

**F**r. Hermenegild Santapau's association with the BNHS began in 1944, when he joined as a member and was elected to its Executive Committee in the very same year. He later served as the Editor of the *JBNHS* from 1948 and was designated as Vice President in 1954.

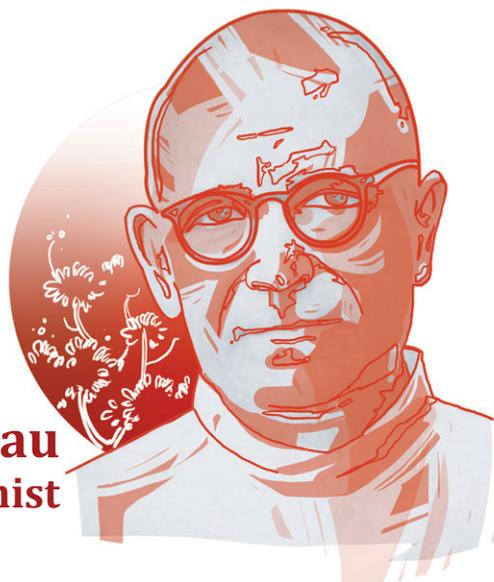
Born in 1903 in La Galera, Spain, Fr. Santapau completed his education in Spain and London. He acquired a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Rome in 1927, and another Ph.D. in Botany based on his extensive work on the flora of Khandala, which he worked on for two years at the Kew Herbarium, London.

Fr. Santapau came to India in 1928 and became a Professor of Botany at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai in 1940. He explored the Subcontinent from the deserts of Baluchistan to the rainforests of Assam, covering the Darjeeling hills in the Himalaya and the Nilgiri and Palni hills in the Western Ghats as well. He collected botanical specimens in every region that he surveyed, and amassed a collection formidable in time.

Fr. Santapau generously passed on his knowledge of Indian Botany and lectured at several universities across the country. He gained recognition as a favourite professor among many of his students. He was also a visiting faculty at the Universities of Delhi and Poona.

Fr. Santapau's publications on Indian Botany number more than 350, which include authoritative treatises on the taxonomy of the flora of Khandala, Purandhar, Saurashtra, and on several plant families. His 'Critical notes on the Orchidaceae of Bombay State' in 11 parts published

## Fr. H. Santapau An Eminent Botanist



in the *JBNHS* from 1959 to 1963 was a notable contribution, which appeared in book form as *THE ORCHIDS OF BOMBAY* in 1966. His book *COMMON TREES* was published by the National Book Trust, India, which is an ideal example of Fr. Santapau's expert ability to reach out to both scientists and the lay

reader. The highly comprehensible language and overall appeal of this work made it a very popular read.

An eminent botanist, he was credited with the Latin nomenclature of several Indian plant species. He was a Fellow of the National Institute of Sciences, India, and was associated with many other scientific societies. Fr. Santapau was a member of various committees of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India. He retired as Director of the Botanical Survey of India in 1968.

Fr. Santapau's contributions to the BNHS, to the Government of India, and to Indian Botany are immense. A Padma Shri was conferred upon him by the Government of India and the Birbal Sahani Medal by the Indian Botanical Society in recognition of his personal and professional excellence. The Spanish Government also honoured him by granting him the Orden de Alfonso X el Sabio (Order of Alfonso the Wise). ■



Illustration of the Bhendi Tree, from  
*COMMON TREES* by H. Santapau

