Some scholars in China and abroad regarded all the fungi of *Cordyceps* parasitizing other types of organisms forming the carposporophyte as the aweto. However, the traditional Chinese medicinal theory, and most Chinese scholars, only regarded the aweto as *Cordyceps sienesis* parasitizing the larva of the organisms in Insecta, Lepidoptera, Hepialidae and *Hepialus* distributed in the alpine meadow areas of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau of China, form the complex of larva and fungi.

Aweto is one of the three most precious medicinal herbs and tonics. It is well known world wide due to its strange morphology, abundant nutrient, and magical medicinal effects. It is believed to benefit without the harm of ginseng. The ingredients of aweto are adenosine, mannitol, aweto acid, polysaccharides, and other bioactive chemicals. It is reported that the main pharmacological effects of aweto are regulation of human immunity functions, hormone-like effects, restraining cough, protection of kidney, strengthening the hematopoiesis, anti-aging, diminishing the rejection effects of organ transplants, inhibition of lupus, decrease of blood sugar, and anti-tumour properties. Among more than 800 Chinese medicinal herbs, aweto is the only type with dual effects of complement for both Yin and Yang according to the traditional Chinese medicinal theory. In ancient times, aweto was an exclusive tribute to the aristocracy in the royal palace in China.

In recent years, because of the high prices in the market, more and more people have plucked aweto in China, the so-called soft gold, unregulated, just like the "gold rush" in the western United States in the middle period of the 19th century. However, due to its scarcity in nature and the rapid increase in demand, the habitat of aweto were seriously damaged or even desertified. Aweto as a resource is decreasing rapidly and becoming more and more endangered. Nowadays, aweto has been listed as a national key protected wild plant of level-II in China. The protection and research on the natural aweto resources are becoming imperative.

The book *Aweto in China* is the first comprehensive and systematic monograph on the various aspects of aweto resources in China, including the properties, biological basis, ecological characteristics, life history pattern, biological engineering, characteristics in herbal science and pharmacognosy, pharmacological effects, chemical ingredients, its role in health care, its other various applications, its research history and the present states of aweto resources.

The book contains 9 chapters, 41 sections, and more than 220 figures. The main contents are as follows: Chapter 1 fungus and aweto, Chapter 2 basic biological research on aweto, Chapter 3 ecological research on aweto, Chapter 4 research on the biological engineering of aweto, Chapter 5 chemical research on aweto, Chapter 6 herbal science and pharmacognosy of aweto, Chapter 7 pharmacological research on aweto, Chapter 8 roles of aweto in medicine and health care, and Chapter 9 research on the roles of aweto in biological control.

The book was well written with few errors, and can be easily understood by non-scientists. Abundant illustrations are helpful for readers to easily understand the explanations. The book is suitable for readers who engage in biology, taxonomy, agriculture, medicinal plants and other related fields, or other persons who are interested in aweto.

LI DEZHI[1] and QIN AILI[2]

[1]Labratory of Urbanization and Ecological Restoration of Shanghai; National Field Observation and Research Station in Tiantong Forest Ecosystem of Zhejiang; Department of Environmental Science, East China Normal University, 3663, Zhongshan Road (N), Shanghai, China 200062
[2]Jilin Forestry Staff School, Jilin, China 130000

Chinese Wild Orchids

By Chen Xinqi, Ji Zhanhe and Luo Yibo. 2008. Science Press, Beijing. 416 pages, Price: 260 CNY.

Orchidaceae is one of the largest and most diverse families in Angiospermae. Orchids have been regarded by some scholars as reaching the culmination of the evolution of plants. So far, Orchidaceae contains more than 700 to 800 genera and 25 000 to 30 000 species, and more than 100 000 hybrid species and varieties. In China, there are about 174 genera and more than 1300 species in Orchidaceae. Orchids are mainly distributed in Asia and America, especially Central and South America. According to the living habits and growth forms, orchids generally can be divided into three categories: the terrestrial orchids, epiphytic orchids, and saprophytic orchids (very rare in many other plants). In his classic work, Darwin (1862) used the theory of evolution to explain the adaptation and evolution of orchid plants based on a mass of facts and detailed tests and observations. Although there were some mistakes in his explanations, most of the conclusions are still reliable nowadays. After Darwin, orchids have attracted more and more researchers all over the world.

Chinese orchids usually have beautiful slender leaves and faintly-scented flowers. The quiet elegance of orchids has been deeply advocated and praised by the Chinese people for thousands of years. The character of orchids was compared to a man of honour by Confucius in his book, *Dialogue at Home*. Orchids not only have been popularly used as ornamental plants, but some also have been used as medicinal plants, spices and so on. The cultivation of orchid plants has a long history in China and the world.

