

theoretical nature. After a short preface, the book is a solid reference containing around 7,000 terms used in plant pathology. These necessarily include terms of wider biological importance (e.g. DNA) or of specific disciplines often associated with plant pathology but not specifically plant pathological (e.g. mycology, microscopy, nomenclature). Most terms are explained in simple English, with the occasional cross references to other terms in the glossary. Some of these are made without further explanation, (e.g. 'Priorable – see Legitimate'). As annoying as these cross references are, I believe that they are unavoidable in such a work. For many terms a simple illustration could have helped in clarifying the meaning, but these are absent. Some terms are restricted to American usage or are of little relevance to plant pathology (e.g. 'peck' being explained as an American measure of volume). As unfortunate as such parochialisms are, they are overall of little importance in this publication.

The book reflects the experiences of two long careers in plant pathology. As a consequence the authors have included words that are now obsolete, but which a reader might encounter in older literature. In contrast new, only recently coined terms, are explained and give the book a modern edge.

This publication will be useful for dedicated students in plant pathology as well as specialists in other fields who need to know precise definitions of plant pathological terms. Given the choice, I would personally prefer a plant pathology dictionary, containing the names of organisms and their relationships as well as the terms used in their study.

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Plant Crib 1998. T. C. G. Rich and A. C. Jermy. Botanical Society of the British Isles. 1998. 392pp. ISBN 0 901158 28 3. £25 (softback).

This new identification guide has been produced as a guide for recorders working on the Atlas 2000 Project, which will be one of the most important botanical publications since the last Atlas. It is a combination of the two earlier identification manuals and the *BM Fern Crib* and a lot more additional information has been added. It is not just a minor revision of the last *Plant Crib* but a major reworking of many of the accounts incorporating much recent work. It draws attention to taxonomic problems and suggests how best to record them. The work aims to augment rather than duplicate Stace's *New Flora of the British Isles* and the standard Botanical Society of the British Isles handbooks. The book has a soft cover in blue, the text is sharp and easy to read and the drawings and silhouettes are quite clear and the paper is of good quality.

The introduction of this book gives much useful information regarding conservation, practical hints on plant collecting and general useful tips in dealing with rare and critical groups. Because much of this work is new and largely untried it is inevitable that some small inaccuracies will have been made. For instance, in the

Puccinellia table on p.353, the leaves of subspecies *borealis* are given as 0.2–0.5 instead of 1–2 mm broad. An errata list is available from Dr Rich at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff. Major reference works are included at the end of each group and it is nice to see that stoneworts, which are rather a Cinderella to most botanists, have been covered and brought up to date for the first time in this series of manuals. There are tables, diagrams, sketches and even tabular keys in plenty throughout and these all help to make for easier identifications. Obviously, when dealing with critical groups several characters need to be taken into account and the tables make the task of comparing allied species much quicker.

There is slight divergence from Stace's *New Flora of the British Isles*. For instance, some taxa in *Fumaria* are treated as subspecies in the Flora but only as varieties in the Plant Crib. Here, Peter Sell has resurrected several old varietal names which will please the 'splitters' and upset the 'lumpers'. *Nigella* in the new treatment now has four additional species, all keyed out. Drawings of *Aconitum* flowers and leaves should help to demystify them; *A. japonicum* is new. *Ranunculus ficaria* now has two additional subspecies but only of local occurrence and the variety *vertumnus* of *R. penicillatus* subsp. *pseudofluitans* has also been recognized. Two taxa which I often had difficulty in distinguishing are *Vaccinium oxycoccus* and *microcarpum*. Here, the differences have been clearly elucidated and recent research suggests that they only warrant infraspecific rank. *Rubus* has had 35 new or amended status of names and I was especially pleased to see the new *Sorbus* treatment which allowed me to differentiate some pairs of species which I had previously found confusing: *S.* and \times *thuringiaca* and \times *pinnatifida* and *pseudofennica* and *hybrida*. Unfortunately, although the account for *Rosa* has been revised, one of the commonest species, *R. caesia* subspecies *glauca*, should be subspecies *vosagiaca*. The account of *Pyrus* now gives some floral dimensions which are larger than those quoted in Stace's key so that there are now overlapping sizes between the species, and as only two out of the three species have been dealt with, one is left wondering why the third species was omitted. *Amelanchier* too has been revised and the species have increased from one to four. A difference of opinion between Clive Stace and Peter Sell has resulted in the reversal of the *Pilosella officinarum* infraspecific rankings from variety to subspecies. There are some clear warnings to the uninitiated viz. *Anthemis* 'the genus is fiendishly complex'. A sensible departure from the norm was to key out look-alike genera such as the mayweeds together, and also similar and often confused species are listed with unique characters underlined. One could continue comparing and contrasting the present work with Stace's Flora but this would be tedious, so it suffices to say that the Plant Crib is very user-friendly and a must for a botanical recorder.

Reference

STACE, C. A. (1997). *New Flora of the British Isles*, 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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