

Preface

During recent years the findings of molecular systematics for the first time have provided a reliable lead for a higher order classification of angiosperms, as reflected in the classification of the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group. From Volume III of this series onward, these new concepts have been used as a guideline for treating angiosperm families in a meaningful context within individual volumes of this series. Among the five orders treated in this volume, Celastrales and Oxalidales represent novel concepts of which at least the latter makes sense also in morphological terms. The concept of Ericales followed here has largely been expanded beyond its conventional limits to include parts of former Ebenales, Lecythidales, Primulales and other orders. Also, the circumscription of many families has been revised on the basis of recent molecular studies. Among the recircumscribed families, Ericaceae, Celastraceae, Cunoniaceae and Elaeocarpaceae appear now in revised and expanded circumscriptions, and the former Primulales families have been profoundly reorganised. I am most grateful to my authors who have incorporated into their treatments the most recent results of molecular and cladistic studies. At the same time I, as the editor, also feel the dilemma of prejudicing those authors who responded at an early stage of the preparation of these volumes and whose contributions had to wait for publication until late authors were able to comply. Lamentably, R.C. Carolin's treatments of Stackhousiaceae and Tremandraceae, submitted in the early 1990s, have been superseded by later developments, and I am most grateful to Roger Carolin for his understanding and generous permission to use his treatments in a changed family context.

I would like to direct the attention of the users of this series to the remarkable treatment of Ericaceae in this volume. Its author, P.F. Stevens, is introducing here an interesting kind of "hierarchical" description, which emphasises apomorphic characters and leads to great clearness and conciseness, the constantly aspired aims of this series.

It would hardly have been possible to complete this volume without the help so generously offered by many colleagues. Most substantial support has been provided by C. Bayer and P.F. Stevens who reviewed many contributions and suggested most helpful improvements. A.S. George is thanked for building up a team that contributed Styphelioideae and thus made possible completion of Ericaceae in the new circumscription; I am also grateful for his kind assistance in various other matters. Deep thanks for reading and commenting on particular contributions are due to R. Archer (Celastraceae), I.K. Ferguson (Cornaceae), J.W. Kadereit (Introduction), S.R. Manchester (Cornaceae), M. Matthews (Cunoniaceae), B. Ståhl (Symplocaceae), S. Renner (Sarraceniaceae), R. Rutishauser (Cunoniaceae) and J. Thompson (tremandraceous Elaeocarpaceae). D. Albach and L. Hufford are thanked for their comments on problems concerning Hydrostachyaceae, and M. Matthews and P.K. Endress for showing me papers prior to publication.

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