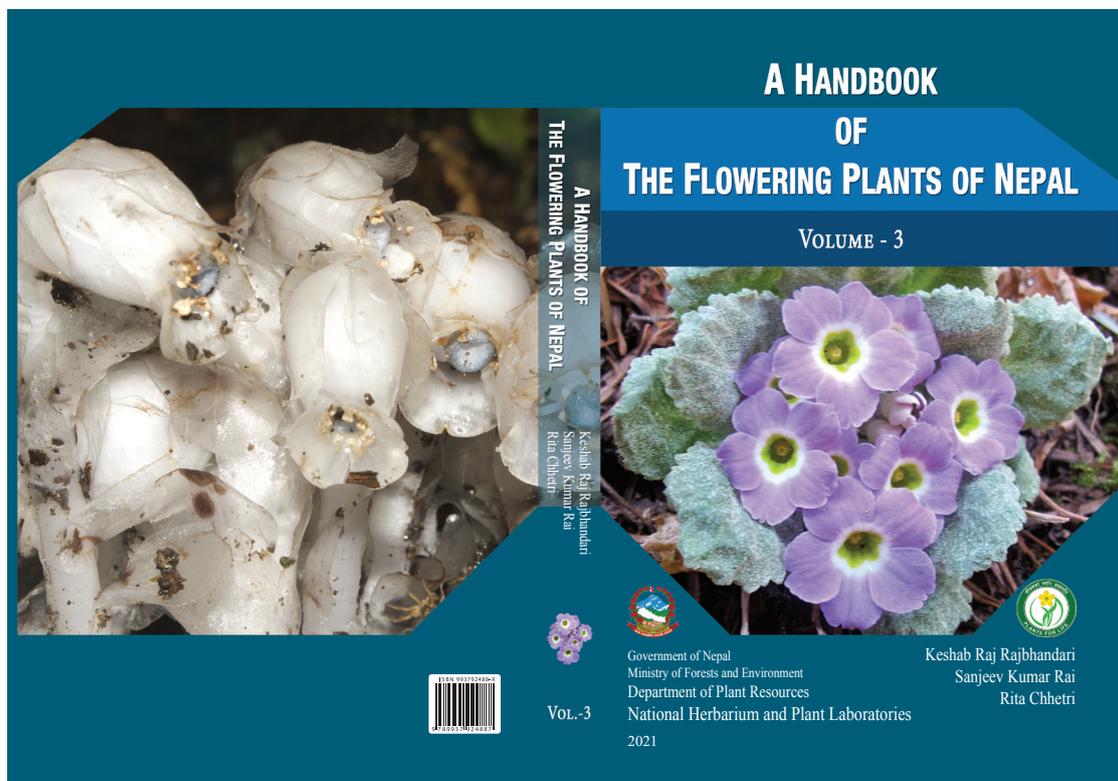


**Book Review:****A Handbook of the Flowering Plants of Nepal Volume 3**

Rajbhandari, K. R., Rai, S. K. & Chhetri, R. (2021). *A handbook of the flowering plants of Nepal*, Volume-3, 331 pp. (including 131 plates). Department of Plant Resources, Ministry of Forests and Environment, Kathmandu. ISBN: 978-9937-9248-8-7.

This is the third volume of “A Handbook of the Flowering plants of Nepal”. Just like previous two volumes, the third volume of handbook is a concise reference book that comprises ready reference on account of plant taxa (family, genus and species) of Nepal. The book is printed with beautiful photographs of *Primula nana* in the front page and with *Monotropastrum humile* in the back page.

A Handbook of the Flowering Plants of Nepal, volume-1 has set up foundation for writing Flora of Nepal by describing a comprehensive account of 1,715 plant species belonging to 421 genera and 58 families of angiosperms and gymnosperm and provides 304 color photographs of plant species. A Handbook of the Flowering Plants of Nepal, volume-2 documents 1,457 species of flowering plants belonging to 404 genera and 67 families from Nepal. A Handbook of the Flowering Plants of Nepal, volume-3 describes 643 species belonging to 129 genera and 32 families from Nepal; contains 331 pages; and provides 103 colored plates of plant species. These three volumes of the book provide a thorough and detailed checklist of 3,815 species. Thus, by comparing an estimated number of plant species (around 6,000 species) occurring in Nepal by Shrestha (2020) in *Plant Diversity in Nepal* published by Botanical Society of Nepal, an account of almost 2/3<sup>rd</sup> (64%) of checklist of flowering plants species in Nepal has been created.

