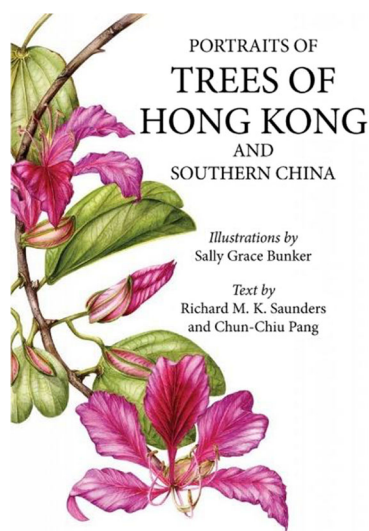




Book Review

(Edited by A. Marshall)



Richard M. K. Saunders & Chun-Chiu Pang, illustrated by **Sally Grace Bunker**. *Portraits of trees of Hong Kong and Southern China*. 290 pp. : col. ill. Hong Kong: Earnshaw Books, 2019. <https://earnshawbooks.com/>, e-mail: orders@earnshawbooks.com. ISBN 9789888552030. Price £70.00, widely available.

Hong Kong is fascinating to botanists and ecologists for, although its coastal slopes have long been barren, its hinterland still sustains fragments of the South China inland evergreen and pine forests, richest and most ancient of all subtropical floras, while patches of surviving mangrove disclose frost-free coastal refuges. This is an elegant presentation of fruiting or flowering twigs of over 140 trees and some shrubs, including many exotics but also an impressive proportion of the 390 known natives.

Both residents and visitors can admire Sally Grace Bunker's magnificent and precise paintings, and her hand drawings of habit and bark detail. The exotic *Bauhinia* will be familiar to most, but the *Bombax ceiba*, whose pods once yielded flock for pillows, the Malaysian jambu or rose apple, *Syzygium jambos*, and the candle-nut *Aleurites moluccana* may come as a surprise, as will species more familiar in tropical montane forest such as *Engelhardia roxburghiana* and *Rhodoleia championii*. Depictions of species widespread in the regrowth of equatorial South-East Asia, such as *Cratogeomys cochinchinensis*, *Mallotus paniculatus*,

Acronychia perdunculata and *Macaranga tanarius* will encourage the inquisitive to search some out on Mount Victoria. Species of the frost-free coastline as well as the inland copses are included.

This is a book for the naturalist rather than the professional botanist, for flower and fruit details are absent although summarised in the text; nor do the sketches detail the branching architecture and positions of inflorescences so essential for the identification of freestanding individuals; and there are few habitat or location indications. Notwithstanding, Saunders and Pang have regaled us with arcane revelations of ancestry and relationships revealed by the current delvings of the molecular geneticists.

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