RAISING PLANTING MATERIALS OF PEAT SWAMP FOREST SPECIES

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The availability of adequate high quality planting material of peat swamp forest (PSF) species is one of the main constraints in rehabilitating degraded PSF. Planting materials of PSF species are currently difficult to get because planting in PSF has never been included in rehabilitation programmes in the past (Shamsudin & Aziah 1992). Therefore, due to the low priority given to PSF, there had been no attempt made to raise planting materials of PSF species. In addition, there is not much information on how to raise the planting materials. As the physical and chemical properties of peat soil are different from other forest types, it is not certain if normal techniques of raising planting materials and nursery management practices applied to inland forest species will be suitable for the PSF species.

The aim of this study was to investigate suitable techniques of raising planting materials of some PSF species. Three techniques were tried out, namely, seeds, wildings and vegetative propagation by stem cutting.

Anisoptera marginata and *Gonystylus bancanus* were used for the germination test because their seeds were available during the study period. The test was based on procedure established by Aminah *et al.* (1997). Pure river sand with a proportion of approximately 60 and 40% particles < 2 mm and > 2 mm diameter respectively were mixed and put in germination trays (60 × 35 cm). The trays were placed in a germination house with light intensity ranging between 30 and 40%.

Seeds selected for the germination test were in good condition and mature. The seeds were sown at an interval of 2 cm along the row and 4 cm between rows. The narrow or pointed end of the seed was pushed into the sowing media, leaving the blunt end of the seed exposed. After sowing, the seeds were covered with a thin layer of paddy husk for moisture retention.

Watering was done twice a day, in the morning and afternoon, until the seeds germinated. Percentages of germination obtained were 90 and 95% for *A. marginata* and *G. bancanus* respectively. After about three weeks in the seedbeds the seedlings (about 5 cm height) were transferred into polybags (flat size 24 × 16 cm) that contained a mixture of 3:1 top soil and river sand. The seedlings were then placed under shade with 50% light intensity for a period of six to nine months. Both species had more than 90% survival.

In the experiment using wildings, water gel was used to collect the PSF wildings (Ismail & Shamsudin 1999). The PSF species collected were *G. bancanus, Madhuca motleyana, A.marginata, Stemonurus secundiflorus, Calophyllum* spp., *Durio carinatus, Santiria* spp. and *Pometia pinnata.* Collection was conducted in the morning (about 7.00 a.m.) to minimise water loss from seedlings through transpiration. The area was surveyed one day before collection to locate and assess the amount of wildings present. Small-sized wildings, approximately 4 to 12 cm high, and preferably at two-leaf stage, were collected by pulling the wildings out carefully from the ground. The wildings were then placed in plastic bags containing gel and water at a ratio of 1:150 (Figure 1).

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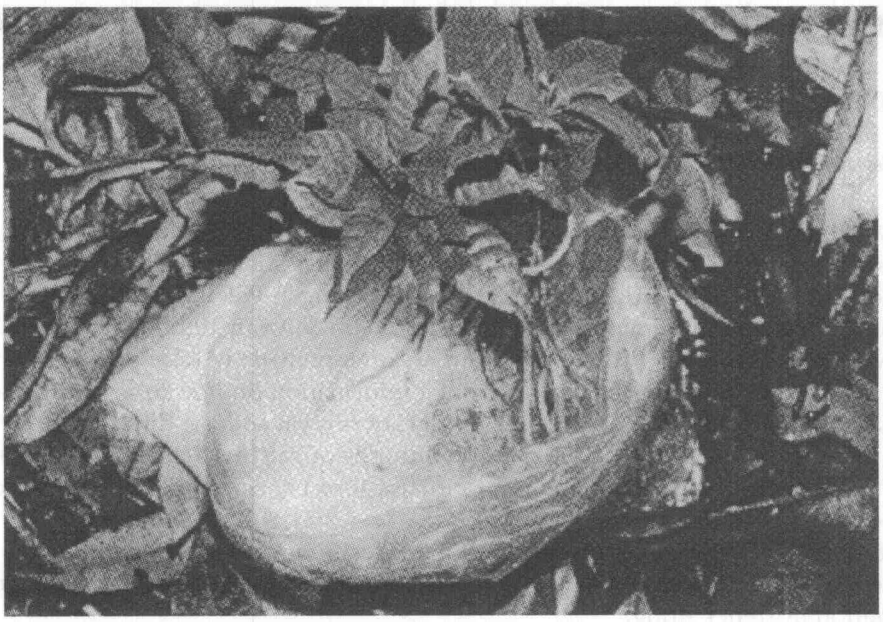

