

ORNAMENTAL FLORA INTRODUCED AND NATURALIZED IN TENERIFE

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ABSTRACT

One of the biggest problems for the conservation of the natural vegetation in the less degraded environment of the Tenerife island, is the increasing number of naturalized plants introduced by man. Among them, we show in this paper several species which have spread through the island. In some cases this introduction has been so big that plants involved have integrated in the natural and potential-natural vegetation. Nowadays we consider that it is impossible to eradicate them, and they can be considered characteristic species in certain substitute plant communities.

RESUMEN

El creciente asilvestramiento de plantas introducidas por el hombre con fines agrícolas u ornamentales, constituye uno de los mayores problemas para conservar la vegetación natural en los ambientes menos degradados de la isla de Tenerife. En este trabajo se presentan una serie de especies, las cuales, según nuestras observaciones, se han extendido de tal manera por el territorio insular, que en determinados casos es prácticamente imposible erradicarlas. Algunas de ellas se han integrado masivamente en la vegetación potencial y constituyen elementos característicos de determinadas formaciones vegetales de sustitución.

INTRODUCTION

The growing spread of naturalized ornamental species constitutes one of the most striking phenomena of plant dynamics in the island of Tenerife.

The potential vegetation has been totally or partially ousted from its natural areas and during recuperation phases it has had to compete with the ruderal-arvensis flora invasive aggressions as well as with the enormous number of exotic plant varieties introduced. These together form the several hundreds of ornamental species cultivated by the Canary islanders in rural and city patios and gardens, public parks and along the verges of streets and avenues.

The mild climate of the island has for centuries favoured the cultivation of plants from warmer parts of the world in particular. The Orotava Botanical Garden has played an essential role as intermediate step in their acclimatization, later to be spread throughout the island, exported to the rest of the islands and even to Europe and other parts of the world.