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## Preface

The richness and diversity of the vegetation of the southeastern United States have long intrigued ecologists and phytogeographers. Their extensive publication record (PEET 1979: A bibliography of the vegetation of North Carolina, In: LIETH H. and LANDOLT E., Contributions of the knowledge of flora and vegetation in the Carolinas, Vol. I, 263-297) amply documents both the intensity and the duration of the botanical research in this region. However despite wide-spread interest, no comprehensive or synthetic treatment has been published on the vegetation of the Carolinas since B.W. WELLS's classic but popularized "Natural Gardens of North Carolina" in 1932.

During the summer of 1978 the 16th International Phytogeographical Excursion was held in the southeastern United States. The excursion centered on North Carolina and served as a vehicle for bringing together ecologists and phytogeographers of many backgrounds and countries, as well as numerous specialists on the botany of the region. While the impact of the Excursion has been and will continue to be felt by the participants in numerous, intangible ways, the most conspicuous and valuable product for those not directly involved will undoubtedly be the three volumes of proceedings.

As a result of the activities of the International Phytogeographical Excursion and the encouragement of its organizers, Drs. Lieth and Landolt, there has developed a new sense of interest in and excitement about the botany of the Carolinas. It is my hope and expectation that the new found momentum will not be lost and that in the coming years we will be able to address many of the questions raised by IPE participants. The papers in the proceedings volumes provide a potential basis for and should in time lead to the long needed synthesis work on Carolina vegetation. Certainly the task is not yet complete, and indeed has only begun. However, that there is now serious interest in this task must be viewed as a direct consequence of the IPE and the activities of its participants. As a member of the botanical community of the region, I

wish to thank the participants in the IPE for their interest, stimulation,  
and efforts to further our understanding of the vegetation and phytogeography  
of the Southeastern United States.

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