



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN



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Review

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Los “Bosques Vacíos” and 14. *Abundancia, Distribución y Estado de Conservación del Marimono (Ateles chamek)*. Part four, *Comunidades Locales y Manejo de Recursos*, has five chapters: 15. Regeneration of Tropical Forest Patches Following Slash-and-Burn Agriculture, 16. Pre-Hispanic Raised-Field Cultivation as an Alternative to Slash-and-Burn Agriculture in the Bolivian Amazon: Agroecological Evaluation of Field Experiments, 17. *Agricultura Tsimane y su Relación con la Conservación*, 18. *Plantas Útiles: Investigación Etnobotánica con las Comunidades Chimane y Mestizo-Campesinas*, and 19. *Fauna en la Subsistencia de los Tsimane*. Finally, part five, *Conservación*, closes the book with two chapters: 20. Biogeographical Analysis: Implications for Protected Area Management and Regional Planning and Processes and 21. *La Gestión de la Reserva de la Biosfera Estacion Biologica del Beni, Bolivia*.

*Biodiversidad, Conservacion y Manejo en la Región de la Reserva de la Biosfera Estación Biológica del Beni, Bolivia* is the outcome of intensive long-term research with an interdisciplinary and community based framework that should serve as a template for future biodiversity inventories and investigations. Anyone interested in the biological diversity and conservation in Bolivia should own this book. Due to the breadth of topics covered, readership should be extensive in Latin American and Western populations alike.

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**Growing Gourmet and Medicinal Mushrooms.** Stamets, Paul. 2000. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, Toronto. xvii + 574 pp (paperback). ISBN 1-58008-175-4.

For those interested in the art and science of mushroom growing, to those simply curious as to how gourmet and medicinal mushrooms are cultivated for commercial or personal purposes, this book is a must. Written as a comprehensive guide, this is richly illustrated with more than 500 photographs, illustrations, and charts to clearly identify each stage of mushroom cultivation. The volume describes in detail the precise growth parameters for 31 mushroom species—from gardening tips to current production techniques including a trouble-shooting guide, and a few interesting gourmet recipes.

Appendices include advice for creating a mushroom farm from laboratory and growing room construction, to maintenance, and proper use by personnel. Included also is a ‘Resource Directory’ that provides information on all aspects of the mushroom field including field guides, book suppliers, annual festivals and events, seminars and training centers, study tours and

adventures, societies and associations, sources of cultures and spawn, marketing information, newsletters and journals, museums, sources of medicinal mushroom production, and mycological resources on the internet. Also in the appendix is an analysis of basic materials for substrate preparation and data conversion tables. A suitable glossary and bibliography is also provided. The author does credit to the art and science of this interesting field in a readable and useful form.

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**Cycads: The endangered living fossils—Cycadas: Fósiles vivientes en peligro de extinción.** Gómez-Pompa, Arturo, Andrew P. Vovides, Nisao Ogata, Roberto Castro-Cortés, José A. González-García, Andrés Corona López. 2000. Compact Disk for Pentium PC computer.

This Compact Disk (CD) introduces the fascinating world of the cycads. The format and content of this CD seem to target amateur botanists, undergraduate students, and high school teachers. There it is no doubt that this CD has a tremendous potential for teaching introductory botany courses for non-Biology majors. I wish that more botanists would follow the example of Gómez-Pompa and collaborators and make an effort to use computer technology in reaching undergraduate students and others who are not professional botanists.

The CD has both Spanish and English versions and, as indicated on the front page, it provides “An interactive trip into the world and conservation of cycads.” The work consists of nine modules, namely: *Introduction, Cycads, Atlas, Identification, Vegetation, Conservation, Bibliography, Index, and Credits*. Also, a *Menu* page allows the reader to move easily from one module to another. Most of these modules deal with the genera of cycads restricted to the New World and there is hardly any information about the genera from Africa, Asia, and Australia. Each module is very well illustrated and the reader can “click” on some keywords for further information about some topics.

I found three of the modules (i.e., *Identification, Bibliography, and Index*) superb. The Index allows the reader to find easily all the key-words of the text. It is however, a pity that this module does not included all the currently recognized species, for example *Zamia pseudoparasitica*, the only known epiphytic cycad. *Identification* is outstanding; has maps with distributions, and an excellent interactive key with illustrations that will help identify easily the major morphological groups of the New World. Likewise, the *Bibliography*

is useful and one can find easily relevant literature for several cycad topics.

