
Preface to the Third Edition

As scientific understanding of genetics has increased and technological advances have reduced the cost and difficulty of sequencing genomes, plant studies have turned increasingly to evolution and phylogeny. The overall direction of plant science has shifted. One consequence is that over the years since the publication of the first edition of this dictionary, access to the genetic relationships among plants has made it possible to revise plant taxonomy, placing it on a firmer evolutionary footing. The need to revise the dictionary for its new edition has given me the opportunity to take account of that development. The entries describing plant families now refer to the orders in which they are placed, and at the same time I have revised the numbers of genera and species in each family in the light of current estimates. The widely used classification developed by the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group is summarized in an appendix, where I have also added a summary of the present classification for Fungi.

In revising the dictionary, I have been helped greatly by Dr Robin Allaby, FLS, FSB, of the University of Warwick, who has scrutinized my revisions and made many of his own. This edition contains many new entries. Some of these relate to plant systematics and others are from molecular biology.

Each of the entries in the second edition has been scrutinized carefully. Many have been modified, often in only small ways, in order to clarify them or bring them up to date.

The revisions do not disguise the fact that the original compilation was the work of a team and would have been impossible without the enthusiastic support and hard work of Mike Kent, Diana Sainsbury, Tim Whitmore, and Robin Allaby. Their work is retained, and if mistakes or omissions have survived, the fault is mine, not theirs.

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