Figure 1 Wildings placed in a plastic bag containing water gel

From experience, the wildings can be stored in this condition for more than a week. However, it is better that wildings be transplanted immediately into polybags at the nursery to ensure better growth conditions. Therefore, before collecting the wildings, polybags filled with planting media must be ready in the nursery. The planting media used was a combination of top soil and river sand at a ratio of 3:1. After being transplanted at the nursery, the wildings were then watered. In cases where the collection of wildings was done far from the permanent nursery, a temporary nursery was established. In this study, a mean of 60% survival was recorded for all species that were collected using water gel.

Method of raising planting materials by stem cutting in this experiment was based on the technique used by Aminah (1991) and Mohamad Lokmal *et al.* (1992). The species used for this technique were *G. bancanus, A. marginata, D. carinatus* and *Shorea platycarpa.* Stem cuttings of these species were obtained from stock plants which were raised in the nursery. The preparation of cutting materials was done in the morning between 8.00 and 11.00 a.m. A commercial rooting hormone, Seradix-3, was applied to improve rooting percentage of the stem cuttings. Each cutting, with at least one node and one leaf, had a length of 2 to 3 cm.

The cutting bed was prepared in a green house with 30% light intensity and humidity ranging between 85 and 95%. The rooting medium was made up of pure river sand. The stem cuttings and rooting medium were kept moist by an automatic mist sprinkler system operated at hourly interval; the duration of each spray was one minute. In addition, the cutting bed was covered with clear plastic sheet supported by wooden frame to maintain high humidity around the cuttings. Rooting percentage after six weeks were 51, 41, 20 and 32% for *G. bancanus, A. marginata, D. carinatus* and *S. platycarpa* respectively. Even though the root percentages were low, this study showed that vegetative propagation by stem cuttings can be an alternative technique to raise PSF species. More comprehensive study is needed in order to obtain good rooting percentage in this regard.

