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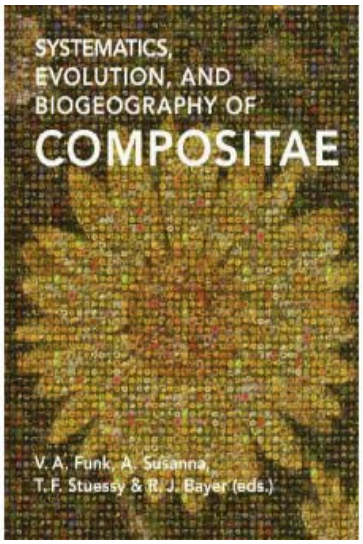
Grădina Botanică "Alexandru Borza"
Cluj-Napoca

BOOK REVIEWS



FUNK V.A., SUSANNA A., STUESSY T.F., BAYER R.J. (eds.) - 2009, ***Systematics, Evolution, and Biogeography of Compositae***. International Association for Plant Taxonomy, Vienna, 965 pp.

An outstanding book by its content and graphical display, and by the diversity of addressed issues was published last year. We recommend it to all botanists (both classical and modern botanists) as well as to those interested in phytodiversity conservation or practical uses of plants. It should also be one of the major references for those who „*Magno amore in familiam Synantherearum captus*...", as C.F. Lessing stated in 1829.

This volume is dedicated to the largest (about 23000 species), most diverse and unitary family of *Magnoliophyta* that gathers original contributions and comprehensive syntheses signed by acknowledged experts in the taxonomy (e.g., members of TICA - *The International Compositae Alliance*, founded in 2000), evolution, biogeography and ecology of these plant group.

The readers can find here a solid contribution by B.B. Simpson regarding the economic importance of *Compositae* (alimentary, medicinal, ornamental, etc.), and also general considerations concerning plant systematics, a science that must „*reinvent itself*" if we want it subsist as a dynamic academic discipline (V.H. Heywood).

Evolutionists can learn about an interesting approach to the evolution of the *Compositae* inflorescence (C. Jeffrey), in which the neoteny seems to have been played an important role, and the evolution of pollen (Blackmore *et al.*). The geneticists can benefit from the caryological synthesis made by J.C. Semple *et* K. Watanabe for 978 of the 1300 genera of the *Compositae*.

The overall classification of the family representatives (species) is developed by Funk *et al*. based on both morpho-anatomical and molecular genetics characters. No less than 12subfamilies (*Barnadesioideae*, *Mutisioideae*, *Carduoideae*, *Cichorioideae*, *Corymbioideae*, *Asteroideae*, etc.), compared with only two in the classical taxonomic system, are proposed.

Numerous other contributions concern the research history and the biochemistry aspects of different *Compositae* species (Calabria *et al*.). Other contributions are focused either on the biogeographical patterns, or on the taxonomy of one subfamily or one of the 43 tribes. All these contributions complete this remarkable book as an authentic and useful monograph to which contributed 80 authors!

Of the rich illustration occurring throughout this book, we must emphasize the excellent quality of the 108 cladograms and 443 pictures representing the aspects of vegetative and reproductive organs of the *Compositae* species.

Finally, the book is also an excellent source of information through the 2632 references that are cited in the 44 chapters.

Nihil dicturus sum!

Vasile CRISTEA