

Books of Interest

Gene flow from GM plants

Edited by Guy M. Poppy and Michael J. Wilkinson
Blackwell Publishing. 2005. \$199.99

At a time when everyone is writing about GM crops (I have just submitted text for an 18 chapter edited book), it is easy to be distracted by opinionated ramblings by both scientists and anti-GM activists. This book has just arrived on my desk without fanfare and I almost returned to sender. However, the title drew closer me and at first glance, it turns out to be an expensive, but refreshingly rational, set of 9 chapters by 7 academics and two researchers from industry. With such a stable of authors, the direction is clearly academic and largely European in context. I will prepare a full review for the next issue of **Davidsonia**.

Book Review

The Jade Garden. New & notable plants from Asia.

Wharton, Peter, Brent Hine, and Douglas Justice. 2005. Timber Press, Portland and Cambridge. 228p. ISBN: 0-88192-705-8. \$34.95.

This is both a useful and quite delightful book – the sort of book one would expect botanic gardens to publish or encourage to be published, but which too often never sees the light of day. The book follows several botanical excursions to Asia by western (including UBC) scientists and horticulturists, and begins with a general, but very good, overview of the East Asian Flora and the natural landscapes of China (and some wonderful colour plates) and nearby regions, along with an essay on bioinvasiveness, an issue all of us in botanic gardens are concerned about. The bulk of the text consists of three sections (perennials,

shrubs, and trees) with excellent coverage of details about a selection of individual species, including distribution, hardiness, cultivation, and propagation, with the great majority of species illustrated with gorgeous colour plates. For many of the species, there are useful remarks about nomenclature or the derivation of their names, along with notes about when they were introduced to the Pacific Northwest or North America. The 40 perennials, 50 shrubs, and 40 trees selected for coverage generally are recent introductions or rarer species or those that have not been introduced much beyond botanic gardens, and all of which have a lot of potential for gardens in the coastal (and sometimes interior) regions of the West. At least one of the species mentioned (*Alangium kurzii*) might yet not be introduced (“...deserves to be introduced to the West”) to British Columbia.

A couple of minor quibbles: The map of China on page 22 would be a lot more useful if it were larger, or included sub-maps, showing the location of cities and rivers noted in the text. One might argue that some of the species included in either the “shrubs” or “trees” chapters might better be placed in the other chapter, but botanists and foresters always have had a hard time definitively separating the two. As one who admires many members of the genus *Larix*, I would argue that they are not “a scruffy lot”. There are minor stylistic differences in the coverage of the three principle chapters, as one would expect from three different authors. For example, Peter Wharton includes many remarks about the introduction history for most of the shrubs, while Douglas Justice often includes remarks about conservation biology or ecological concerns for many of the trees. All of their remarks make for interesting reading, and I only wish that space allowed for more of this anecdotal, ecological, and historical information.

The only errors I noted were for a couple of the references to Plates in the text. The text for *Carpinus turczaninowii* (page 170) refers to Plate 159, but that plate (and the front dust-wrapper illustration) appears to show *C. fangiiana* (and is so labeled). On page 193, the text for *Quercus*

acuta refers to Plate 199, but that should be Plate 198. Similarly, on page 194, the text for *Q. myrsinifolia* refers to Plates 200 – 201, but the correct plates for that species are numbers 199 and 200.

I would encourage every avid gardener and most botanists in British Columbia to buy this book. There are many outstanding species covered, and the information for each generally is excellent. The superb colour plates alone are worth the price. I only regret that the great majority of the species covered won't survive where I live!

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