

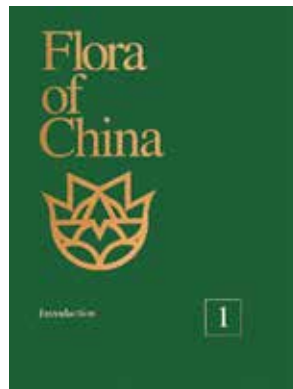
# The *Flora of China* and Biodiversity Research

The earth is the shared home for all kinds of life forms and it is our legacy and our responsibility to conserve it. Through years of efforts, CAS scientists together with collaborators outside the Academy thoroughly investigated the biodiversity in China and completed the world's largest flora, the *Flora of China*.

Led by the four centers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Botany (Beijing), the Kunming Institute of Botany, the Jiangsu Institute of Botany (Nanjing), and the South China Botanical Garden (Guangzhou), scientists launched an epic expedition to thoroughly study and record China's vascular plant species.

After 41 years of preparations (1918-1959) and 45 years of compiling (1959-2004) by four generations of plant taxonomists in China, and together with a teamwork of 312 authors and 164 draftsmen from more than 80 participated units in China, the Encyclopedia of China's vascular plant species – *Flora of China* was completely published in 2004. The flora covers about 31,000 plant species. This number includes about 8,000 species of medicinal and economically important plants and about 7,500 species of trees and shrubs. It represents a landmark achievement of botany research in China.

Notably, along the long-lasting effort (nearly half century) to compile the Chinese version of the *Flora of China*, an international Editorial Committee was formed in 1988 to publish its English version. Joined by more than 600 scientists from throughout the world, its publication is



The first volume of the English version of the *Flora of China*. The book serial has 25 volumes in total and covers about 31,000 or one-eighth of the world's total vascular plant species.

a great contribution to the scientific circles of the world.

Previously, the compiling of the *Higher Plants of China* and the *Genus Index for the Higher Plants of China*, led by the Institute of Botany, CAS (IBCAS) won the first prize of the National Natural Science Award in 1987. Besides, researches concerning the systematic arrangement and historical origin of the ferns in China made by the scientists at the IBCAS won the first prize of the National Natural Science Award in 1993.



The *Flora of China* was completed in 2004. (Credit: CAS)