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BOOK REVIEW

Mabberley's Plant-book – a portable dictionary of plants, their classification and uses. 4th edition. D.J. Mabberley. 1102 pp., 2017. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-107-11502-6. Price: EUR 69.00 or GBP 59.99 (hardback).

The fourth edition of Mabberley's Plant-book weighs less than the third edition published in 2008, yet it numbers 91 more pages and contains over 1400 additional entries. This miracle has been achieved by the publishers of this much used compendium by changing from ordinary to 'bible paper', in order to fully justify the subtitle "portable dictionary". I have sung the praises of the Plant-book before: it brings together the latest information on plant classification, catalogues all generic names of seed-plants, ferns and clubmosses, and economically important mosses and algae, provides concise information on plant morphology and geographical distribution, and has a wealth of information on plant uses. With each new edition, entries for vernacular and trade names are growing in number, including those of timbers. In fact the 26,000 entries are so rich in information, that in a way the Plant-book can replace a whole botanical library.

The classification adopted is largely from Kubitzki's *Families and Genera of Vascular Plants*, which in turn is firmly rooted in that of the *Angiosperm Phylogeny Group* (APG). For wood anatomists unfamiliar with, or sometimes hostile to, the dynamics of phylogenetic plant classification and name changes, the introduction to this fourth edition clearly explains the inescapable and scientific logic behind it, as well as the author's pragmatic and wise approach to reduce nomenclatural instability to a minimum.

Curators of wood collections are well-advised to purchase this new edition to keep up-to-date with the family attribution of woody genera. For instance, from the first edition onwards *Viburnum* has moved from Caprifoliaceae to Adoxaceae (ed. 3), now renamed Viburnaceae in this edition. Many important other woody genera have also been reclassified.

Most importantly, Mabberley's Plant-book remains a treasure-trove of botanical knowledge, that never disappoints if one quickly has to compensate for one's own ignorance on certain plants or plant products.

Pieter Baas