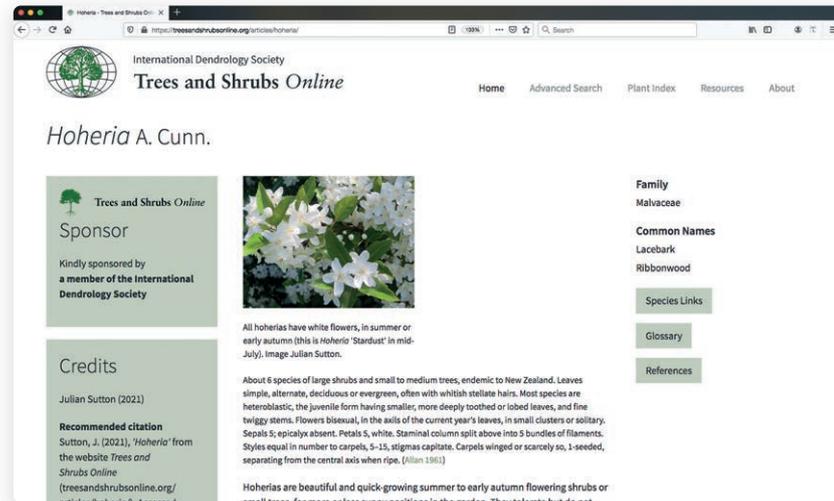


IDS Trees and Shrubs *Online*

TOM CHRISTIAN, assistant editor and sometimes author for IDS TSO, reports on some highlights that emerged from the revision of genera during 2021.

'Labels should not be trusted too much, even in well-curated collections.' So concludes Julian Sutton in his new account of the genus *Hoheria* which was published in IDS Trees and Shrubs *Online* in October 2021. The lacebarks are a beautiful genus of late-summer-flowering trees and shrubs—their delicate white flowers come usefully late in the season and have the decency to fall to the ground before turning a messy brown colour. They are also tolerant of alkaline conditions, heat, and to some extent summer drought, making them an excellent alternative to *Eucryphia* for those longing for an acid soil and higher rainfall. Julian's new account of this genus highlights much that



remains to be understood, particularly regarding taxonomy, but from the gardener's point of view he busts several myths about these beautiful plants and hopefully this will encourage more people to try growing them—they are not so tender as classic literature would have us believe.

Several more familiar groups appeared on treesandshrubsonline.org during 2021. New text for the sweetgums (*Liquidambar*), the katsuras (*Cercidiphyllum*), and the snowberries (*Symphoricarpos*) all provide much-needed, thorough and accessible modern accounts of these old favourites. I was amazed, whilst reading the text for *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, to discover that it is among the tallest growing deciduous trees in China.



Buddleja saligna, part of a group of African buddleja with anthers held on long filaments giving the flowers a distinctive fluffy appearance.

Below, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, likely to be a tree from the original introduction of the species, at Cluny House Gardens, Scotland.

Another old favourite, or at least a stalwart, is *Buddleja*. We published Andrew Large's accounts of the African and New World species in early 2021, and his new text covering the Asian species and the hybrids and cultivars all went live toward the end of the year. This now complete revision of *Buddleja* was nothing short of a labour of love for Andrew, and anybody who thinks they know this genus would be advised to delve into his articles and discover obscure, yet highly garden-worthy alternatives to the usual suspects.

Other additions in 2021 include the oaks of Section *Cerris* and the dendrological superstar *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*. This landed in my in-tray, and I can admit it was a difficult one to write: its story is legendary, yet to do it justice I had to forget everything I thought I knew and look at it afresh. It turned out that the version of events I had gleaned from books years ago as a student was abridged, to say the least, and I discovered many things about this enigmatic conifer that were new to me, not least that claim and counterclaim over the credit for its introduction spawned a 'ridiculously petty... seven-year transcontinental barrage





A monster *Thujaopsis dolabrata* at Leckmelm, in northwest Scotland.

of misunderstandings, denunciations, attacks, vilification, innuendos, libel, slander, and outright lies'!

Thujaopsis dolabrata seems not to be burdened with any such sensationalism. Characterful and yet understated, it isn't planted enough these days, and is most frequently seen in the guise of one of several named cultivars. However, where a fast-growing bulky evergreen backdrop is needed, the natural form of this species provides an attractive and interesting alternative to the more ubiquitous offerings of the average nursery.

Finally, 2021 delivered a satisfying 'proof of concept' that IDS Trees and Shrubs *Online* is the ideal format for generating and disseminating up-to-date knowledge about temperate woody plants. New text for *Eucryphia* was published on the website in 2018, but at that time a mysterious cultivar, 'Madron', remained shrouded in mystery. Raised at Trengwainton, Cornwall, sometime prior to 1954, it was exhibited that year but its parentage was never recorded, and seemingly it was never distributed. Since then, classic



The striking acorns of *Quercus acutissima*; a species from section *Cerris*, the second section to be published online in 2021.

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Eucryphia × splendens T. Christian

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Tom Christian (2021)

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Because the 'original' tree of *Eucryphia × splendens* grows in woodland conditions, a drone was required to obtain images of the plant in flower. Trengwainton, Cornwall, UK. 3rd September 2021. Image Jamie Pikesley.

Tree to 20 m. Multi-stemmed from a single, short bole. Crown densely broad-columnar. Branchlets pale pinkish-brown, densely pubescent, nearly winged and approaching cruciform below nodes on youngest growth, becoming rounded with longitudinal ridges with age. Vegetative buds ovoid, 4–5 mm, not sticky, densely pubescent. Leaves 10–15 cm long, petiole and rachis densely pubescent, rachis internodes 8–15 mm, compound with (3–)5–(7–)9 leaflets. Leaflets elliptic-oblong, olive-green and glabrous above or with a short pubescence along the midrib; glaucous below, undersides densely tomentose; apex distinctly short-mucronate, mucro to 2 mm; base rounded, usually uneven, occasionally shallowly cordate; margins entire, wavy; terminal leaflet petiolate,

Genus
Eucryphia
E. cordifolia × *E. moorei*

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Eucryphia × splendens
'Madron' foliage at
Trewgainton in Cornwall.

horticultural literature has either been necessarily vague about it, or in recent years has ceased to mention it entirely and it has been assumed lost. Since *Eucryphia's* 2018 revision I have had the opportunity to visit Trewgainton where, against all odds, I re-discovered this beautiful long-lost plant. The whole unlikely story was written up for the RHS journal *The Plant Review* and can be found on TSO under the entry for *Eucryphia × splendens*. Because IDS Trees and Shrubs *Online* is web-based, and not a physical publication like a book, there is no need to wait several years for the next edition to put useful information out into the public domain: we were able to draft and publish a new account of *E. 'Madron'* as soon as *The Plant Review* article was published.

Being able to make these sorts of updates with ease is a huge advantage, and the steady flow of new content onto the site mirrors a growth in its audience. May 2021 saw the website achieve its highest ever tally of unique visits: over 25,000 in a single month. Not surprisingly there is some seasonal fluctuation in visitor numbers, but the general trend is up, and it is deeply satisfying for the team behind the project to know that this incredible resource is being well used by a truly international audience. We hope that those of you who have already sponsored genera share in this satisfaction, for it is your generosity that makes the whole thing possible.

As always, a complete, up-to-date list of groups that have been revised can be found on the website at <https://treesandshrubsonline.org/about/completed-groups/>

If you are interested in sponsoring the revision of a genus, or contributing to the project in some way, please write to John Grimshaw at editor@treesandshrubsonline.org or contact the IDS office.