

Arnoldia Reviews



Echeveria linguaefolia. From *Echeveria*.

Echeveria. Eric Walther. San Francisco: The California Academy of Science. 1972. ix + 426 pages, 16 colored plates and 226 text figures. \$15.00.

A beautifully produced book with numerous photographs, diagnostic line drawings, and colored plates, Eric Walther's monograph of the crassulaceous genus *Echeveria* represents the work of over 30 years, during which most of his energies were devoted to the development of the Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Garden in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. At the

time of Walther's death in 1959, the manuscript of his monograph remained unfinished, but he had arranged with the California Academy of Sciences for his estate to be used to publish the work. Subsequently, the manuscript was edited and prepared for publication by John Thomas Howell with helpful collaboration from Elizabeth McClintock and Reid Moran, the latter a noted specialist in succulent plants.

Although by far the greater portion of the book is devoted to descriptions and keys to 143 species arranged in 14 sections, the introductory portion covers the botanical history, morphology, natural occurrence, and systematic position of the genus. In addition, cultural notes and sections devoted to hybrids and species in cultivation are included. As with most succulents, herbarium specimens of *Echeveria* are difficult to prepare, and diagnostic species characters are often obscured in pressed specimens. It is important to note in this connection that Walther's descriptions were largely based on living materials. Employing the type method of taxonomy, he revisited the type localities of numerous Mexican species to study the plants in nature and to supplement his studies of important herbarium collections.

Certainly most readers of this notice will be familiar with at least a few species of *Echeveria* in cultivation, both as houseplants and as striking ornamentals in warm temperate gardens. For persons wishing to know the identity of their plants, as well as botanists and horticulturalists anxious for more detailed information concerning the species of the genus, Walther's monograph will serve as the standard reference for years to come. It is a pleasure to see a genus of succulent plants (a group that as a general rule is dominated by amateurish coverage in the literature) monographed in a professional manner.

STEPHEN A. SPONGBERG

The Naturalists' Directory (International), 41st edition. South Orange, N.J.: PCL Publications, Inc. 1972. 178 pages. \$5.00.

The Naturalists' Directory is an institution of impeccable ancestry and dubious prospects. The current edition lists "more than 3,000 individuals". The edition of 1895 lists 5747. This is not a reflection of decline in the number of naturalists, but rather a decline in the comprehensiveness of the Directory. There is a need for a comprehensive, national and/or worldwide listing of naturalists.

Most of the natural history specialist societies publish lists of members; some of them indicate the specialties of their members, some indicate current research projects of the individual members. There are fairly up-to-date, fairly comprehensive lists of arboreta and botanical gardens both national as well as international. One presumes that comparable lists are available for zoology and geology. If, as alleged, this is a compilation of materials, it is very poorly done.

To be sure, for one who has nothing else, it is better than nothing. However, a publication in its 41st edition ought to do better than this.

GORDON P. DEWOLF

Early Gardening Catalogues. John Harvey. London: Phillimore and Co. Ltd. 1972. 182 pages, illustrated. £ 2.25.

John Harvey has written a fascinating book about the early trade in seeds, roots and plants, primarily in England from the Middle Ages until about 1800. It is of importance for American gardeners because such plants were available for American gardens, and tell us something of the way our ancestors gardened.

About one-third of the book is occupied by description text; the balance by reprints of various gardens and dealers' lists ranging from c. 1500-1833.

The one serious criticism one may make about the book is the size of the type. It is too small to be read with comfort by middle-aged eyes.

GORDON P. DEWOLF

Forest Environments in Tropical Life Zones. L. R. Holdridge, W. C. Grenke, W. H. Hatheway, T. Liang, and J. A. Tosi, Jr. Elmsford, N.Y.: Pergamon Press. 1971. 747 pages, four pocket maps. \$80.00.