The wild orchid plants are not used intensively at present, but they are of potential value in the future, and they are also important as a natural gene pool.

Thus, from any piont of view, the wild orchids should be protected in appropriate ways. However, in recent years, due to the rapid increase in the prices of orchids in domestic and international markets the wild orchid plants have been collected by people illegally. In addition, frequent and large scale logging and excessive land reclamation resulted in the habitats of wild orchid plants being destroyed or fragmented, and the number of valuable germplasm resources of wild orchids, especially the rare species, became endangered in some areas. Thus, the protection and rescue of the endangered resource of wild orchids in situ or ex situ is becoming more and more an imperative. The development of techniques for rapid propagation and cultivation of various orchid plants are also vital. In order to do this work more effectively, all-around recognition of past and current ecology and distribution of wild orchid plants is needed.

The book *Chinese Wild Orchids* is one of the largest and most comprehensive monographs illustrating the wild orchid resources in the world. The book was written in both Chinese and English, and includes 117 genera, 403 species and 2 varieties of Chinese wild orchids. The morphological characteristics, origin, habitat and elevation of distribution, inflorescence time of each species was described in detail. Abundant first-hand information was included in the book. Most color photographs in the book were taken by the authors in the field, and many of them are being published for the first time. The book has strong scientific and practical values. Its publication will promote the research on orchids, exploitation and protection of the orchid resources, development of orchid industry, as well as the international academic exchanges in the field of orchids.

The book was written on the basis of textual research weighing almost every word. Abundant illustrations are helpful for readers to easily understand the explanations. The book is suitable for professionals who engage in botany, taxonomy, agriculture, forestry, horticulture, medicinal plants and other related fields.

LI DEZHI

Labratory of Urbanization and Ecological Restoration of Shanghai; National Field Observation and Research Station in Tiantong Forest Ecosystem of Zhejiang; Department of Environmental Science, East China Normal University, 3663, Zhongshan Road (N), Shanghai, China 200062

Book Review Editor's note: The American Orchid Society has recently published a series of beautifully-illustrated articles on Chinese orchids in its journal *Orchids*.

The Vascular Plants and Their Eco-Geographical Distribution in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Area

By Wu Yuhu. Science Press, Beijing, 2008, 1370pp, Price: 280.00 CNY.

The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, with an average elevation of 4000 metres and covering an area of 2 300 000 square kilometres of land, is known as the "roof of the world" and the "Third Pole of the Earth". The formation and development of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau since the Cenozoic is one of the most important events in the natural history of the Earth, because its uplift has a profound impact on the natural environment of vast adjacent areas. As a unique natural geographical unit and large ecosystem of the world, Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has become an ideal natural laboratory for carrying out research in the fields of geography, biology, ecology, resource and environmental science, and other related subjects.

The vast area and complexity of the environment of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau provide diversified conditions for the growth and development of a large number of plant species. The complexity of the flora of the area lies in the abundant plant species, geographical elements and vegetation types. According to a rough estimation, there are about 10 000 higher seed plant species in the area. The area not only retains a number of ancient plant species, but also involves a lot of new plant species after the geological uplift. So far, the number of genera and species of the ferns, gymnosperms, and angiosperms being found in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau area accounts for 40% of the flora of China. Furthermore, nowadays the new records of plant species are frequently found in this area.

Since the 1850s, a number of foreign explorers and scientists successively carried out a variety of investigations in fields such as geology, geography, flora, fauna, as well as natural conditions and social customs, in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau area, accumulating some preliminary information. From the 1950s, large-scale comprehensive scientific investigations organized by the central and local governments were carried out several times in the area, which laid a solid basis for studying the formation, evolution and natural resources of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau area. Especially active were many botanists as backbone members participating in these investigations. They collected a large number of plant specimens, which became valuable data for the analysis of the flora of the area.

Based on the plant specimens collected in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau area by former researchers, and the author's own first-hand data on the flora of the area accumulated in more than 30 years of investigations, as well as a large number of literature references in China and abroad related to the area, the book comprehensively addresses the vascular plants and their eco-geographical distribution in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau area.

Erratum The Canadian Field-Naturalist 126(4)

In response to the review of *Contributions to the History of Herpetology*. CFN 126(3): 344-345, the book's editor Kraig Adler pointed out (personal communication to FRC 12 May 2013): "Only one small correction. Mrs. Martof used a kitchen knife, not a gun. She told the police she slipped while cutting some pizza. But Bernie was stabbed up under his rib cage several times!"

Erratum The Canadian Field-Naturalist

It has come to our attention that sections of many of the book reviews by Li Dezhi and Qin Aili were copied from sources without attribution. The journal and the authors apologize for this oversight.