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Review of The Timber Press Dictionary of Plant Names

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The Timber Press Dictionary of Plant Names. von Erhardt, W., E Götz, N. Bödeker and S. Seybold. A. J. Coombes (ed.). 2009. ISBN 13: 978-1-60469-115-3 (cloth US$39.95) 920 pp. Timber Press, 133 SW Second Ave., Portland, OR 97204.

The Timber Press Dictionary of Plant Names is based on the 18th (2008) edition of the *Zander Handwörterbuch der Pflanzennamen*, but revised by a team of botanists and plant taxonomists for an English-speaking audience. First published in 1927, it follows the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (ICBN). It contains entries for over 20,000 plants including the common names of both cultivated varieties and wild species in English, French, and German.

This single volume contains a wealth of information and considerable attention to depth and scope. After an historical chapter describing the originator (Dr. Robert Zander) and past and present contributors and editors, it begins with an introduction to botanical nomenclature. This second chapter also includes very practical pronunciation guide, descriptions of classification within kingdom Plantae, and what governs the ICBN (Vienna 2006), followed by a chapter on cultivars and the International Code of the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants (ICNCP).

Chapter 4 is entitled "How to use the book" and, as the title suggests, describes the coding system and format of the dictionary entries, as well as an overview of geographic distributions and the classification system used for vascular plants. Given the very large number of entries, a system of abbreviations and a description of technical terms are provided. As one might expect, I found myself flipping back to these pages each time I looked up a particular entry in the alphabetical listings that followed. Future editions of this dictionary would benefit from having the edges of these pages highlighted (like they do with the three sections of vernacular names tabbed in a latter section of this book) to assist in finding this section. Alternatively, this list of abbreviations could be combined with the key to the symbols used in the alphabetical listing of species, found immediately preceding their entries on page 58, or even on the inside of the book covers, for easier reference.

The amount of detail found in the individual entries is impressive and includes the botanical authority, cold-hardiness (according to USDA Hardiness Zones), cut flower use, decorative fruit use, endangered species status (according to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora - CITES), flowering time, foliage type (deciduous, semi-evergreen, evergreen), fragrance value, geographic distribution, garden habitat (rock garden, water, window box), growth habit (climbing, creeping, aquatic), life cycle (annual, perennial), medicinal properties, number of species in the genus, synonyms, toxic properties, and type of plant (perennial, shrub, tree, succulent).

There are three dozen symbols used throughout the individual entries, making it awkward to have to keep referring to the key, but certainly understandable given the sheer number of entries. The advantage of using these symbols is clear, however, since without them the size text itself would be even more cumbersome, and costly.

Following the alphabetical entries are the tabbed lists of vernacular names in English, French, and German, cross-referenced to Latin names. The text then includes a particularly useful section listing authority names, strictly following Brummitt and Powell (1992) for standardized abbreviations. This list also includes the birth and death years of the author or, if unavailable, the years when the author was active and/or publishing. At over forty pages, it is particularly useful as a dictionary within a dictionary. The text concludes with a dozen pages of related reference texts (including floras, cultivated plants by group, digital materials, and recommended internet sites) and three maps to correspond with the geographical abbreviations used in the body of the dictionary.

Having worked over the years with a number of cultivated varieties, non-native introductions, and threatened or endangered species, I was curious to see how comprehensive this reference text is for the species with which I am familiar. I was pleased to see entries for some

of them; however, at the same time I was disappointed at the omissions of a few of the threatened species. Being more of a geneticist/physiologist, with much less of a background in taxonomy, I would see myself using this dictionary only occasionally, however. The flyleaf recommends this book to "anyone with an interest in plants." I would narrow that endorsement a bit and suggest that it is more tailored to botanists, advanced horticulturists, field researchers, and individuals who find themselves working with a variety of plant species on a regular basis. It would not be an interesting "read" for the average home gardener. It would, on the other hand, be a very valuable addition to an academic reference library and botanical gardens, both for its scope and price. There are many plant dictionaries on the market, each with its own focus, from those limited to specific plant families or habitats, to those targeted to home gardening. Compared to similar plant dictionaries of very broad scope that can cost well over a thousand dollars, *The Timber Press Dictionary of Plant Names* is a very affordable addition to any library.

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- Editor

Catalogue [of the] 13th international Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration. Bruno, Lugene B. 2010. ISBN 978-0-913196-84-7 (Paper US$25.00) 198 pp. Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, 5th Floor, Hunt Library, Carnegie Mellon University, 4909 Frew Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890.

Flower and Fruit: Morphology, Ontogeny, Phylogeny, Function and Ecology. Leins, Peter and Claudia Erbar. 2010. ISBN 978-3-510-65261-7. (Cloth 69.00 •) 439 pagesE. Schweizerbart'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung (Naegele u. Obermiller), Science Publishers, Johannesstr. 3A , D-70176 Stuttgart, Germany.

Flora of North America, North of Mexico Volume 7: Magnoliophyta: Salicaceae to Brassicaceae. Flora of North America Editorial Committee (eds). 2010. ISBN: 9780195318227 (Cloth US$95.00) 832 pp. Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016 U.S.A.

Flora of North America, North of Mexico Volume 8: Magnoliophyta: Paeoniaceae to Ericaceae. Flora of North America Editorial Committee (eds). 2009. ISBN: 9780195340266 (Cloth US$95.00). 624pp. Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016 U.S.A.

Gymnosperms of the United States and Canada. Nixon, Elray S. 2010. ISBN 978-0-934115-05-6 (Cloth US$74.95) 208 pp. Forester-Artist.com-Bruce Lyndon Cunningham, 180 County Road 8201, Nacogdoches, TX 75964.

Plants in Mesozoic Time: Morphological Innovations, Phylogeny, Ecosystems. Gee, Carole T. (ed.). 2010. ISBN 978-0-253-35156-3 (Cloth US$89.95) 424pp. Indiana University Press, 601 North Morton St., Bloomington, IN 47404-3797.