This volume, subtitled "A pilot study", is a remarkable documentation of a theory. Holdridge proposed a model for the classification of the world's vegetation into 100 Life Zones arranged on the basis of latitudinal regions, altitudinal regions, and humidity provinces. The system has been applied in some tropical American countries and forms the basis of ecological vegetation maps of El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Honduras and Haiti. The present study is a detailed account of the vegetation of 46 selected forest sites in Costa Rica, culminating in an ecological map, with an appendix presenting data from seven areas in Thailand. It is remarkable that these data were assembled in about two years even with hard work.

Holdridge's system is complicated, but this volume presents the first detailed discussion of the factors he considers important. The sites selected were studied by means of several types of aerial photographs, and supported by on-the-ground transects of the vegetation and a great deal of climatological data, as well as soil chemical and physical data. The presentation of facts is remarkably clear. For each area there are stereopair photographs, some in color; standard profiles of the vegetation, also interpreted as idealized profiles; soil profile diagrams; crown cover photographs for vertical visibility, and these compared with MEGA vegetation diagrams of the Dansereau school. The best explanation available of the MEGA vegetation symbolization forms Appendix III. The only discordant element in an extremely handsome layout is the computer print-out reproduction of the species encountered in the Costa Rica study areas. The presence or absence matrix of sample tree species by life zones, which accompanies the listing, is also followed by a listing of life zones indicating the dominant taxa within each zone.

The authors asked three questions: "Does the use of the Holdridge system contribute to the organization and understanding of field data and thus lead to increased predictability? Is it broadly applicable? Is it usable in practice?" They conclude the answer is "yes", but they have demonstrated the difficulty of gathering the data desired as well as the value of

their data for comparative purposes. They admit there remains a problem of developing a predictive system which will produce reliable information on under-canopy features from aerial observations. The man observing within the forest is still needed.

RICHARD A. HOWARD

The Complete Book of Flower Preservation. Geneal Condon. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1972. 210 pages, illustrated. \$7.95.

The publisher's blurb describes Mrs. Condon's instructions as "simple". Lucid they are; simple they are not. The author narrates in assiduous detail her method of preserving fresh flowers, using Great Salt Lake sand. Other equipment is described and pictured. Sources for supplies are given when required. Absolutely fresh flowers are essential, negating the preservation of a bridal bouquet. A large, dry working area is necessary and the patience of Job would be helpful. Mrs. Condon suggests that a course in flower arranging is advisable. She covers every vegetative subject which can be preserved by her method and even recommends its use by students of botany. A teachers' manual, special treatment for special flowers, and answers to frequently asked questions offer still more information. The book is well-indexed.

If one feels intensely about flowers going through the cycle of life, assisting other forms of life in the process, seeding, and returning to the earth which nourished them, then this book is not for him. However, in 1972 it was in its fourth printing indicating a strong desire by many to preserve flowers.

MILDRED PELKUS



Linnaeus. Frontispiece from The Compleat Naturalist.

The Compleat Naturalist. Wilfrid Blunt. New York: Viking Press. 1971. 256 pages, illustrated, with an appendix by William T. Stearn. \$14.95.

The fact that *The Compleat Naturalist* is a biography of Linnaeus should be enough to recommend the book; in addition it is so handsomely illustrated (32 color plates and numerous half-tones) that it is as much a joy to look at as it is to read.

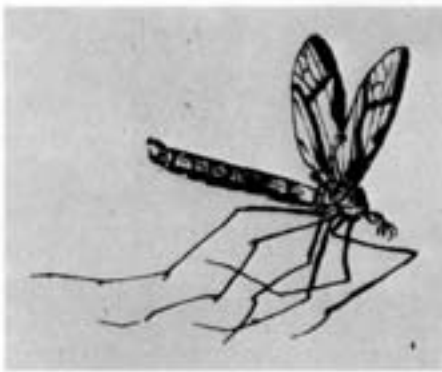
William Stearn's contribution, "Linnaean Classification, Nomenclature, and Method", makes this definitive work more definitive, if that is possible, and provides a simple, clear explanation of Linnaeus' contributions to science.

