
Preface to the second edition

Recent years have seen renewed interest in the fragile alpine biota. The International Year of Mountains in 2002 and numerous international programs and initiatives have contributed to this. Since nearly half of mankind depends on water supplies originating in mountain catchments, the integrity and functional significance of the upland biota is a key to human welfare and will receive even more attention as water becomes an increasingly limited resource. Intact alpine vegetation, as the safeguard of the water towers of the world, is worth being well understood. This new edition of *Alpine Plant Life* is an update with over 100 new references, new diagrams, revised and extended chapters (particularly 7, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17) and now also offers a geographic index. My thanks go to the many careful readers of the first edition for their most valuable comments, in particular to Vicente I. Deltoro (Valencia) and Johanna Wagner (Innsbruck).

Basel, April 2003

Christian Körner

I decided to grow up in a green environment, my interest in biology was stimulated by my parents' fascination of plants and landscape gardening, bird watching and photography, and their strong feel for nature conservation. Alpine vegetation is like a garden, a mosaic of beauty, a small-scale multitude of ways of living with little attractive to both the naturalist and the scientist. Perhaps to readers who find some details of this fascination between the lines of this scientific text.

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