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## Book reviews

Titles for review should be sent to the Editor at the address on the inside back cover of this yearbook. The Editor reserves the right not to review a book that has been received unsolicited.

### **New Trees, Recent introductions to cultivation**

by John Grimshaw and Ross Bayton

Kew Publishing 2009 976pp ISBN 978-1-84246-173-0 £90

*reviewed by Roy Lancaster V.M.H.*

At a packed reception in London in May, appropriately in Chelsea Show week, this long awaited and eagerly anticipated book was introduced to the great and the good of the dendrological world. Some five years in preparation, *New Trees* was conceived and commissioned by the IDS in response to a demand for information on the huge number of new trees introduced to Western cultivation in recent decades. In this impressive tome weighing almost 3kg, over 800 species plus subspecies and varieties but with few exceptions, no cultivars are described as being currently present in the gardens, arboreta and specialist collections in the United Kingdom, Europe and North America. Not surprisingly, many of these trees hail from Asia, China particularly but other countries including Mexico, S.E. Australia and Chile also figure prominently. Many of these newcomers, which include 81 oaks (*Quercus* spp.) alone, are already well established while others, for the moment, merely have a toe-hold.

The bulk of this generously illustrated book is occupied by an A-Z account of these trees by genus and species from *Abies* to *Zelkova*, each featured tree comprising a detailed description including distribution and habitat in the wild, USDA hardiness zone and where available, conservation status in the wild plus references to sources of illustrations. Those subspecies and varieties included are also described and where there is more than one, a key to their identification is given. Following the botanical descriptions are more general and instructive commentaries on the trees and their potential horticultural value.

To all who enjoy the stories of plants these frequently substantial and occasionally entertaining narratives help make a tree come to life and more accessible to the reader. They typically give details of introductions, by whom, from where and when as well as details of cultivation including current size and location of the largest or most notable examples. The combination of botanical description and interesting narrative is the key to this book's popular appeal just as it was and is with W.J. Bean's seminal work *Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles*. It comes as no surprise that the original concept for *New Trees* was that it should be complementary to Bean's work, the last (8<sup>th</sup>) revised edition of which was completed with the Chief Editor Desmond Clarke's Supplement published in 1988. It was my good fortune to be able to supply that author with information based on my introductions from China and elsewhere in the

1980s and I have a letter written by him in June 1988 urging me to “continue the flow as there will be another supplement in eight to ten years time”.

Well, the intended supplement was not to be, Clarke died in 1991 but I have no doubt whatsoever that he would have highly approved of the present volume as indeed would have Bean for it fulfils all that they and the wise heads of the IDS could have dreamed of. The illustrations alone, exquisite line drawings by Hazel Wilks from specimens supplied principally by RBG Kew and growers in the UK and a wealth of colour photographs taken in gardens and wild habitats around the world, many published for the first time adorn a text that serious tree lovers will devour. I spent a week dipping into its pages targeting trees that I have some personal knowledge of before moving on to the majority that are quite new to me. I urge readers however, to resist the temptation to cherry pick until they have read and digested the introductory pages which, apart from preparing the ground for a more thorough understanding and appreciation of the main text are full of good sense and erudition providing up to date information and opinion on such essentials as Hardiness, Global warming and Climate Change, Nomenclature, Conservation both in the wild and equally important, in cultivation, Conservation Legislation, Invasive aliens, Cultivation, Labelling and record keeping. In addition, in a series of appendices there is a descriptive list of major arboreta and gardens especially noted for their collections of new trees, an appendix of collectors’ references, a glossary and an extensive bibliography.

Which leads me, finally and inevitably to the authors, whose individual yet complimentary skills and expertise have resulted in a masterpiece of tree literature. In addition, a mere glance at the list of acknowledgements will be enough to remind readers of the quality and generosity of the huge number of tree enthusiasts amateur and professional, worldwide, who have contributed information and or photographs in order to help make *New Trees* the first great contribution on its subject of the millennium. It is an achievement of which the authors and the IDS can justifiably be proud.