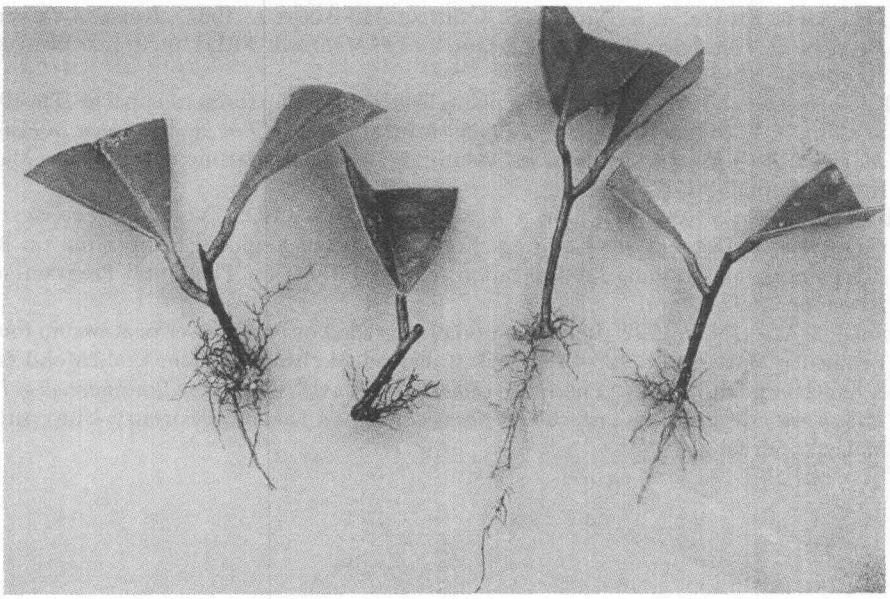

Figure 2 The rooted stem cuttings of *Gonystylus bancanus*

The rooted stem cuttings (Figure 2) were transferred into polybags (flat size 24 × 16 cm) containing potting media of 3:1 top soil and river sand. The polybags were then placed under shade with 50% light intensity and watered regularly. One gram of commercial fertiliser nitrophoska blue (12N:12P:17K) was applied to each plant at the ages of two and five months to boost the development of roots and leaves. It was observed that the potted rooted cuttings grew well and can then be treated like other planting stocks in the nursery.

From this study, we conclude that PSF species can be raised using normal procedures applied to other inland forest species. Even the collection and vegetative propagation by stem cutting, both of which are considered less common techniques compared with technique using seeds, were also found feasible for plant production. Furthermore, it was also observed that management aspects of the PSF species in the nursery were also similar to other inland forest species. These findings suggest that adequate supply of planting materials to rehabilitate degraded PSF can be produced without much constraint.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Malaysian-DANCED Project on Sustainable Management of Peat Swamp Forests in Peninsular Malaysia, for their grant facility to fund this study. We also would like to extend our thanks to the officers and staffs of the FRIM nursery for providing advice and assistance during the period of the study.

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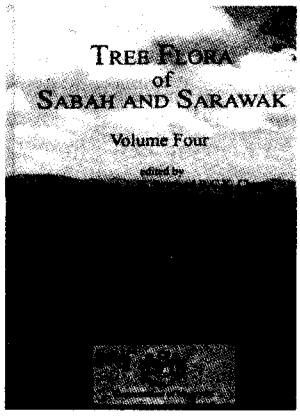
BOOK REVIEW



E. SOEPADMO, L. G. SAW & R. C. K. CHUNG (Eds.). 2002. **Tree flora of Sabah and Sarawak. Volume IV.** Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), Sabah Forestry Department Malaysia and Sarawak Forestry Department Malaysia. xii + 388 pp. USD75.
ISBN 983-2181-27-5

As stated on the back of this volume, "The *Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak* is an account of the families of trees that occur in these two botanically rich states situated in the island of Borneo. The Flora provides identification keys and illustrations for all families treated and descriptions of all species that grow to a significant size, usually taken as at least 10 cm diameter or 5 m high, ...". Volume I (published 1995 and covering 31 plant families) explained that the objectives included documenting and updating the taxonomic status of the native trees of Sabah and Sarawak, as well as to upgrade Malaysian capability and expertise in plant taxonomic research, and strengthen the management capability of Malaysian herbaria and their data bases. Volume II (1996) covered 23 more families, while Volume III (2000) covered just three large families and one subfamily. Volume IV (published 2002) covers the large family Sapotaceae, together with Ebenaceae (one genus, *Diospyros*, with 75 species described in this volume), Aquifoliaceae, Lecythidaceae, Oleaceae and Proteaceae. Thirteen botanists contributed to the taxonomic treatments in Volume IV, of whom 11 are Malaysians, including veterans F. S. P. Ng and P. P. K. Chai, as well as botanists of the younger generation.

Following the format of the previous volumes, for each family there is an introductory description along with notes on the family distribution, ecology, uses and taxonomy. For each species described there are concise notes on major references, derivation of the genus and species name, followed by detailed botanical descriptions with notes on distribution and ecology. Vernacular names and uses of the trees are provided for some species.

