

# Review of “*Cryptocoryne* of Peninsular Malaysia” by Ahmad Sofiman Othman, Niels Jacobsen & Mashhor Mansor

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ISBN 978-983-861-377-4 (soft cover)  
ISBN 978-983-861-379-8 (hard cover)  
584.64 QK495.A685  
Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2009

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The full title of this work is “*Cryptocoryne* of Peninsular Malaysia: A Portrait of an Enchanting Plant Genus.” The work is a joint effort between Ahmad Sofiman Othman and Mashhor Mansor, Associate Professor and Professor respectively at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, and Niels Jacobsen Professor of Botany at the University of Copenhagen. It was published by Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia Pulau Pinang in 2009.

The publication, consisting of 102 pages is printed on high quality gloss paper with heavy paper colorful covers. The information is presented in 5 chapters; the first an introductory chapter which discusses morphological characteristics, propagation, uses, and a history of the taxonomic activity with *Cryptocoryne* in Peninsular Malaysia and a discussion of the habitats where *Cryptocoryne* can be found.

Chapter 2 deals with morphology and cytology and presents a review of the chromosome numbers as well as the ploidy level of species in Peninsular Malaysia.

A discussion about the evolution of the genus and the geographic sectors in which it evolved including a molecular analysis that correlates with its phylogeography, makes up Chapter 3. This is a fascinating account of the evolution of *Cryptocoryne* and includes a map of Southeast Asia showing related geographical areas as well as two phylogenetic trees.

Chapter 4 is the meat of the work where all the species are keyed out and illustrated with one or more excellent color photographs. A total of 20 species are treated, 3 of which are endemic to Peninsular Malaysia, 5 are native but not endemic species and 2 species of cultivated origin which are assumed to have been developed in Peninsular Malaysia. Each species is described, references, known synonyms, habit and distribution are presented as well as appropriate taxonomic discussion.

Finally Chapter 5 deals with the outlook for the future of *Cryptocoryne* in Peninsular Malaysia discussing species which are threatened by human interference with habitat modification, listing each species and its current condition.

In the back of the publication is a four-page glossary, a section on the etymology of the species of Peninsular Malaysia, and discussion of name derivations. The publication also has a section on literature cited and an index.

This publication is an excellent and useful revision of an interesting group of poorly known aroids. For information about purchasing this work, visit the website of the USM press website: <http://www.penerbit.usm.my> or contact the press via their email: [penerbitusm@notes.usm.my](mailto:penerbitusm@notes.usm.my).