The families in the books are arranged according to the classification system of Angiosperm Phylogeny Group (APG) version IV (Byng et al., 2016 in *Bot. J. Linn. Soc.*, 181(1), <https://doi.org/10.1111/boj.12385>. Revised 11 June 2016). The format of the species presented in all three volumes follows valid

scientific name of the plant species (in bold letter) followed by author (s) name (s) and its publication. The valid name is followed by synonym (s), whenever available, of the plant (in italics) in alphabetical order. After synonym(s), vernacular Nepal name(s), wherever available is provided. This is followed by habit of the plant, habitat, altitudinal distribution in Nepal and then general distribution. Place of collection in Nepal-district name, altitude, place of collection representing three phytogeographical zones of Nepal, wherever available, date of collection, names(s) of the collector(s) with field number and the acronym of the herbarium where the specimen(s) is deposited are given for each specimen. Information of “Type specimens(s)” is also given.

The book can be divided into three sections: (i) introduction (ii) detailed and compressive checklist of flowering plants of Nepal and (iii) superbly illustrated plates of photographs followed by index of taxa described in the book.

The first author (K. R. Rajbhandari) is a well reputed plant taxonomist with experience of over four decades working in Nepal Himalaya; the second author (S. K. Rai) is a trained plant taxonomist and an experienced administrator; and the third author (R. Chhetri) is an emerging and meticulous plant taxonomist. The senior and younger authors’ broad encompassing is reflected in this book.

Nepal holds special status on the planet, not only due to highest altitudinal gradients in the globe, but also because of its remarkable biodiversity and an area of exceptional plant diversity (Miehe et al., 2015 in *Nepal-An introduction to the natural history, ecology and human environment in the Himalayas: a companion to the Flora of Nepal* published by Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh). The three volumes published by the Department of Plant Resources and forthcoming volumes meaningfully support in future to publish a comprehensive “Flora of Nepal”.

A Flora is an account of the plants occurring in a particular area, including keys, descriptions, and illustration. The “Flora of Nepal” is a not only a major nation building event, but also fulfilling international agreement as a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Hence, it is a crucial tool to conserve, and sustainably use Nepal’s unique biodiversity.

The aim to publish a comprehensive “Flora of Nepal” has traveled a long way since 1960-1961 when the Department of Plant Resources (DPR) (previously Department of Medicinal Plants) was established. “Flora of Nepal” Implementation Project and the Flora of Nepal National Work Plan endorsed by the Department of Plant Resources in 1997 to publish a comprehensive “Flora of Nepal” (both higher and lower groups of plants) in 15 volumes by 2005 A.D. remained unsuccessful. The Central Department of Botany, Tribhuvan University has also made efforts to prepare “Flora of Nepal” in support of International organizations. The Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (RONAST) has signed a multinational project with the UK and Japan on “Flora of Nepal” in 1999. However, the accomplishment of “Flora of Nepal” is yet to be experienced; and the project “Flora of Nepal” has been conceived as a collaborative project.

Nepal is one among only a few countries which has adapted APG system in flora writing. With the publication of three volumes of “A Handbook of the Flowering Plants of Nepal”, and the rest of the volume(s) on pipeline by the DPR to complete the checklist of flora of Nepal; *A Handbook of flowering plants of Nepal, volume I (Gymnosperms and Angiosperms: Cycadaceae-Betulaceae)* by Shrestha et al. (2018) published by Scientific Publishers and *Flora of Kailash Sacred Landscape Nepal: An annotated checklist, volume I (Gymnosperms and Angiosperm: Ephedraceae-Buxaceae)* by Ghimire et al. (2021) published by Research Centre for Applied Science and Technology (ReCAST), Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal; it would be imperative to consider that Nepal has entered into the era of APG Classification System in flora writing;

although some adjustments to the “*Flora of Nepal*”, volume 3 (*Magnoliaceae-Rosaceae*) by Watson et al. (2011), Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh are needed.

It is not easy to pinpoint anything missing in this comprehensive book but I would have liked to have seen: (i) a synopsis of the book with total number of plant taxa described in volumes 2 & 3 (as in volume 1), and in forthcoming volume(s) (ii) a cumulative index to the families of all flowering plants in all volumes as given in the *Flora of Bhutan volume 2, Part 3 - Index of Families* by Grierson & Long (2001), Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh & Royal Government of Bhutan and (iii) consistency maintained in all volumes, for example, ‘Saransha’ (Summary in Nepali) as in volume-1.

This book is devoted to researchers, students and professionals, but the book is probably most useful to the Masters and Ph.D. researchers in botany and plant systematics. I highly recommend these volumes to botanists, foresters and policy makers working in biodiversity to use the checklist which provide updated taxonomic nomenclature of flowering plants of Nepal.

I do hope the book provides inspiration for the future generations and stimulates researchers to carry out more taxonomic work to prepare a comprehensive “Flora of Nepal”.

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