## **The Garden at Larnach Castle, a New Zealand story**

by Margaret Barker

David Bateman Ltd, Auckland, 2006. 160 pp. H/back. Illus. ISBN-13: 978-1-86953-639-8, ISBN-10: 1-86953-639-8 [<http://www.larnarchcastle.nz>]

*reviewed by Susyn Andrews*

New Zealand’s only castle is situated on the Otago Peninsula, South Island, with glorious views to the opposite side of Otago Harbour and down to Dunedin. Its story began when an Australian banker, William Larnach arrived in Dunedin in 1868. By 1870, he had seen “the site with a beautiful view” and bought it. He had the native forest cleared and in 1871 began

building. Larnach Castle was built of stone in the northern Gothic Revival style but with southern hemisphere additions such as cast-iron lace verandas. He established shelterbelts and planted native and exotic trees. However, business and politics took him away from the Castle and having become overstretched financially, he shot himself in 1898. Larnach died intestate and the Castle was finally bought by the government in 1906 and used as a mental home until 1918.

It then remained empty until 1927 when Laura and Jackson Purdie moved in. He was a wood and coal merchant in Dunedin and immediately removed most of the mature trees for timber. Laura, however, was a keen gardener and between them, they turned the Castle and gardens around, so much so that it was open to the public for two afternoons a week. However, Jackson became ill and the Castle was sold in 1939.

Over the next 30 years there were a number of different owners. Soldiers were billeted there during the Second World War but by the 1950s it was abandoned.

When Barry and Margaret Barker first saw the Castle in February 1967, it was in a complete state of disrepair and regarded by the locals as "a sad reminder of misplaced ambitions". There was a *Pseudotsuga menziesii* growing in the roof and the shelter belt had completely engulfed the garden! Totally captivated by the hidden potential of the site, the Barkers acquired the Castle and its 14 hectares of garden and had settled there a couple of weeks later in early March!

As might have been expected, their early years were filled with trials and tribulations, trying to make the Castle habitable, restoring the essential services, together with looking after two young children. It was during this time that Ira Thorncroft came to visit, who was the retired superintendent of the Hobart Botanic Gardens in Tasmania.

As fate would have it, he had laid out the gardens at Larnach for the Purdies in the early 1930s. He asked where the rock garden was as it was the largest rock garden in New Zealand, covering one third of a hectare. Eventually, they discovered its site hidden under sycamore, blackberries and other woody weeds. Thorncroft was devastated to find that all his work had disappeared and this spurred the Barkers on to restore the lost rock garden to its former glory.

Once bits of it had been uncovered and cleared, *Galanthus* appeared in huge drifts and Margaret discovered gardening and what was to be a lifetime passion for plants. She studied alpine plants in depth and then as she slowly began to develop other areas, different plants caught her interest. Today, the Serpentine Walk, the Patterned Garden, the Rainforest Garden, the Green Room and its pool of reflection, the South Seas Garden and Out of Africa all reveal her love and knowledge of plants.

Margaret has travelled all over the world to study plants in the wild and

in cultivation, bringing them and her ideas back to Larnach. Chile, New Caledonia, France, UK, China, Australia, the Chatham Islands and the remote islands off New Zealand are just some of the places she has visited and as she says, it took a trip to Scotland that made her look at her own native flora as a source of inspiration.

Her artistic flair for marrying such a diverse collection of plants is evident from the superb photographs that appear on every page. Larnach has been her life's work and it is a tribute to her courage and tenacity. Margaret and her two children continue to run this privately owned estate and she has won many awards for heritage, tourism, business and design.

Today, Larnach Castle and its magnificent gardens is a must for visitors to the Otago Peninsula. In 2004 it became a Garden of National Significance as assessed by the New Zealand Gardens Trust.

"The garden is dominated by the Victorian Castle, its initial audacity now mellowed by time."

### **Plantsman's Paradise: Travels in China** by Roy Lancaster

Garden Art Press, 2008. 511 pp. H/back Illus. ISBN ISBN-13: 9781851495153  
ISBN: 1851495150 £39.95

*reviewed by Tony Kirkham*

Anyone with a garden or an interest in Chinese plants will almost certainly have an original copy of Roy Lancaster *Travels in China – A Plantsman's Paradise* on their bookshelf. It was first published in 1989 and was a book that would give anybody who has never visited China the hunger to want to visit her to see the incredible richness and diversity of plants growing in their own natural habitat or to go and plant a Chinese plant in their garden. I remember buying my copy when it was first published having never travelled in China and promising myself throughout the day, a long day, that I wouldn't look at it until I got home to the comforts of my flat, where I could pour a dram and spend the evening wallowing in the splendour of China from my armchair; it was difficult not to be tempted to peep into the carrier bag and casually flick through the 516 pages, but I managed it and spent my evening in China.