The quality of Volume IV, in terms of content and presentation, equals that of the earlier volumes, and all volumes fulfil admirably the original intention of this project. There are 64 line drawings by five artists in Volume IV. Users, such as myself, who are not professional botanists would like to see many more such drawings, but presumably that would increase to an unrealistic extent the time and funds needed to complete the series of volumes.

I have stated in a previous review of Volume III of *Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak* my view that this series of books represents one of the most significant ongoing projects in the Southeast Asian region in relation to conservation of rain forests. One reason is that the volumes compile information that is not readily available elsewhere. As noted in the Foreword to Volume IV, 14% of the 321 species described are new to science, while 46.5% are endemic to Borneo and 21.5% are endemic to Sabah and/or Sarawak.

This project helps in several ways to fulfil Malaysia's commitment to conserve biological diversity, as outlined in the National Policy on Biological Diversity. In this context, I draw attention to the Foreword to Volume IV (by the Director General of the Forest Research Institute Malaysia and the Directors of the Sabah and Sarawak Forestry Departments) and the editors' Acknowledgements, which note that publication of this volume was made

possible by financial support from the Malaysian Federal and relevant State Governments, and the Malaysian Forestry Research and Development Board. The Government of Malaysia is to be congratulated on its decision to continue providing funds needed to carry on work on the *Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak.*

I can think of at least three specific reasons why continuing support for this project will, in the long-term, prove to be a wise investment for Malaysia. Firstly, forest areas continue to be selected for long-term retention (whether for protection, timber production, potential for "bio-prospecting" or whatever) as much by their unsuitability for oil palm or for human settlement as by their biological composition or significance. This approach which has prevailed from 1960s is no longer in Malaysia's best long-term interests. I believe that tree species composition tends to be a good indicator of general biological endemism and diversity in a particular forest area. The Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak project can help towards identification of the most significant sites, both on a large scale and, in terms of specific sites, within production forests.

Secondly, the *Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak* represents a fine educational and reference resource. I would like to see the *Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak* volumes as obligatory reading in Malaysian degree courses in biological, environmental and geographical sciences. In the long run, students with potential will get more out of repeatedly browsing them than any amount of those books which tend to waffle about such things as biodiversity, rapid assessment, monitoring and so on. Indeed, there has been a misguided trend worldwide away from teaching the taxonomic aspects of biology and away from providing a working knowledge of recognition of the local flora and fauna. There are signs that this trend is halting, and resources such as the *Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak* can help to reverse it. People who conduct environmental impact assessments should read all the sections of these volumes on "Distribution" to obtain a better picture of the regions where species endemism or diversity is likely to be high. Professionals may gain better insights into the significance of different areas from these, than from relying only on quick field surveys, which may reflect the capability and time input of the survey team rather than the actual biological significance of any particular site.

Thirdly, if Malaysian forestry continues to change in ways that one would hope, towards a genuinely permanent forest estate managed for a greater variety of higher value products than has been normal over the past three decades, then the *Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak* (like its older sibling, the *Tree Flora of Malaya*) will provide an important scientific basis. The prevailing ignorance of most foresters and forest licence holders about trees other than the commonest traditional large timber species is something that ought to be remedied, and the *Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak* can help here.

Finally, Volume IV contains a Dedication to T. C. Whitmore, one of the great tropical botanists of the 20th century, who died in February 2002, and who was the driving force behind the Tree Flora of Malaya project which commenced in 1965.

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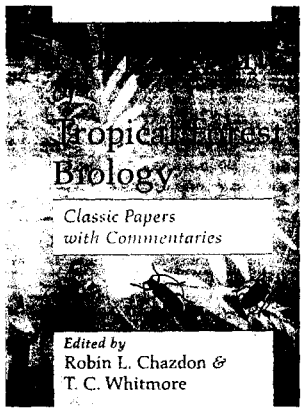
CHAZDON, R. L. & WHITMORE, T. C. (Eds.). 2002 **Foundations of Tropical Forest Biology: Classic Papers with Commentaries.** The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London. xvii + 862 pp. USD35
ISBN 0-226-10225-4



This book, in its true sense, can be called a classic because of the efforts taken by the authors to document the historical precedents, conceptual origins and methodological antecedents which have been the foundational work in the field of tropical biology and forestry. The book, however, for the most part emphasises on terrestrial systems of the tropical forest.

