floras and forestry books. At times little or no information is provided and this is particularly noticeable in the section dealing with the ash soil requirements.

Throughout, the text is illustrated by a number of excellent photographs and the book is well produced. In the absence of an index and with the use esoteric headings the book can not be readily used to find out about specific points of information. Anyone interested in ash and broadleaf silviculture should consider acquiring this unusual book, although its style might be slightly over the top for readers with a basic knowledge of French.

C.J. Jepma, *Tropical Deforestation: a Socio-economic Approach*. Earthscan Publications, London, 1995. Pp. xiii, 316, 23.5 × 15.5 cm. 6 appendices, 46 tables, 33 figures, 4 boxes, 210 references, index. Price £18.95 (paperback). ISBN 1-85383-238-3.

Review by J. Burley

The public and political awareness of the occurrence of tropical deforestation has never been higher through the media of magazines, newspapers, and television; professional resource managers have been closely concerned with the issue since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and in recent years there have been innumerable agency reports, international initiatives, research projects and conference papers on the causes and rates of loss of tropical forests. However, there have been few integrated studies and models of the causes and predictions of the effects of deforestation to compare with this volume; to quote the description on the cover, '... offers a new perspective on the economic imperatives which encourage indigenous populations to encroach upon their own forests,