

REVIEW

G. NATHO, C. MÜLLER & H. SCHMIDT: Wörterbücher der Biologie. Morphologie und Systematik der Pflanzen. Gustav Fischer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1990, 2 volumes, 852 pp., 560 figs. Paperback. Price DM 44.80. ISBN 3-437-20415-7.

This dictionary covers systematics, morphology, and anatomy of the Plant Kingdom, including also Fungi and Fossils. Not included are cytology, genetics, and evolution, which have been or will be treated in other volumes of the same series.

As to systematics, families and higher taxa as well as many for some reason important genera have been treated. The families are taken in a broad sense. Liliaceae, to give an example, include some 25 families as accepted by many present-day botanists (Agavaceae, Alliaceae, etc.). These family names are included too, with a cross reference to the Liliaceae. (However, Agavaceae as well as *Agave* are only provided with a cross reference to the Amaryllidaceae; with neither of the two, nor with the Amaryllidaceae, the Liliaceae are mentioned.) Why some small exotic families like the Akaniaceae are omitted and others, as small and as exotic, for instance the Corynocarpaceae and the Eucommiaceae, are not, is not clear.

A typical entry of a family of Seed Plants includes the Latin name with author, the German name, the order which it belongs to, a description, the number of genera and species, distribution, some important genera, alliance, sometimes different opinions on delimitation and systematic position, and often a nice clear drawing. Often it is not mentioned whether a group is recent or extinct.

The number of morphological and anatomical terms included is far smaller than that of taxa, but they are often extensively treated (see e.g. 'Staubblätter', 'Fiederblätter', or 'Blüte'; including 'Blütenhülle' the latter covers 4½ pages with 2 figures). As a matter of course, many terms are mentioned and defined under these treatments, quite often, however, without a cross reference. To give just a few examples: 'Dichocladium' refers to 'Verzweigung' where it is mentioned but not defined, only subdivided into 'Isotomie' and 'Anisotomie'; the latter two refer to 'Dichotomie' where they are defined and depicted, but where 'Dichocladium' is not even mentioned. The terms 'Sarcotesta' and 'Sclerotesta' are mentioned and defined under 'Testa' but not included separately. 'Tracheen' is rightly, 'Tracheiden' wrongly referred to and treated under 'Gefäße'. The text on 'Arillus' is very insufficient. Summarizing, you may find a lot of morphology and anatomy, but the way to find it is not always an easy one.

Finally, included are many scientific terms of all kinds: nomenclatural, theoretical, methodological, etc.

Everybody who uses this book for some time will have some wishes left. In my opinion it would be worthwhile to have more often references to further literature; in the text a few times author and year are given but in a few cases checked the reference was not included in the bibliography. In a future edition also some more theoretical and geographical terms should be included. Why is the unimportant term 'Artenkreis' included (with a rather vague definition) and not the far more often used term 'Rassenkreis'? Why 'Numerische Taxonomie' and not 'Kladistiek'?

In brief, a lot of information, well and profusely illustrated, and at an extremely low price.

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