This book, in my opinion, will serve as an excellent reference on historical perspectives for the present and future biologist and forest scientists who will investigate, inventorise, conserve and restore the world's tropical forest and the unique diversity that dwells therein. The book itself is divided into twelve sections.

The first section of this book highlights the contributions and insights of naturalists and explorers dating back to the sixteenth century. Some exciting personal narratives which are very crisp and clear of the travels and excitement of the early plant collectors, naturalists and explorers have been included in this part to provide firsthand narration of what these early experts saw, felt and collected.

The second section focuses on the geological forces that have shaped the evolution and biogeography of tropical biota. In this section, T. C. Whitmore and some contemporary authors reviewed and discussed the series of events which has caused the evolution of plants and animals of the world.

In the third section of this book, the ecological and evolutionary perspectives on the origin of tropical diversity are elaborated. A total of seven authors contributed to this section, the longest in the book. This part of the book deals with issues like evolution of the diversity in the tropics, speciation, latitudinal gradients in species diversity and community patterns. Apart from terrestrial flora and fauna, the diversity of coral reef, its non-equilibrium state and effects of disturbance on its further sustenance are also discussed in good length. The chapters in this section of the book makes excellent reading for biologists who need basic understanding of the origin and evolution of tropical diversity on earth.

Section 4 deals with species interactions in the tropical forest. It emphasises on the interaction between plants and their herbivores, seed predators, pathogens, pollinators and frugivores, illustrating the ecological consequences of plant-animal interactions on community structure. All the four chapters in this section are well reviewed and deliberated upon and, of particular interest, are those chapters on the principles of Dispersal in Higher Plants and The Ecology, Flowering Phenology and Hummingbird Pollination of *Heliconia* Species.

Section 5 also deals with plant-animal interactions but examines the evolutionary perspective of the intricate coevolutionary relationships and specialised mutualistic interactions among plants and animals. The papers presented and reviewed in this section provide the basis for the hypothesis of coevolution in a particular system or have contributed

significantly to the further understanding of previously recognised coevolutionary relationships. All these papers as they are presented are steeped in natural history, some of them exquisite in detail and clarity.

Sections 6, 7 and 8 of this book discuss the numerous studies of patterns of species richness and species distribution of arthropods, vertebrates and plants respectively. The emphasis is on the description of patterns of species occurrence and associations. In Section 6 on arthropods, the chapter by E. O. Wilson on The Patchy Distribution of Ant Species in New Guinea Rain Forest makes interesting reading. Likewise, the chapter on The Entomological Studies From a High Tower in MPANGA Forest in Uganda highlights the mosquito breeding habits at different levels in and above the forest; the swarming activity of these mosquitoes above the forest and their nocturnal flight activity, as indicated by light traps, sheds light on the behaviour of mosquitoes. In another chapter, the richness of the Coleoptera and other arthropod species of the tropical forest are discussed. In Section 7, foundational papers published on vertebrate diversity from 1962–1978 have been brought together and reviewed. These are the classical studies that have stimulated and shaped much of the current ecological research on vertebrates in tropical forest. In this section too, the reproductive strategies in 30 species of frogs and the bird diversity in Peru have been excellently reviewed. Section 8, that discusses Floristic Composition and Species Richness, has contributions from authoritative researchers like A. Aubreville, P. W. Richards, J. M Pires and P. S. Ashton. The papers presented in this section serve as an inspiration for those who hope to advance the state of knowledge of tropical botany and floristics. All practitioners and students of botany will benefit reading the review presented in this section.