Little did I know at that time that this would be part of the catalyst for me to travel in China. A book like this can only be written and illustrated by someone with a passion and unending knowledge of Chinese plants and only two people that could do that immediately spring to mind – Ernest Henry Wilson and Roy Lancaster. Prior to 1989 and the publishing of this book, E. H. Wilson's *A Naturalist in Western China* and *China Mother of Gardens* were the two books giving an account of the Chinese flora and people by someone who had personal experience of the two; however Wilson only had the luxury of a Sanderson plate camera on his last two expeditions, so the illustrations,

are sepia and limited to a few. Roy Lancaster is the font of all knowledge when it comes to Chinese plants and has a keen eye for a good photograph, many of which he uses to illustrate the text of his first edition, despite many of them being black and white.

When I first heard that Roy was producing an updated edition I wondered how can this book ever be improved from the original work? When I was given a copy at an RHS show in Westminster another long wait ensued as I sat on a District line underground train back to Kew fighting the temptation yet again not to peep into the bag that protected my copy. I wanted to rekindle that night in the armchair once again. I wasn't disappointed!

Much of the text remains the same with the seven chapters describing the different regions of China visited by the author between 1979 shortly after China reopened her doors to foreigners following the Cultural Revolution and 1984 when Roy visited the Changbai Shan in Northwest China. Roy describes over 1,000 different plant species and how these have enriched our gardens in the west.

Chapter one; "The Hills of Beijing" describes the vegetation along the Great Wall and around the city of Beijing. Chapter two; "The Sacred Omei Shan" is almost a monograph of the rich flora of one of China's four most sacred mountains, 100 miles southwest of Chengdu with some three thousand different species native to this one mountain.

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Chapter three, "City of Eternal Springs" is about the hills outside the city of Kunming and the Stone Forests of Lunan in Yunnan. Chapter four, "In the Footsteps of Forrest" recalls Roy's trip to the mountains of Western Yunnan as a member of the 1980 Sino-British Expedition. Chapter five; "The Peak and the Poppy" describes a trip to the area around the base of Gongga Shan, a mountain that Wilson never saw despite the many years that he spent in the area and a mountain once wrongly described by Joseph Rock in 1930 as the highest peak on the globe. This is an area in China well trodden by myself during my seed collecting trips to Western Sichuan and whenever I read this chapter I am taken back to the very same mountainous regions, the rivers, the people and plants that Roy describes in this chapter. Chapter six, "North of the Yangtze" provides a glimpse of the three gorges on the Yangtze River before the Gorges Dam project began in 1992, which will be completed this year in 2009; many of the plants that Roy introduces us to will have now disappeared under the rising water levels caused by the construction of the dam. The final chapter, "The Long White Mountains" is a visit to the Changbai Shan in north-east China on the North Korean border where the influence of Korea and Russia rub off onto the vegetation, giving me a personal reminder of the plants that I saw when I visited Ussuri Land in the Russian Far East in 1994.

What clearly makes this book so different from the first edition are the many new colour photographs, which replace the black and white images and are naturally worked into the existing text. Many of them are the first

flowering examples of Roy's introductions growing in gardens around the country. The quality of the images is of the highest and no space is spared in order that they can be shown to their true potential, many taking up a full page where the plant warrants it. Page 61 is a full-page impressive portrait of *Pinus bungeana* in the Forbidden City, Beijing. Each image bears a descriptive caption which put together make a book on its own and is completed with the date that the photograph was taken, providing the reader with a diary of plant flowering and fruiting times in the northern hemisphere. On page 101 is an image of *Emmenopterys henryi* flowering at the Villa Taranto in Northern Italy. This must be the first time that this shy flowering plant introduced by E. H. Wilson in 1907 has been printed in flower in any botanical or horticultural reference book and on page 189, is one of my favourite evergreen shrubs, *Illicium simonsii* flowering in the forest at Dapingdi.

The botanical nomenclature has also been updated where necessary as well as the information on the introduction of plants into Western cultivation, as many of the plants seen in China in the 1980s were not known to be in cultivation, but are now firmly established in our gardens.