The account of Linnaeus' life makes interesting reading for the most part. No man's life is continually compelling, and some parts of the book are less compelling than others; but that is no fault of the author. Often the serendipitous information is

as interesting as the main line of the biography. There is a fascinating picture of university life at Upsalla during the 18th century, for example, which makes you wonder how anyone survived an education. Blunt's account of life among the intelligensia of Europe, with their "curio cabinets" filled with treasures brought from around the world, also is interesting.

The biography of Linnaeus is a gold mine of botanical trivia, such as the story of *Linnaea borealis*, the only plant that bears Linnaeus' name. He described it as "lowly, insignificant, disregarded, flowering but for a brief space — from Linnaeus who resembles it."

DONALD M. VINING



Linnaeus' drawing of a crane fly. From The Compleat Naturalist.

Capability Brown & Humphrey Repton. Edward Hyams. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1971. 248 pages, illustrated. \$7.95.

The flowering of the 'Picturesque' or English landscape garden may be attributed primarily to 'Capability' Brown and Humphrey Repton. Mr. Hyams details the life of each artist tracing the evolution and refinement of his talent and the influence of the society in which he flourished.

Lancelot (Capability) Brown, following in the footsteps of William Kent, was the greatest exponent of this essentially new approach to planning and planting. The presentation of his life and work is used as a vehicle for the author's questionable theories concerning English gardening. Information must be sparse on the design and execution of Mr. Brown's landscapes, for the text becomes overinvolved with names and places; thus it fails to really capture either the character or the mind behind the genius who was to influence the course of landscaping and ultimately produce a master such as F. L. Olmstead.

Humphrey Repton, on the other hand, published several books on his work and, luckily for us, all of Mr. Repton's clients were presented with 'Red Books' which contained plans, paintings and sketches, and detailed explanations of all proposed work. Mr. Hyams takes advantage of this information and not only gives us a fairly comprehensive view of the Reptonian landscape, but introduces us to a fascinating and complex artist who characterizes the society of the late 1700's and early 1800's. Unfortunately the book does not provide us with adequate illustrations or plans, but there is a list of the surviving works of each man so one may view the artistry first hand.

JACK LINK

A Gardener's Guide to Plant Names. B. J. Healey. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1972. 284 pages. \$7.95.

This is an English book which has experienced a relatively painless transition to the United States. The bulk of the book is made up of an alphabetical listing of genera of plants in cultivation and their species, with translations of the Latin words. It will fulfill the author's purpose: "An excursion into the mysteries of botanical names; and, I hope, an answer to your friends who fix you with a glassy eye and ask, 'What's that in English?'"

GORDON P. DEWOLF

A Revision of B. E. Dahlgren's Index of American Palms. Phanerogamarum Monographiae Tomus VI. Sidney F. Glassman. Lehre, Germany: J. Cramer Co. 1972. 294 pages. DM 120.

Dr. Dahlgren, in 1936, brought together in one index taxonomic and nomenclatural information on all species of New World palms. Since that time a Palm Society has been organized, with its publication *Principes*; several important books on palms have appeared, including an annotated checklist of cultivated palms, and many smaller monographic studies. Glassman's revision brings all sources together again by supplying an alphabetical list of names of New World palms. Accepted names and synonyms are indicated, along with basic bibliographic citations and designations of type specimens, and references to published treatments. A supporting bibliography cites papers into 1971. Appendices offer a geographical list of taxa by country, an enumeration of the genera, and the respective number of species.

This is an excellent reference volume for curators or collectors, and belongs in all botanical libraries.

RICHARD A. HOWARD



Boletus viscidus. From *Exotic Mushrooms*.

Exotic Mushrooms. Henri Romagnesi (ed.). New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc. 1971. 192 pages, 160 full page color illustrations. \$12 95.

A coffee table book or micologists and others interested in mushrooms. The book consists mainly of 160 beautiful full-page color drawings of mushrooms. It might be useful for identification if you can get the mushrooms to the coffee table before they have discolored.

DONALD M. VINING

Your City Garden. Jack Kramer. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1972. 120 pages, illustrated. \$3.95 paperback.

The Country Garden. Josephine Nuese. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1972. 256 pages, illustrated. \$2.95.