Section 9 describes Forest Dynamics and Regeneration. The four important questions raised in this section are how do canopy gap determine patterns in tropical forest community composition; what is the contribution of disturbance events, on a variety of scales, to maintenance of species richness; to what extent does the autecology of tropical tree species reflect their varying requirements for regeneration in canopy gaps; and what are the implication of successional processes and disturbance for the equilibrium status of tropical forest. To answer these questions the authors of this section brought together those studies describing historical development of research in this field and that has laid a foundation for future work. This section is extremely interesting and it is strongly recommended for budding tropical forest ecologists.

Section 10 dwells on ecosystem processes in the tropics. Three classic papers pertaining to nutrient cycling, leaf litter in the total energy flow dynamics and organic matter dynamics are the highlights of this section. It provides excellent basic reading material for forest plant nutritionist and ecophysiologist in understanding the ecosystem processes in tropical forest.

The last two sections, i.e. Section 11 and 12, cover the foundational work in the realms of conservation biology and tropical biology. While Section 11 focuses on selections dealing with human impact, Section 12 discusses sustainable use of tropical forest and their resources. The chapters discussed in Section 11 are fundamental contributions to a growing literature of the global concern about human impact on extinction in tropical regions. These papers have served as alarm calls and conceptual foundations for developing a focus on conservation biology in the tropics. Section 12, on the other hand, reviews the ways human beings have sought to use tropical forest and the various attempts in recent years to make these sustainable. For each of the chapter in this section a classic paper has been reprinted and subsequent developments are traced to more recent literature.

Overall this is an excellent book which provides the reader with foundational work on the many areas of research in tropical forestry. This book is a definite must in all major libraries and would be an excellent reference source and a collector's item for all those involved in tropical forestry, biodiversity and botany. The authors of this book have to be congratulated for pulling together an excellent pool of experts to share their knowledge and expertise and in coming out with this masterpiece.

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OBITUARY

JOHN WYATT-SMITH

Pioneer in tropical rain forest silviculture

It was on 17 November 2001 that I last saw John when I spent a whole day with him and Peggy at their home just outside Oxford. We reminisced about the Forest Research Institute, Kepong (FRI and now the Forest Research Institute Malaysia, FRIM) and Malaya (now Malaysia), forestry in general, and the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS). He was mentally active as usual and talked fondly of his many years in FRI and Malaya. He lamented the loss of the lowland forests such as the rich meranti-keruing forests and the virgin jungle reserves (VJRs) that he had initiated. He talked about donating his collection of books and publications to FRIM and/or MNS and he claimed to have one of the few nearly complete collections of the early editions of the *Malayan Forester* and *The Malayan Nature Journal.* In his last letter to me in early 2002, he also talked about his book collection. When I last saw John, he was healthy and mentally sharp and it was a personal shock when I received news from Professor Jeff Burley of his demise. We all extend our heartfelt condolences to Peggy and her family. Forestry has lost one of the founding fathers of tropical silviculture.

Born of British consular parents in Swatow, China in 1917, John had his early schooling in Switzerland where his mother was being treated for tuberculosis. Thereafter, he was educated at Brighton College, and then at Wadham College, Oxford, graduating in botany in 1939. While at Oxford he won his Blue for cross-country running.

He began his career with the Malayan Forest Department in 1939, at the outbreak of World War II. He served as district forest officer, forest botanist, ecologist and silviculturist, and twice acted as Chief Research Officer of FRI Kepong.

He left Malaya in December 1941 due to the Japanese invasion of Malaya. When the Japanese approached Singapore, John joined "Dalforce", a body of Chinese irregulars led by Colonel John Dalley, which had already carried out harassing raids on Japanese lines of communication on the mainland. With Dalforce, John took part in the last desperate effort to defend Singapore, before resistance became impossible and the defending force surrendered.