Reading this book is the next best thing to listening to Roy on an arboretum walkabout or sitting through one of his entertaining, illustrated lectures, hoping that it will never end. Reading or even browsing through this book, whether it be on a district line underground train or in the comfort of your own study one cannot fail to be inspired by this book and want to visit China.

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### **A Natural History of Conifers** by Aljos Farjon

Timber Press, 2008. 304pp. H/back. Illus. ISBN 13: 978-0-88192-869-3 £25 (US\$ 34.95)

*reviewed by Ross Bayton*

As the world's "foremost conifer taxonomist", you might expect this review of their natural history to be highly authoritative though perhaps somewhat technical. However, Farjon has succeeded in carefully balancing scientific accuracy with a lucid narrative to produce a highly readable volume that will appeal to experts and laymen alike.

The format and layout of the book are well designed; the text is broken into 34 separate chapters, each a self-contained unit detailing one particular aspect of conifer biology. The chapters are then grouped in sections under seven major headings covering the key elements of natural history. Numerous colour photographs and Farjon's exquisite illustrations enhance the pages.

The initial chapters introduce the conifers and explore their bewildering diversity. At this point, I feel obliged to confess to being a closet conifer aficionado and was therefore surprised to discover that when faced in Chapter 1 with the question "What are conifers?" I could answer no better than "cone-

bearers". Not only is this question answered in full, but also Farjon mounts a vigorous defence of conifers, a group, which have suffered from bad publicity and changes in garden fashion. It is apparent that for too long their beauty and value as garden plants have been obscured (probably by a dense Leyland hedge).

The second major heading deals with systematics and begins with a somewhat dry discussion of heredity (Chapter 5) and the means by which taxonomists reconstruct a phylogeny (loosely translated, a family tree) using DNA and other data (Chapter 6). Difficult subjects to enthuse about and indeed these two chapters lack the vivacity of the rest of the book. Perhaps they should have been excised, which would not have diminished the scientific integrity of the work. That said this section does provide a valuable insight into the work of taxonomists, a profession that draws its fair share of often uninformed criticism.

The remaining sections provide a review of conifer palaeobotany, ecology, biogeography, the uses of conifers and their conservation. Though undoubtedly informative, they also include numerous stories and anecdotes from the author's own past, together with those of other conifer collectors and enthusiasts. Of particular interest to members is Chapter 26, entitled "Clothing my estate", which discusses the popularity of conifers as specimen trees in the gardens of the great estates. The author wryly describes an outing with the International Dendrology Society in which his companions included several titled landowners, who might balk at discovering the more limited acreage at Chez Farjon! Equally interesting is the untold tale of the Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*). Its discovery was widely publicized around the world as were the efforts to ensure its conservation, but the discord behind the scenes is less well known.

The most appealing aspect of this book is that it clearly displays the author's passion for his subject. While perhaps we do not all share that passion (I do!), it is clear that conifers are a significant group of plants with much to offer the dendrologist. Furthermore the natural history tales told in this book will interest anyone with a passion for plants.

## **Seeds of Adventure: in Search of Plants**

by Peter Cox and Peter Hutchison

Garden Art Press, 2008. 416 pp. H/back Illus. ISBN 978-1-870673-58-7. £35

*reviewed by Martyn Rix*

Peter Cox and Peter Hutchison are well known to dendrologists as the experts on rhododendrons and primulas; both have spent many years searching remote parts of the Himalayas for new and rare species. Their gardens in

Scotland, both at Glendoick near Perth and one they share on the west coast in Argyll, are filled with their introductions, and are really exciting places for dendrologists to visit.

This book describes and illustrates the expeditions made by Cox and Hutchison, (C&H.) from the Pontus mountains in northern Turkey in 1962 and the first China expedition in 1981, to Pemako in south-eastern Tibet in 1996, and finally, in 2002, a return to Arunchal Pradesh in north-eastern India, which they had first visited in 1965. These are not locations for the faint-hearted, and the expeditions, so long in preparation, were often on the point of collapse through illness, accidents, blocked passes or early snowfalls, to say nothing of political obstacles which would put off less determined characters. A striking photograph of a shocked and bedraggled Peter Cox, after being caught in a road-workers' explosion is especially telling of the hazards of travel in western China. Other botanists have lost passports and even their clothes in road crashes there, so in a sense our two authors have been lucky.

