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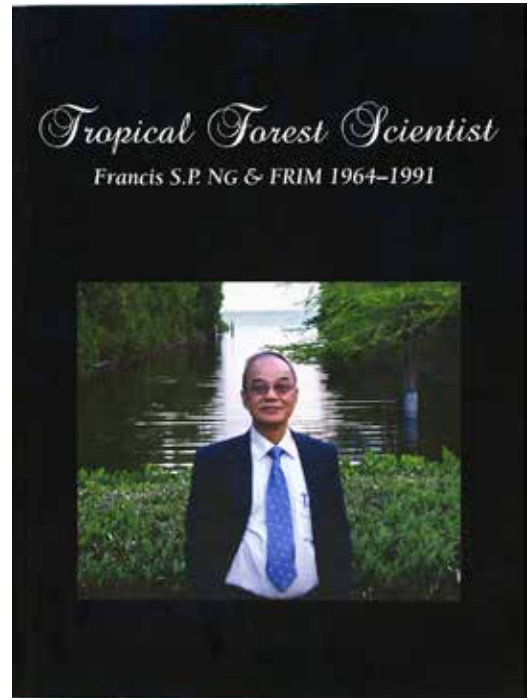
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Ng, Francis S. P. *Tropical Forest Scientist: Francis S. P. Ng & FRIM, 1964–1991*. Kepong, Kuala Lumpur: Forest Research Institute Malaysia, 2018. 200 p., ill., maps, port. (some col.). \$18.00 (US) plus postage. ISBN 978-967-2149-07-1 (paperback). Available from Forest Research Institute Malaysia (<https://info.frim.gov.my/infocenter/Korporat/2003Publications/Links/Other%20publications/FRANCIS.hht>).

Francis S. P. Ng spent 27 years of his career at the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM). Following Malayan independence from British rule in 1957, it took eight years to “Malayanize” the Forest Department, which included FRIM. Ng joined FRIM near the end of that process as a first year pupil botanist in 1964. This intelligent, curious and highly motivated fledgling scientist hit the ground running, eventually becoming an expert in tropical tree biology and the Malaysian tree flora through exploration, experimentation and endless curiosity about trees. He took time out to earn a Ph.D. at Oxford in 1971.

Exploration of Malaysian forests led to numerous projects. In 1970 he began an extensive study of tree seedlings, seeds and fruits. A related study on seed germination eventually covered around 630 species. Experimentation on regeneration in logged forests yielded important insights.



His study of flowering-to-fruiting periods in trees led to a better understanding of gregarious flowering in Malaysian forests in which many species flower at the same time followed by mast fruiting unlike the more predictable times seen in non-tropical deciduous forests. His pioneering paper on “crown shyness” in several tropical tree species—treetops not in contact with each other, allowing unfiltered sunlight to pass through the canopy—was met with excitement among international dendrologists. He wrote on another aspect of tree growth in a joint paper with Francis Halle, who had already worked with others on classifying tree architecture. Missing from their work was an explanation of the architecture of the mature crowns of canopy trees, which



completely change shape after a certain stage of growth. Ng’s insights into these and other topics unlocked research problems for others and led to his being invited to speak at numerous international symposia.

His first overseas symposium was Tropical Trees as Living Systems, at Harvard in 1976. He was one of 27 leading tropical forest scientists invited to contribute to the 1978 book of the same name. His chapter on germination theory discussed a problem with the presentation of only two European germination types in standard texts, but Ng found that four types occurred in the tropics. He comments, “Until then I had no idea whether my research, published in *The Malaysian Forester*, was having any international impact” (p. 79).

In 1978 Ng was transferred to lead plantations research in FRIM, a move by the new director to discontinue discrimination in staff development and promotion, and later that year was promoted to deputy director of the Forestry Research Division. By 1981 FRIM had become the intellectual center of Malaysia’s forestry sector. In

1986 Ng was appointed deputy general of FRIM, and he worked to put FRIM on a solid scientific footing before his impending retirement. He also spent considerable time collaborating with and mentoring others at FRIM and in the region. He worked on a joint research project with every new scientist to come under his charge to start them on their research careers. He also advocated for the importance of networking and information sharing. As time went on he shared more of his expertise with other governmental research institutes locally, regionally and internationally. In 1990 he was hired at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as chief of Forest Education, Research and Training, based in Rome. After six years away he returned to Kuala Lumpur. In 2009 he received the David Fairchild Medal for Plant Exploration from the National Tropical Botanical Garden.

Much of Ng’s published work is in FRIM journals. His books include *Tree Flora of Malaya* (1972–1989, volumes 3–4 edited

by Ng); *The Tropical Garden City* (1990) with Salleh Mohd Nor and Wong Ywe Kwan; and *Manual of Forest Fruits, Seeds and Seedlings* (1992), covering more than 600 species. Ng took particular satisfaction from the *Tree Flora of Malaya*: “I think the *Tree Flora of Malaya* was the only flora ever completed in a former colonial territory after independence” (p. 175).

Ng has given us a narrative interwoven with information about tropical trees and forests, the 20th-century Malaysian scientific world and various intriguing botanical problems. The format of the book combines chronological journal-style entries with grey text boxes expanding on topics in the journal entries, such as tree biology, forestry, science, post-colonial politics and more. The book offers an interesting and compelling recollection of a scientific world unfamiliar to many in the West. An index and two maps are included, one keyed to an accompanying list of the Malaysian forest reserves.

—Charlotte Tancin, Librarian

Taylor, Judith M. *An Abundance of Flowers: More Great Flower Breeders of the Past*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2018. x, 230 p., 55 col., 24 uncol. photographs. \$65.00, \$28.95 (US). ISBN 978-0-8040-1192-1 (hardback); ISBN 978-0-8040-1193-8 (paperback).

For an author interest in the subject matter of a completed manuscript does not end with its publication. There are often aspects of one’s research that linger for resolution. In this case Judith Taylor picks up where her *Visions of Loveliness: Great Flower Breeders of the Past*