John, however, evaded capture and, with 15 others, crossed the Straits of Malacca to Sumatra in a small coastal patrol craft. They traversed the island to its Indian Ocean coast, where they found a British freighter, which took them to Java. There they joined the *Wu Chang*, a 3200-tonne Yangtze steamer "armed" with a single dummy gun. *Wu Chang* almost immediately had a lucky escape when two Japanese torpedoes passed straight under the ship. She managed to make it to South Africa, from where John traveled on to West Africa. There the Colonial Office assigned him to the Nigerian Forest Department. Towards the end of the war he was assigned to be part of a special force that was being assembled for an invasion of Japanese-occupied Malaya, which never took place.

After the Japanese surrender, John returned to Malaya in 1945 to find the forestry situation in disarray. Squatters who had felled and cultivated forest reserve areas had to be persuaded to return to the towns. The forest industry had to be convinced that it was safe to resume operations in a climate that was quite soon to become uncertain again with the beginning of the Malayan Emergency in 1948.

John's first postwar appointment was that of botanist and ecologist for the Malayan Forest Department based at FRI Kepong. He was a botanist of unusually broad interests and perspective and very much a field person. He traveled widely in Malaya, studying the forests that had been cut down and degraded during the world war, which revealed the possibilities for effective natural regeneration. In 1947, years ahead of his time, he published an appeal to "Save the Belukar".

The lowland forests, particularly the meranti-keruing forests of the dipterocarp family of trees, a complex forest ecosystem, captured his interest and led him to return to Oxford to develop techniques for its ecological analysis. This research gained him an M.Sc.

On his return to Malaya in 1948, he conducted additional studies that established the basis for the "Malayan Uniform System" or MUS, which remains the best-known silvicultural management system for tropical lowland forests. He persuaded the State Forest Departments to establish VJRs and undertook the painstaking identification of the hundreds of tree species within them. By the time he retired from FRI in April 1963, about 50 VJRs had been established. Several VJRs have since been logged; the officers responsible would have earned a severe reprimand from John, had he been around. In the 1990s, when tropical forestry worldwide came under fire from environmentalists, the VJR concept became the cornerstone for forest conservation.

John produced the first *Pocket Check List of Timber Trees of Malaya* in 1952 as Malayan Forest Record (MFR) No. 17. Although it was much too big for any normal pocket, it nevertheless was so useful for all fieldwork in forestry that it was revised and republished in 1964, 1979 and 1999 by the late Mr. K. M. Kochummen, who had been recruited by John as his assistant in forest botany. (I remember vividly how much I depended upon this publication during my early years at FRI doing forest inventory. We never ventured into the forest without it!)

In 1957, when Malaya received her independence, John continued at the FRI Kepong where he refined the now widely accepted tropical practice known as diagnostic sampling. This led to his most important contribution to Malaysian and tropical forestry–his two-volume *Manual of Malayan Silviculture for Inland Forests*, which was published by FRI as MFR No. 23 in 1963. This publication was the culmination of all his years of dedicated work in Malaysian forestry. The Manual was a unique work of scholarship, providing a comprehensive approach to tropical forest management based on John's extensive knowledge of tropical ecology, botany and silviculture, a keen sense of history, and his highly polished skills in expository writing. Apparently, the Manual has no counterpart elsewhere in the tropical world, if not the whole world.

John was also the inspiration for the "Tree Flora of Malaya", a project started in 1965, which was to complement Symington's *Foresters' Manual of Dipterocarps*, as a scientific record of all trees in Peninsular Malaysia. He himself wrote introductory accounts on six major tree families. In the early 1960s, John persuaded the British Government to provide the services of Dr. Tim Whitmore to organise and produce the *Tree Flora of Malaya*. Dr. Francis Ng and the late Mr. Kochummen and a team of local and foreign botanists contributed to this effort, and as a result, Malaysia can boast of being the first tropical country to have an updated postcolonial account of its tree flora. John outlived both his protégés (Dr. Whitmore and Mr. Kochummen) but his expectations of them were fully realised.

