Review of: Vollesen, K & Merrett L. (2020). A Field Guide to the (Wetter) Zambian Miombo Woodland. Part 1 (Ferns & Monocots) pp 1-446. Part 2 (Dicots) pp 447-1020. Published by GVPedia Communications – gia@gvpedia.com. ISBN: 978-1-949677-11-9. Soft covers, quarto, 2.69 kg (total). Available from: Mike Park Books (UK and rest of the world excl. Africa), Silverhills Seeds and Books (Africa) and Bookworld (Zambia) at between £120 and £130 per set.

This is the book of the decade for a tropical African botanist like me. Nothing like it has been seen before. It has value for all interested in identifying vascular plants in tropical Africa, especially in woodland areas.

The book is focussed on the 1634 plant species that occur in the 10,000 hectares at 1350-1680 m alt. of the Mutinondo Wilderness area of northeastern Zambia. The foreword is by Noah Zimba. As set out in Paul Smith's introduction, (pp 4-9) the vegetation is dominated by Miombo semi-deciduous woodland which covers about 80% of the area. Comprising canopy trees of *Brachystegia*, *Isoberlinia*, and *Julbernardia* (all detariod legumes) reaching 30 m tall, Miombo is replaced by species-diverse, seasonally wet dambo grassland (c. 10% cover) in the flat valley bottoms and mushitu (seasonally inundated) forest strips along the river banks (c. 3% of the area). Granite inselbergs, aligned N to S, form the backbone of the area (c. 7% cover).

The stand-out attraction of this book is the number, quality and accurate identifications of the colour photos. Each species usually has three or four, sometimes eight photos – each showing a different aspect of the plant, typically habit, leaves, flowers and fruit. As a whole these give us the gestalt or 'jizz' of the species. Most of these species (and even genera) otherwise have no published photos available anywhere and have never before been illustrated. So this book is worth buying for the expertly identified photos alone which carry so much information.

Each species also has a succinct description of 3-5 lines, and notes on geography, ecology, flowering time, and often local names and uses, and etymology. Species are arranged within genus, and genera in families (both with descriptions), presented in a modified APG IV system. There is a useful 50 page 'photographic key' to genera based on five categories: ferns; sedges and grasses; creepers, climbers and lianas; herbs and subshrubs; trees and shrubs. There are eight other introductory chapters spanning 30 pages, mainly by the second author, covering the history of the botanical survey work on which the book is based, the topography, climate and geographical and geological context of Mutinondo, the new species discovered (20 taxa) and new records for Zambia (24 taxa); data on rates of natural habitat loss, especially Miombo, in Zambia.

This book will be of interest for anyone interested in identifying plants species, from tourist to researcher who is visiting not just Mutinondo but anywhere in Zambia. The introductory chapters provide valuable context for the main body of the book. The book will be useful across tropical Africa for identification to genus, after all, 611 genera in 143 families are featured with numerous detailed high quality photos: many of these genera also occur in West Africa, for example.

Whilst similar books have been produced for selected areas in South Africa, this is the first time a photoguide has been published for any area in tropical Africa with high quality photos of every species present and linked to authoritatively identified herbarium specimens. 4890 specimens were collected in preparation for this book.

The book is based heavily on the work of the nearly complete Flora Zambeziaca programme which has laid the foundations for accurate identification of the plant species in most of South-Central Tropical Africa.

This tremendous achievement does great credit to the authors – Lari Merrett who has co-managed the Mutinondo Reserve for many years, and Kaj Vollesen, a vastly experienced taxonomist of tropical African plants based at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.