The photographs in the book, of which there must be over 1000, can only be described as mouth-watering, showing an amazing range of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants as well as mountain scenery, forests, views of their tents, friends, villagers and other things of local interest. Rhododendrons and primulas figure largely here too, with gentians, nomocharis and other lilies.

The text carries the reader along, describes the towns and minority tribes, details the discomforts of travel and enthuses over the wonderful plants, which make all the difficulties and hardships worthwhile.

This type of book is valuable at two levels; at a practical level, gardeners can learn about the habitats of the plants they grow, and thereby hope to grow them better. On a more romantic level, the stories and the pictures that go with them can be called to mind by a particular tree or shrub in the garden, so that the intensity of its enjoyment will be heightened. Surely this knowledge of the origins and stories behind a particular plant is one of great importance in the aesthetics of gardening, as well as in other branches of art or nature.

The Antique Collectors' Club is to be commended for publishing such volumes, which are a delight to gardeners, armchair travellers and fellow enthusiasts for beautiful plants.

### **Trees for All Seasons:**

#### **Broadleaved Evergreens for Temperate Climates** by Sean Hogan

Timber Press, 2008. 336pp. H/back. Illus. ISBN-13: 978-0-88192-674-3 £25/US \$39.95

*reviewed by Michael Hickson*

The title, "Trees for All Seasons—Broadleaved Evergreens for Temperate Climates" brings together a selection of evergreen trees with fascinating

contrasts and textures through the enthusiasm of Sean Hogan's own personal experience and his understanding of growing this range of interesting plants he has in the Mediterranean climate of his home district of Portland, Oregon in the northwestern United States of America.

Mr Hogan's opening chapter explains his dedication to the subject matter and his criteria for including the evergreens in this book whilst encouraging the reader to delve deeper.

Covering some 70 genera of broadleaved evergreen trees is no mean feat when he has declined to include camellias, conifers, monocots (i.e. palms, yucca etc.) and rhododendrons in this volume. Plants regarded as invasive have been thoughtfully omitted. There are over 370 excellent photographs, covering in many cases, the flowering, the foliage, barks where appropriate and where possible depicted growing in its natural surroundings. The black and white icons help the reader judge the ultimate size of the plant growing in the wild although it will be appreciated that the growth rate and habit can vary in a garden or arboretum. In Europe the Mediterranean region is well known but this book highlights other such areas in Australia, New Zealand, South America, South Africa and of course California and Oregon. Although the research for this book has been carried out in the USDA hardiness zones 7 to 9 a helpful world temperature chart outlines regions where these evergreens might be expected to grow. Many dendrologists gardening on the peripheries, in maritime conditions or in local microclimates are encouraged to experiment with what have, in the past, been regarded as 'border-line' plants so as to push out the boundaries and see how many evergreens can be adapted to the cooler climatic regions. To name a few, *Comarostaphylis diversifolia* or *Vauquelinia californica* or even the *Elaeocarpus* species from Japan and New Zealand. Many of us living in these peripheries will be interested to see how Sean has included *Fraxinus*, *Hoheria* species and some of the *Ulmus* included as evergreens where they are grown in congenial climates. Whether or not we are successful in growing the wide range of trees listed, gardeners will always want to discuss their own experiences in trying out new plants with their friends whilst also wanting to distribute them. To help understand the growing requirements there is a useful chapter, starting on page 313, covering specific characteristics and uses for all the trees described in this volume.

Not all the plants mentioned will be available in every country but one of the pleasures of gardening is finding and introducing a new species to the garden accession list. Some countries have import restriction on new plants, which is so frustrating for those gardeners living in, say New Zealand.

Throughout the 300 pages of A-Z text the current thinking on nomenclature is used, bringing many of us up to date with new genus and species names. For example, the genera *Manglietia*, *Michelia* and *Parakmeria* are all included within *Magnolia* and *Cytisus battandieri* has become *Argyrocytisus battandieri*. It is also good to see some of the newer cultivars mentioned and highlighting

their value to the garden scene. For many gardeners the useful advice given through the lengthy descriptions of the individual evergreens will be welcome in the way of giving hints on the juxtaposition of evergreens with other trees and shrubs, how evergreens can provide useful shade and protection from the sun as well as from the cold to the lower storey plants whilst not forgetting the textures and colourful aspects of seasonal foliage variation. Where the bark, young growth, flowers and fruits are an asset these features are drawn to our attention. Amenity plantings are encouraged to fit into the surrounding landscapes whether it be backdrops, street trees or as a useful screen against building development.