John was also active outside his official duties. He was a founder member of the Hash House Harriers. He was also active in the Malaysian Nature Society (then the Malayan Nature Society); he was Chairman of the MNS Selangor Branch in 1957–1958 and then the MNS President for the year 1959–1960. He also contributed a number of articles to the Malayan Nature Journal. He is also remembered for his "busman holiday" outings, in which he took forestry colleagues on forest hikes during weekends and public holidays to the

forests of Bukit Lagong, Klang Gate, Gunong Bunga Buah, Gunung Nuang and other forests around Kuala Lumpur.

John left Malaysia on 4 April 1963 to become the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization's forestry project manager in Nigeria. At the same time he was Professor of Forestry at the University of Ibadan from 1963 to 1968. Then for nine years, until 1977, he served as forestry adviser to the British Overseas Development Administration, a post that enabled him to travel widely throughout the world. In retirement, he accepted another UN appointment as consultant to the Forest Research Institute of the Philippines and, when that ended, he carried out a two-year forestry assignment for the British Overseas Development Administration in Nepal.

In his sixties he was still paying seven-a-side rugby with young VSO workers and he continued to run with the Hash House Harriers.

In 1981 he was awarded the CBE by Her Majesty the Queen for his exemplary services to forestry. In that year too, he was awarded the Bernand Edward Fernow Award, which recognises individuals for outstanding achievements in international forestry.

When he left Malaysia in 1963, John had completed 18 of the 21 chapters of the *Manual of Malayan Silviculture.* From 1986 to 1987, he completed Chapter 8 on Red Meranti-Keruing Forest, that was published by FRIM as Research Pamphlet No. 101. In June 1990, John returned to FRIM as an ODA consultant to complete Chapter 11 on Heavy Hardwood Forest, during which time he perused more than 320 silviculture and ecology files that he had left behind in 1963. His visit provided an excellent opportunity for his former colleagues, younger ecologists, silviculturalists and foresters to interact with the "guru" of Malaysian silviculture. He completed the chapter in 1992 and, through a project memorandum executed in May 1992 between FRIM and ODA, the completed Manual (Volumes I and II) was published in July 1995, a few months before my own retirement from FRIM.

John continued to be personally interested in new developments in forestry and often talked to me about the future of forestry and the forestry profession. He used to write personal letters to friends and colleagues and his sense of humour is clearly reflected in a letter to Dr. Wan Razali in December 1999, where he wrote "*We are both keeping reasonably well though age is beginning to catch up with us. We are now both in our eighties and I am personally suffering a bit from osteo-arthritis in my knees and wrists. Too much use of the parang in the past, cutting through the jungle and collecting wood specimens, I suspect!! ....*" His sense of humour could be challenging even for his wife who, on urging him to weed the garden, would be told: "Fine–provided I can do it by species. Today it's dandelions!"

John was a generous mentor to foresters and ecologists from many parts of the world long after he retired, and many, including myself, benefited from the warm hospitality he and his wife provided at their Oxfordshire home. I remember with fondness the time my whole family stayed at his home after a road trip to Aberdeen and he insisted on driving us to Heathrow Airport. We recognised in him a person who remained informed and up-to-date, not a passive relict of the colonial era. We have lost a friend, a colleague and a mentor, and indeed a historical figure in tropical forestry.

John Wyatt-Smith, CBE, forester, born in China on 29 January 1917, passed away on 30 October 2002, aged 85. He is survived by his wife Peggy, and two daughters. We extend to them our deepest condolences.

Prepared by Dato' Dr. Salleh Mohd. Nor with contributions from Dato' Dr. Wan Razali Wan Mohd, Dr. Francis Ng and extracts from The Times Obituary of 12 November 2002.

24 December 2002