



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN



Springer

Review: [untitled]

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Source: *Economic Botany*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1981), pp. 259-260

Published by: Springer on behalf of New York Botanical Garden Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4254290>

Accessed: 13/08/2010 09:32

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The Genus *Tamarix*. Bernard R. Baum. 209 pp. illus. The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem, 1978. \$25.00.

In *The Genus Tamarix*, Bernard R. Baum has produced an excellent account of an important and widespread genus of plants. Taxonomically, these are a difficult group to work with, due to the general lack of distinguishing external features. For proper determination, it is necessary to examine the rather small flowers. In his key, Baum uses the configuration of the disk of the androecium (whether hololophic, paralophic, or synlophic) as a major criterion for separation of species. Other criteria apart from the flowers are the occurrence of papillae on the young branches and inflorescence rachis and the shape of the small, scale-like leaves.

Species of *Tamarix* are varied in utility. They can be used for windbreaks, dune stabilization, ornamental hedges, and reforestation efforts, all in desert areas. In addition, one interesting use is as "manna." It is noted that the "manna" mentioned in the Bible was probably the sweet exudate of insects living on this genus. Bedouins still collect and use this "manna" today.

Each species discussed in this work is accompanied by drawings of important parts (e.g., flower, leaf, and twig sections), botanical description, list of specimens studied, phenological and habitat data, and distribution map. The monograph accepts 54 species out of a total of about 200 published binomials. Baum also considers evolution within the group and describes two new species, *Tamarix bengalensis* and *T. dalmatica*.

The Genus Tamarix is a fine reference work on a taxonomically difficult group of plants.

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Gather Ye Wild Things: A Forager's Year. Susan Tyler Hitchcock. 182 pp. illus. Harper and Row, New York, 1980. \$10.95.

A pleasant, readable, fascinating book for an audience interested in what our North American landscape offers, Hitchcock's *Gather Ye Wild Things* will not fail to be a winner amongst the too-many "pot-boilers" devoted to "living off the land." For this charming book is full of interesting and odd bits of folklore and scientific fact skilfully interwoven into a relaxed, almost musical presentation. The reading is tremendously enhanced by the many line drawings of Gail B. McIntosh.

In the book's 182 pages, the plants are arranged according to their season for gathering: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The book is essentially a collection of 52 essays, one for each week of the twelvemonth.

The book is of high quality, a restful off-white; the binding is sturdy; and the type is very readable. The price seems reasonable for the pleasure that the volume will give to many devotees of a return to the use of many of the neglected plants of our own wild flora.

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Amber: The Golden Gem of the Ages. Patty C. Rice. 289 pp. illus. Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1978. \$26.95.

Amber has long fascinated man—both primitive and modern—but there have been few popular or scientific treatises on this most mysterious gem, which is not a mineral but fossilized resin of plants. If only for this reason, Rice's authoritative, inclusive, and exhaustive book is welcome.

Rice has a Ph.D. in education, but her undergraduate training in science, her years of study and collection of amber, and her dominance of an extraordinarily wide range of

literature directly or indirectly concerned with amber—all combine to enable her to produce what seems to me to represent the very best book on amber in this century.

Virtually every aspect of amber is treated in detail. The book is divided into four parts. Part 1, "Amber, the Golden Gem of the Ages," considers amber as a gemstone and as a fossil resin and discusses the present conditions of the Baltic coastal regions, which have historically been the greatest source of the product. Part 2 offers an excellent study of the pre-history of amber, a thorough review of its role in medieval Europe, and a summary of the mythology, symbolism, and ethnomedical uses of the fossil. Part 3 is devoted to scientific aspects of amber: physical and chemical properties and tests, inclusions, early beliefs and current geological and botanical studies on the origin of amber, varieties of amber and other fossil resins, and natural resins resembling amber. Part 4 concerns the preparation and working of amber and surveys modern imitations and their identification. A bibliography of 178 entries, the most comprehensive list on this subject, comprises items from early historical sources and from the most up-to-date technical reports.

The book is profusely illustrated—five of the illustrations are outstanding colour plates. It is printed on excellent paper in easily readable type and is sturdily bound. From all points of view, the volume is reasonably priced.

Specialists in many fields and non-professional readers will long appreciate Rice's work of love.

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Proceedings [of] the Second International Symposium on Parasitic Weeds. Edited by L. J. Musselman, A. D. Worsham, and R. E. Eplee. 296 pp. illus. North Carolina State University, Raleigh, 1979. \$5.00

Supplement to Proceedings [of] the Second International Symposium on Parasitic Weeds. Edited by L. J. Musselman, A. D. Worsham, and R. E. Eplee. 48 pp. illus. North Carolina State University, Raleigh, 1979. \$3.00.

Haustorium. Parasitic Plants Newsletter. No. 1+, December 1978+.

The symposium volumes contain 46 papers presented at North Carolina State University in July 1979. The papers are grouped under the following sections; "Forest Parasites," "Ecology and Floral Biology," "Ultrastructure/Anatomy/Morphology," "Physiology and Development," "Germination," and "Control." Among the genera written about are some of widespread economic importance in agriculture and forestry: *Orobanche*, *Striga*, *Cuscuta*, and *Arceuthobium*. Others include *Viscum*, *Thesium*, *Phoradendron*, *Amyema*, *Aureolaria*, *Seymeria*, *Rhinanthus*, *Agalinis*, and even the parasitic gymnosperm, *Parasitaxus ustus*. About two thirds of the papers are concerned with *Orobanche* and *Striga*. The economic importance of "parasitic weeds" and their great biological interest are ample justification for the symposia on these plants.

The symposium volumes are reproduced from typewritten pages with unjustified right-hand margins. Copies may be obtained from Dr. A. D. Worsham, Crop Science Department, Weed Science Center, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27650. Checks, in U.S. dollars, should be made payable to North Carolina State University; add 20% for overseas mailing.

Haustorium, a newsletter subtitled (from no. 3 on) *Official Organ of the International Parasitic Seed Plant Research Group*, is sent out from Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA 23508 (write to Dr. L. J. Musselman, Department of Biological Sciences). It contains notes on parasitic plants and on literature, meetings, and courses concerned with these plants. Each number of *Haustorium* consists of several 8½" × 11" pages stapled together.

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