Book review

The Bamboos of the World

The reader who looks forward to coloured pictures will be disappointed: the book contains only letters and a few maps in black and white. Colours are not important for the aim of this book. The general aims are to present a documentary review of the main data for all bamboo species, to facilitate access to further data by citation and to give a comprehensive bibliography. The author stresses that he gives a review based on literary work. He does not intend to revolutionize the systematics of bamboos. All the six known tribes of bamboos, amongst them the tribe *Bambuseae* with its 11 subtribes, are described. 6494 names of bamboos are mentioned in the index (including some synonyms). The bibliography with about 2000 references starts in the 18th century and ends in 1997. As far as I could see from the introduction, the book contains parts which have already been published in separate booklets from 1983 to 1997. However, in contrast to the earlier parts, the book has been enlarged and now covers all currently known bamboos in a single inventory. If you have a bamboo at home and you want to know which one it is, first take a look in a book about perennials and then look up the exact name and origin of it in “The Bamboos of the World”. For an exact description with photographs or drawings, the cited literature has to be looked up. Valuable are the remarks on the use of common varieties in horticulture in Europe and USA. Remarks on frost tolerance are included too.

The print design is not to my taste. But that is not detrimental in an inventory. The bibliography is not completely correct in details, e.g. on page 151 “J.P. Demoly, 1991” is cited and in the bibliography you can choose from J.P. Demoly, 1991a, b, c or d.

The book saves a lot of time if you are involved with bamboos. So it is useful for all who deal with bamboos. Even nurseries may make good use of it for their catalogues. In my opinion the work should belong to every horticultural or botanical library.

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