The remaining modules are also interesting and well designed. The *Introduction*, *Cycad*, and *Atlas* modules provide introductory information; however, I found this information limited. The modules on *Conservation* and *Vegetation* give excellent accounts of the vegetation of Mexico, and the problems derived from lack of biodiversity conservation. However, these two hardly make reference to the conservation status of cycads in the New World, and any correlation between vegetation zones of Mexico and distribution of cycads.

My main negative comment concerns the fact that when one of the key-words is clicked the new screen does not overwrite the previous one, therefore it is sometimes difficult to read the content associated with this new page. I am also sure that most cycad enthusiasts would like to see a future version of this work that will come with a supporting book and an extension of the content by including the cycads of the Old World. The current version is only for PC users; therefore, I encourage the authors to develop new versions that can be read by MacIntosh computers. In summary, a good piece of work that will surely set an example to other botanists.

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**Economic Botany, Plants in Our World, Third Edition.** Simpson, Beryl Brintnall and Molly Conner Ogorzaly. 2001. McGraw-Hill, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. xii + 529 pp. (hardcover) \$67.50. ISBN 0-07-290938-2.

On opening the parcel containing this book, I was surprised to find a slimmer (529 vs. 742 pp.) book, as compared to the previous edition. As veteran teachers have noted, textbooks tend to become thicker, and often undesirably encyclopedic, with each subsequent edition.

Notable additions to the third edition include several new, boxed mini-essays of related material found throughout the book. Examples of some especially useful new ones include: "Alternatives to Conventional Western Medicine" (chap. 11), and "A Good Strategy Turned Sour" (chap. 16). Furthermore, each chapter has been updated by accounts of recent advances. This is true especially for chap. 11 ("Medicinal Plants"), chap. 12 ("Psychoactive Drugs and Poisons from Plants"), and chap. 19 ("Uses of Plants in the Future").

The first two chapters of the second edition, "Fea-

tures of Flowering Plants and their Products" and "Variation, Selection, and Evolution in Flowering Plants" have been condensed and merged into a single (first) chapter of the third edition: "Plants and their Manipulations by People." The titles of the remaining chapters (abridged here) are: "Origins of Agriculture" (2), "Fruits and Nuts" (3, 4), "Grains and Grasses" (5), "Legumes" (6), "Leaves, Stems, and Roots" (7), "Spices, Herbs, and Perfumes" (8), "Oils and Waxes" (9), "Hydrogels, Latexes, and Resins" (10), "Medicinal Plants" (11), "Drugs and Poisons from Plants" (12), "Beverages" (13, 14), "Fibers, Dyes, and Tannins" (15), "Wood" (16), "Ornamental Plants" (17), "Algae" (18), and "The Future" (19).

How can a text have expanded coverage with fewer pages? In addition to the elimination of a chapter mentioned above, sixteen pages of color plates which brightened the second edition were omitted (they are available on World Wide Web). Furthermore, the type is smaller (but easily readable), and the page format is slightly larger.

Strangely, both the "Contents" and "Brief Contents" are virtually identical, evidently a printing error, and the only one noted.

The exquisite black-and-white line drawings of Molly Ogorzaly, which enhanced the quality of the first two editions are retained but revised as necessary to reflect new industrial processes. The experienced authors, aided by pre-publication reviewers (many SEB members) have combined to produce this highly refined text. I look forward to using it for my course in Economic Botany, Fall, 2001.

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**Review of Genes in the Field: On-farm Conservation of Crop Diversity.** Brush, S. B., editor. 1999. CRC Press/Lewis Publishers, 2000 NW Corporate Blvd., Boca Raton, Florida, USA. 288 pp. (paperback). price not given. ISBN 1-56670-405-7.

It is now widely agreed by scientists that to maintain the crop genetic diversity on which our future depends, the *in situ* conservation which farmers have been doing for millennia is a valuable complement to *ex situ* conservation in gene banks—the dominant approach since the realization of the loss of diversity from farmer's fields more than half a century ago. *In situ* conservation of crop genetic resources means working with farmers, and implies the need to understand a range of social, cultural, economic, institutional and legal issues, as well as the genetic and ecological ones that have dominated *ex situ* conservation. This book pro-