With the positive words in Roy Lancaster's forward and in the round-up (envoi) by John Grimshaw this book definitely encourages us all, who have the opportunity, to expand the range of evergreens and introduce new species and cultivars to our gardens and arboreta from the wide range of plants on offer in this volume. Sean Hogan's knowledge and enthusiasm is bursting to the brim, which will surely bring further volumes for us all to enjoy. I look forward, like many others will I am sure, to seeing his next book.

### **Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver** by Douglas Justice

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival, 2008. 82 pp. stiff/back. 2009 ed. Illus.  
ISBN 978-0-9811521-0-3 CAN\$ 13.00.

*reviewed by Susyn Andrews*

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What an attractive book was my first thought, as this spiral bound, pocket-sized field guide fell out of the envelope. One cannot fail to pick it up and browse.

There are over 36,000 *Prunus* trees throughout the city of Vancouver, many of which have been presented by the people of Japan. The initial Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival was held in 2005 and has gone from strength to strength, (<http://www.vcbf.ca>).

The first edition of this book was published in 2007. It was published to help the Festival volunteers with "the sometimes confusing job of identifying cherry cultivars around Vancouver". It became a valuable tool and a great success.

This second edition has added more taxa, corrections have been made and the photographs much improved. Cultivars have been listed from each of the city's neighbourhoods and colour codes indicate the flowering season, from February to May.

The 35 taxa are mainly cultivars with just a few species; each are given a double page spread, with two large colour photograph, one of habit, the other close up, both of excellent quality. There is a concise main information paragraph, followed by headings of leaves, locations, flowers, sepals, calyx-

tube. Under each heading are bullet points of key features. Any space left on each page is for notes. *Prunus × subhirtella* 'Whitcomb' caught my eye as it is not a cultivar that I am familiar with. This stunning, intense, purplish pink flowered selection came from Seattle and is widely grown throughout the Pacific Northwest.

This is an immensely attractive and useful field guide and the author and his colleagues have put a great deal of thought and effort into the layout and production. They are to be congratulated and perhaps *Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver* could serve as a model for similar ventures.

### **400 Trees and Shrubs for Small Spaces:**

**How to Grow the Right Plant in the Right Place** by Diana M. Miller

Timber Press, 2008. 216pp. H/back. Illus. ISBN 13:9780881928754 £20/US \$29.95

*reviewed by Tony Schilling V.M.H.*

As the cover sheet of this publication states, "...choosing the right plant for small gardens is a fine art". Selecting just 400 from a choice of many thousands is undoubtedly an even finer art and the author must have spent many hours agonising over what to include and what to leave out. At the end of the day it must surely have come down to personal choice coupled to compromise.

Diana Miller admits this book cannot be all encompassing, nor does it aim its message at the cognoscenti. It does however set its sights on readers who require inspiration and guidance on what to choose and what to plant where and, within this remit it succeeds.

All conifers have been deliberately excluded, as have bamboos and, even more surprising, only two rhododendrons are listed. The main objective of the book is to highlight the breadth and variety within the world of woody plants, which are suitable for small areas.

The main chapter comprises an A to Z of recommended trees and shrubs and covers some 135 pages of text and some 150 colour photographs. In addition to an introduction, which explains the purpose of the work, other chapters include subjects such as basic plant nomenclature, how best to select one's plants, ground preparation, pruning, propagation and the control of pests and diseases.

The final chapter gives suggestions and guidance on the purchasing of plants and a list of gardens to visit for inspiration. European and USA hardiness zones are also covered within this concluding chapter, which also contains a glossary and index.

Larger subjects are included for their value in coppicing or topiary work. Others, equally large, such as *Fagus* and *Quercus* as well as the thug-like *Prunus laurocerasus* are allowed onto the pages but only for their value as

hedging material.

Whilst letting large plants onto the list for specific purposes is wholly acceptable, I did flinch somewhat at finding both *Davidia involucrata* (15m x 10m) and *Eucryphia* x *nymansensis* (15m x 15m) recommended for small spaces surely a step too far.

