

Preface

This volume, the seventh in this series, deals with the families of the Lamiales, a group of the asterids or Sympetalae, which was recognised by early workers such as Bartling and Lindley under the name Labiatiflorae or Personatae, and which has only moderately been modified in circumscription over time. Nevertheless, our considerably increased knowledge of the group and the results of molecular studies provide a more detailed basis for understanding relationships among and evolution within the families of the Lamiales, although, as J.W. Kadereit emphasises in his introduction, in this connection and also in relation to family delimitation, many questions remain currently unanswered.

My sincere thanks go to all authors for their scholarly treatment of families in this volume. In particular, the authors/organisers who handled the four large families with more than 100 genera, Bignoniaceae, Gesneriaceae, Labiatae and Scrophulariaceae, deserve special mention for their herculean work. The authors also emphasised the various themes of diversification, differing from group to group, that are so important for the understanding and interpretation of taxonomic diversity, such as phytochemical diversification in Labiatae and pollinator interactions in Gesneriaceae, to cite only two salient examples. In the circumscription of Scrophulariaceae, a pragmatic position has been taken; since this series aims primarily at providing baseline information for families and genera, the problem of a phylogenetically satisfactory classification of the Scrophulariaceae complex that avoids paraphyly at our present state of knowledge must be left undecided, and indeed is not the primary focus of this volume. Sincere thanks are also extended to Professor J.W. Kadereit for patiently bringing his work on the present volume to an end, in spite of all discouraging vicissitudes.

I am most grateful to all copyright holders for so generously authorising the use of their precious illustrative material. Finally, it is a pleasure to thank, also in the name of Professor Kadereit, the staff of Springer-Verlag and ProEdit, Heidelberg, for their dedicated work on the present volume. I would like to express special thanks to the copy editor, Monique Delafontaine, for the many improvements she made to the manuscript.

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