

# IDS Trees and Shrubs *Online*, update

TOM CHRISTIAN, assistant editor for IDS Trees and Shrubs *Online*, writes about the groups of woody plants and completed genera that were published in 2022 together with some of the remarkable progress the project has made.

As every IDS member should know, IDS Trees and Shrubs *Online* (TSO) is the society's flagship project – a free-to-access digital encyclopaedia of woody plants cultivated in temperate parts of the world. It aims to be a contemporary, comprehensive and authoritative reference for botanists, ecologists, foresters, gardeners, landscapers and everyone who needs reliable information on the subject. No other such work exists, in print or digital format.

TSO has worldwide relevance and usage and is currently accessed by over 20,000 unique users per month. Its production benefits the environment, enabling informed decisions to be made on planting choices in a time of change and thus assisting the development of resilient landscapes; it supports the education of students and the public across the broad spectrum of horticulture and botany, and it enhances worldwide understanding of the rich heritage of cultivated woody plants.

During 2022 TSO underwent a modest rebrand to align more obviously with the IDS. The TSO committee, previously a scion of the Scientific and Education Committee, was elevated to the same status as S&E and Tours, and we welcomed Tony Kirkham MBE, VMH, as the new committee's Chairman, taking over from Nicky Manisty who stepped down at the end of 2021. Everyone involved in TSO is enormously grateful to Nicky for guiding the project so successfully through its formative years.

As ever, there has been a continuous flow of new entries published on TSO during 2022. The most significant publication of the year was the enormous

genus *Magnolia*, prepared by Dr Julian Sutton. With 102 species-level entries and hundreds of cultivar descriptions writing *Magnolia* was a Herculean effort, and Julian would be the first to acknowledge the invaluable input of so many correspondents around the world, in the US, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe. As with all new TSO entries it equates to a full modern revision of the genus, superseding all previous sources of information. With over 300,000 words it would be a large tome if printed, but it is available in full on any smart phone!



*Magnolia sieboldii*



A convenient digital reference, and right, *Forsythia suspensa*, which was updated in April 2022.

In 2022 we published a new account of the ring-cupped oaks (*Quercus* Section *Cyclobalanopsis*), a less familiar group of Asian evergreens. This is another superbly illustrated set of articles by Allen Coombes and Roderick Cameron and concludes the revision of *Quercus* Subgenus *Cerris*. Allen and Roderick now move on to the daunting task of revising the hundreds of oaks that make up Section *Lobatae*. We await the first tranche of these with great anticipation.

Among other tree genera published in 2022 *Carpinus*, *Ostrya*, *Morus*, *Broussonetia* and *Paulownia* all merit a mention for their significance in gardens and landscapes. More obscure, perhaps, are the conifers *Lagarostrobos* and *Manoao* from Tasmania and New Zealand; exacting in their requirements, they will likely remain collectors' items in horticulture. *Carrierea*, *Idesia* and *Poliiothyrsis*, on the other hand, are three members of the willow family that all deserve to be more commonly grown. Superb new accounts will perhaps encourage more adventurous growers to seek them out.

Of course, shrubs must not be forgotten: a new account of the stalwart genus *Forsythia* was published in April, *Crinodendron* followed in October along with the fringe trees, *Chionanthus*, already an important genus in the US and quickly gaining ground in Europe.

A particular boost during 2022 has been the number of images added to the site, generously contributed by our authors and many other supporters. As at early June 2023, 16,000 images have been published on the site, with over 2,000 more loaded in readiness for those articles still in preparation. Over 4,600 entries have been illustrated, approximately one third of the nearly 13,000 published entries. With an ambition to see all entries illustrated there is still a long way to go, but a one-third illustration rate would be unheard of in a printed work.

The TSO website continued to evolve during the year through a series of subtle changes that are



*Broussonetia papyrifera*



*Morus alba* lining a small, rural road in southern France, here at Lacoste, Luberon in June 2022.

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largely imperceptible to the average user. Improvements to the search facility have been welcomed, with a new predictive function greatly assisting searches where there is uncertainty over spelling a plant name, for example.

We know from website metrics that TSO is being used by an increasing number of people worldwide, and its importance is growing all the time as new material is published. The monthly pattern of visitors is similar each year, with a spring peak in May and a smaller peak around October; May 2022 saw a record 27,000 unique visitors. Most visitors are consistently from the United States and the United Kingdom. The top ten countries for visitors as of November 2022 were: United States 39%; United Kingdom 25%; Australia 4%; Germany 3%; Netherlands 3%; France 3%; Denmark 2%; Russia 2%; Italy 2%; China 2%.

Informal feedback from users is overwhelmingly positive; there are occasional grumbles that an entry has not been updated or that a name in a Bean article is out of date, but we are going as fast as we can! Work continues on the genus *Quercus* with Section *Lobatae*, the North American red oaks and entries nearing completion at the time of writing include *Corylus*, *Embothrium*, *Podocarpus* and *Pseudotsuga*. Do look out for these and others during 2023. As always a full list of new publications is maintained on the website:

<https://www.treesandshrubsonline.org/about/completed-groups/>

If you can help by sponsoring a genus or supporting the project in any way please contact Editor-in-Chief John Grimshaw: [editor@treesandshrubsonline.org](mailto:editor@treesandshrubsonline.org)