

Preface

Handbooks devoted to succulent plants (including cacti) have a long-standing tradition, and the demand for updated editions is a good indication of the high degree of interest that exists in this fascinating group of plants.

While first handbooks devoted to the family *Cactaceae* were already published in the 19th century, the first handbook dealing with the so-called 'other' succulents was authored by Hermann Jacobsen and published in 1954 - 1955, then called "Handbuch der sukkulenten Pflanzen". A revised and enlarged English edition was made available in 1959 and was repeatedly reprinted in the following years.

A major step towards a compact handbook including short descriptions, full synonymy and hundreds of illustrations was the publication of the first edition of Hermann Jacobsen's celebrated "Sukkulentenlexikon" in 1970, followed by the English edition in 1975, and a revised German edition in 1981, finished by Klaus Hesselbarth following Hermann Jacobsen's death in August 1978.

The demand for updated compact information on succulent plants has not diminished since then, and contrary to Hermann Jacobsen's opinion (preface to the German edition 1970) that the number of papers dealing with succulent plants was on the decline, the interest in succulent plants was growing, both among hobbyists and among botanists. The results are numerous new taxa in many families, and many monographs of previously little-known groups have been published in the last 30 years. Accordingly, a need for a "New Lexicon" was beginning to be felt, both for 'other' succulents and for cacti.

After some informal initial discussions held among various botanists and interested specialist collectors, and faced with the desire of Gustav Fischer Verlag Jena, the publisher of both Backeberg's "Kakteenlexikon" and Jacobsen's "Sukkulentenlexikon", to prepare revised editions, a meeting was called for during the 1990-congress of the International Organization for Succulent Plant Study (IOS) in Zürich. There was a general feeling that the situation presented a unique occasion to produce a set of authoritative volumes embracing *all* succulent plants, and produced according to a rigid set of common standards adopted to suit all families involved. It was planned that the project, informally termed the "New IOS Succulent Plant Lexicon", should consist of three volumes, one devoted to the *Cactaceae*, one to the *Aizoaceae*, and one to the remaining succulent taxa from various families.

For various reasons, the Lexicon project took much longer to be completed. The *Cactaceae* part had not become available in time for inclusion in the present handbook edition. In the case of the *Aizoaceae*, time permitted a much more complete treatment of the family, which will be published in two volumes. Moreover, it soon became apparent that a single volume will not be sufficient to cover the vast array of the "remaining succulents". Accordingly, they will be split into four volumes (Monocotyledons, Dicotyledons, *Asclepiadaceae* and *Crassulaceae*). It is hoped that these volumes will – together with their companions – be a useful successor to Jacobsen's celebrated Lexicon.

Already Jacobsen counted on the help of various contributors for his Lexicon, and this is even more the case with the present publication. The Illustrated Handbook of Succulent Plants has sought the help of numerous specialists to provide the most up-to-date contributions on the various families and genera. The present volume derives from the close and most enjoyable collaboration between many specialists. In contrast to Jacobsen's Lexicon, the descriptions have been vastly expanded to make them as diagnostic as possible. Numerous additional data items, such as typification, etymology, etc., have been incorporated, and it is hoped that this will add to the

usefulness of the "New Lexicon" when compared with its predecessor – for users from both the botanical, the horticultural and hobby communities.

Thanks to the availability of computers and sophisticated database technology, it has been possible to considerably reduce the time needed to adapt the final manuscripts of the volumes on the "remaining succulents" for publication. The whole text of the volumes on Monocotyledons, Dicotyledons, *Asclepiadaceae* and *Crassulaceae*, including the complete nomenclature and all literature references is stored in a database, and the final version for the printing process was directly generated from this database. With this technology, the reference section as well as the index to taxa could be compiled automatically, which guarantees maximum completeness and reliability, as well as standardization. With the help of this "database publishing", it was possible to get this volume published within four months after the completion of all manuscripts and proof-reading.

Succulent plant botany will not end with the publication of this volume. In fact, the contrary is expected: It has always been the experience that the publication of a major revision or monograph hastens new research within the groups treated. This, it is hoped, will also be the result of the present publication. The compilation of it has exposed many instances where our knowledge is feeble or even non-existent. This shows that additional research is urgently called for. It is therefore the hope of the editor – and this is somewhat in contrast to the hopes of Hermann Jacobsen upon publication of his Lexicon – that succulent plant research will be enhanced by the publication of these volumes, and that a revised and updated edition will become possible in the not too distant future.

Acknowledgments

A special word of thanks goes to all the contributors of this volume. Without their help, the project to compile and edit this handbook would not have been the pleasure that it was.

The editor is most grateful to the authors for their patience with regards to the delayed publication of the handbook. The economics of book production have changed considerably during the time when the manuscripts were completed. The publisher of the original handbooks, Gustav Fischer Verlag Jena, has lamentably disappeared. After considerable uncertainties, the project has found a firm base in the publishing houses of Springer-Verlag, Heidelberg (for the English edition) and Ulmer-Verlag, Stuttgart (for the concurrent German edition). It is my pleasure to thank Dr. Dieter Czeschlik and Dr. Jutta Lindenborn from Springer-Verlag, and Roland Ulmer from Ulmer-Verlag, for their willingness to step in when everything appeared to become lost.

The compilation of the volumes treating the "remaining succulents" has been undertaken using computing infrastructure provided by the Municipal Succulent Collection Zürich (ZSS), and the permission to do so is heartily acknowledged with a deep feeling of gratitude, both to its former director Diedrich J. Supthut as well as to the present director Dr. Thomas Bolliger, and to the authorities of the City Parks Department.

Numerous persons have helped during the compilation and editing process. Foremost is Auli Lenzi (ZSS) who is thanked for her helping hand to keep the project papers organized. Gordon Rowley (Reading) has been of vital help supplying biographical information and literature in numerous cases.

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U. EGGLI

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