The Southern Garden. Ben Arthur Davis. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1971. 252 pages. \$5.95.

What these three books have in common is the word "garden" at the end of a three-word title in which the second word is an adjective indicating the place where the garden involved may be found. Throughout this review I shall refer to the books by the distinguishing adjective.

I question the whole premise of *City*. It is a landscape architect's view of urban gardening — given world enough (and money enough) and time, you can manage to ignore the city entirely. The book is really about small gardens and the author assumes that city dwellers will be the most interested parties. Also, whichever city Mr. Kramer has in mind, it is not a city in the sense of urban Boston or New York where even dandelions have a hard time; he has a gentle city in mind, like Atlanta or Seattle, where gardening is not a struggle with a hostile land. Perhaps the title should have been *Small Gardens in Seattle*.

Country is a book to read straight through like a novel. It is Ms. Nuese's affair with gardening. There is a great deal of really good information tucked in among the honeyed phrases and, truthfully, a deal of good wit too.

Southern is the kind of book that sits on my shelves and induces guilt. It is organized on the "what-to-do-in-the-garden-on-May 6th" principle and as long as it is in the house, you will feel that there is something to do in the garden that you are not doing — which is always the case anyway, so you don't need a carping book. (*Country* is also arranged by months but you don't have to do anything about it.) That business aside, *Southern* is a pretty standard type garden book with lots of good lists of things to plant.

DONALD M. VINING



Magnolia virginiana. From John Banister and His Natural History of Virginia 1678-1692.

John Banister and His Natural History of Virginia, 1678-1692. Joseph and Nesta Ewan. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press. 1970. 485 pages, illustrated. \$15.00.

John Banister has been one of the legendary figures of American botany. He was an English clergyman, sent to Virginia to study and collect objects of natural history for Henry Crompton, Bishop of London. He arrived in America in 1678. He died after a shooting accident in May of 1692. In the interim he supplied his correspondents in England with natural history material, much of which was utilized by them without acknowledgement.

The Ewans have provided us with an eminently readable book. They tell us as much about Banister as they could find — and a very great deal about his contemporaries and correspon-

dents. Indeed this book is a veritable mine of information about 17th century English botanists. Annotated transcripts are provided of Banister's catalogs of plants, insects and arachnids, mollusca, fossils, and stones and "Mr. Banister's papers". Finally, 69 of his drawings are reproduced.

This book can be enthusiastically recommended to anyone interested in the history of biology in America.

GORDON P. DEWOLF



Gonolobus obliquus. From John Banister and His Natural History of Virginia 1678-1692.

Zander. Handwörterbuch der Pflanzennamen. Dr. h.c. Fritz Encke, Dr. Gunther Buchheim, and Dr. Siegmund Seybold (eds.) Stuttgart: Eugen Ulmer. 1972. 744 pages. DM. 42.

Although this little book is in German, its value is such that it should be brought to the attention of American readers. In the first place this book deals primarily with plants in cultivation. Its features include (1) a sketch of the systematic classification of the plant kingdom, (2) a list of the cultivated families of cultivated plants with a list of the genera included in each, (3) an alphabetical list of genera and species with directions for cultivation indicated by a series of conventional signs (a technique widely used in the last century), (4) a list of the abbreviated name of authors of plant names with their full names, dates, and brief biographical information, (5) a brief bibliography that indicates the outstanding current horticultural literature.

It is a book to stand on your desk beside the dictionary, for it will receive an equal amount of use.

GORDON P. DEWOLF

Ferns and Palms for Interior Decoration. Jack Kramer. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1972. 113 pages, illustrated. \$6.95.

It is difficult to become enthusiastic about this book — but also difficult to condemn it. Its main strength lies in some very nice line drawings by Michael Valdez. There are many photographs which tend to be “arty” and not very diagnostic and the text is distinctly lightweight.

In fact, one could probably get all of the information here from a good one-volume horticultural encyclopedia.

This is a fairly good magazine article that has been blown up with photographs and wide margins to make a small book. In all fairness the price is not excessive.

GORDON P. DEWOLF