Plants of lesser hardiness are also included. Subjects such as *Lagerstroemia indica*, *Clianthus puniceus*, *Cantua buxifolia*, *Nerium oleander*, *Olea europaea* and *Rhodochiton atrosanguineus* are examples of plants better suited to Mediterranean climates or at least to a conservatory, or for growing in containers.

Any minor criticisms are far outweighed by the fact that this is a well designed and informative work which will serve as a very good reference point for those keen to realise that wealth of plant material appropriate to small spaces.

### **Trees in Patagonia** by Bernardo Gut

Birkhäuser Verlag, 2008. 283pp. H / back. Illus. ISBN 978-3-7643-8837-9 £53.99

*reviewed by Martin F. Gardner*

To have a book entitled 'Trees in Patagonia' is certainly very enticing to the enthusiastic dendrologist, as there are few books in English that cover the native trees of this botanically exciting part of the world. On opening the book my initial enthusiasm was reduced somewhat as it soon became apparent that the scope of the work covered all tree species, including those that are non-native. *Trees in Patagonia* covers just over 300 species of which 65% are mainly native of Europe or North America. Although there is the usual attempt in a book about trees to define the term tree, the author has not avoided the temptation to include shrubs and bizarrely the native parasitic sub-shrubs *Misodendron* and *Tristerix*. There is no doubt that the title of this book should have been more appropriately called 'Woody plants in Patagonia'! The introductory chapters include the geology, climate, soils and vegetation types of Patagonia—strange inclusion when the emphasis of the book is on non-native woody plants. Other chapters include illustrated (line-drawings) keys to the major groups and the main part of the book consists of colour-illustrated text of all the species. It has to be said that most of the colour illustrations are very mediocre and some, such as *Schinus patagonica* (Fig. 13.85a) and *Tepualia stipularis* (Fig. 13.92a) are simply dire and do very little to assist the identification of the plants in question. In some cases plates of comparative line drawings of leaves are used to assist the identification of critical groups such as the *Eucalyptus* and *Nothofagus* species. Potentially these are very useful however, for the latter some of the leaves depicted are

simply wrong. For example, *N. nitida* has a characteristically rhombic leaf rather than broadly ovate as illustrated and *N. leonii*, which is a spontaneous hybrid between *N. glauca* and *N. obliqua* has a very variable leaf shape and cannot be illustrated accurately with a single illustration. The remaining chapters cover afforestation, trees in the urban landscape, protected areas of southern Argentina and Chile, fruit tree plantations and an interesting chapter on the famous Swedish explorer Carl Skottsberg. I am afraid that despite this publication there is still a need for an authoritative and well-illustrated volume on the trees of Patagonia, perhaps without the inclusion of common European and North American trees and shrubs which have been more than adequately dealt with in other publications.

## Book notes

**Peter Nikau** by Peter Murphy (edited by Barbara Scott)

Published in Gisborne by the Tirau Design and Press, Peel Street, Gisborne, New Zealand \$60.00

The text of this book is mostly taken from a diary that Peter Murphy, a keen member of the IDS, has kept throughout all his varied life and is illustrated with numerous photographs. He and his wife became keen gardeners at Panikau, the estate that has been passed on to the next generation and Peter was a tree planter and member of the Farm Forestry Association. This story of the way of life of pioneer families in New Zealand is a fascinating read.

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## The Hillier Gardener's Guides: Planting with Trees

by Andrew and Rosamund McIndoe

David and Charles, 2007. 160pp.H/back. Illus. ISBN-13: 978-0-7153-2717-3 £22.50

One of a series of useful books on gardening masterminded by Hillier's Managing Director. He is co-author of this one which covers every aspect of planting trees in the garden from their use in garden design, height and shape to situation and seasonal aspects. Copiously illustrated with apposite photos it answers many questions that are raised by those who are finding their way in what is a difficult and broad subject.

**Eugenio's New Neighbours** by Margaret Gimson

Sunset Books, 2008 240pp. P/back Illus. ISBN 978-0-9556104-0-0 £12.99

The story of the making of the garden at La Saleta, that members visited during the Galicia tour in March 1986. The owners grew a big collection of plants which was surprising not only for their number but for the rarity of most of the species. It was said to have been the best private botanic garden in Spain. A good read for anyone interested in gardening, horticulture, travel, history or life and culture.