

Preface

The present volume covering the *Crassulaceae* marks the completion of the successful handbook series that presents a complete coverage of the so-called "other" succulents, i.e. of all taxa of succulent plants with the exception of the *Cactaceae*.

It is with pride that this volume is now put before the public. Together with its predecessors, it is the fruit of a truly international project. Not only does the present volume constitute the first complete synopsis of the large and horticulturally important family *Crassulaceae* published since the treatment by Berger (1930), but the handbook series as a whole is a landmark in succulent plant literature.

The history of the project that eventually led to the publication of the present handbook series was outlined in the Preface to the Monocotyledons Volume, published in the summer of 2001. A short summary of its history will therefore suffice.

Handbooks devoted to succulent plants (including cacti) have a long-standing tradition. First treatments covering the family *Cactaceae* were already published in the 19th century, but the first handbook dealing with the so-called "other succulents", authored by Hermann Jacobsen, was only published in 1954 - 1955, then called "Handbuch der sukkulenten Pflanzen". A revised and enlarged English edition was published in 1959 and was repeatedly reprinted subsequently.

The success of this first handbook led to the publication of the more compact "Sukkulentenlexikon", again authored by Hermann Jacobsen, published in 1970 in a German edition and in 1975 in an English translation. Subsequent to Hermann Jacobsen's death in August 1978, Klaus Hesselbarth edited the revised German edition, published in 1981.

First ideas leading to the present "Illustrated Handbook" were developed prior to the 1990 Congress of the International Organization for Succulent Plant Study (IOS) in Zürich. The feeling amongst participants of an ad-hoc meeting during this congress was that the plan for revised editions of both the "Sukkulentenlexikon" and the "Kakteenlexikon" presented a unique occasion to produce a set of authoritative volumes embracing *all* succulent plants.

The initial project planned a set of 3 volumes, devoted to *Cactaceae*, *Aizoaceae*, and the "remaining succulents", respectively. It soon became apparent, however, that a single volume would not be sufficient to cover the vast array of these "remaining succulents", and they now embrace 4 of the 6 volumes that constitute this series of illustrated handbooks. The other 2 volumes, devoted to the *Aizoaceae* and edited by Heidrun E. K. Hartmann, were published in the second half of 2001. A similar handbook covering the *Cactaceae* is not ready currently for inclusion in this series of handbooks.

In comparison with Hermann Jacobsen's "Sukkulentenlexikon", the present handbooks have many additional features. The descriptions present much greater details and are as diagnostic as possible. There are literature references and typification data for all accepted taxa when available, and full synonymies. Published illustrations are cited for many of the accepted taxa that are not illustrated in the handbooks, and the etymology of the generic names is explained.

The production of the present volume on *Crassulaceae* was overshadowed by the death of our colleague Henk 't Hart (24.7.1944 - 22.7.2000). Henk was a *Crassulaceae* specialist of many years standing, and his scientific work concentrated on this family. His research, as well as projects carried out under his guidance, added significantly to our knowledge of the relationships within the family. Henk was also an important contributor to the present volume. His untimely death did not permit him to complete all the texts that he had envisaged, but the firm base and the framework that he provided allowed the completion of the missing parts. The present volume is dedicated to his memory with a feeling of gratitude for his important contributions.

Acknowledgments

As for the previous volumes, a special word of thanks goes to all the contributors to this book. Without their help and enduring patience, the compilation and editing of this handbook would not have been the pleasure that it was.

It is also my pleasure to thank the publishing houses of Springer-Verlag, Heidelberg (for the English edition) and Ulmer-Verlag, Stuttgart (for the concurrent German edition), who provided a platform for the publication of these handbooks.

The compilation of the volumes treating the "remaining succulents" was undertaken using computing infrastructure provided by the Municipal Succulent Plant Collection Zürich (ZSS), and the permission to do so is gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are extended to both to its former director, Diedrich J. Supthut, as well as to the present director, Dr. Thomas Bolliger, and to the authorities of the City Parks Department.

Numerous individuals helped during the compilation and editing process. A word of thanks is not only due to all my colleagues who contributed texts to the project, but also to all those who acted more in the background. Numerous friends supplied literature references or made other data available. A very important role was also played by the innumerable growers of succulent plants worldwide and the many societies devoted to the study and cultivation of these fascinating plants. Their efforts significantly add to our knowledge, and the handbook series relied heavily on this data.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, wife and son, as well as all my colleagues at ZSS and elsewhere for their patience when the handbooks kept me busy. A special word of thanks is due to Dr. Johanna Schlüter of the now defunct Gustav Fischer Verlag Jena, who so ably accompanied this project during the first three quarters of its long history. A further word of thanks goes to Dr. Dieter Czeschlik and Dr. Jutta Lindenborn from Springer-Verlag, for their help in making this handbook become a reality.

Zürich, November 2002

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