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books noted with interest

Soils of South Africa

Martin Fey

February 2010, Cambridge University Press, 287 pp.

£60.00 (Hardback) ISBN: 978-1107-000-506

http://www.cambridge.org/gb/knowledge/isbn/item5741477/?site_locale=en_GB

This lavishly-illustrated book lists the main soil groups of South Africa, their distribution, properties, classification, genesis and uses. A whole section is devoted to the often under-appreciated role of soil-transforming animals. The final chapter provides analytical details of 37 illustrative soil profiles. What could be a dry tome is lightened by an idiosyncratic style, with the inclusion of soil-themed poems coming as a surprise. There is generous and occasionally excessive use of colour throughout, including numerous colour plates which vary considerably in their quality. The glossary is short and contains little basic terminology, making the book most suitable for specialists.

Bats of Southern and Central Africa: A Biogeographic and Taxonomic Synthesis

Monadjem, A., Taylor P.J., Cotterill F.P.D. & Schoeman M.C.

September 2010, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 596 pp.

£52.50 (Paperback) ISBN 978-1-86814-508-9

<https://sites.google.com/site/fpdcotterill/bats-of-southern-and-central-africa>

There are 116 known bat species in southern and central Africa. This book presents the state of current knowledge regarding all aspects of their natural history, taxonomy and ecology. Each species description contains a distribution map, based on over 6000 museum records, most of which have been personally checked by the authors, from which potential ranges have been projected using MaxEnt. The diagnostic characters are thoroughly described, accompanied by colour pictures of live bats and their skulls, and sonograms of echolocation calls when available. There are also introductory chapters on bat biology and biogeography. Overall this is an excellent resource.

From Populations to Ecosystems: Theoretical Foundations for a New Ecological Synthesis

Michel Loreau

2010, Princeton University Press, 328 pp.

\$99.50 / £69.95 (Hardback), \$45.00 / £30.95 (Paperback) ISBN: 978-1-4008-3416-7

<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9238.html>

Ecologists are sub-divided into those working on populations, communities, ecosystems or evolution. While it is clear that these fields are necessarily connected, and ultimately give rise to biogeographical patterns, a unified approach has seldom been attempted, and never without controversy. Michel Loreau is a theoretical ecologist whose contributions to the link between biodiversity and ecosystem services have made him one of ecology's most recognised authors. This is a bold attempt to build bridges between disciplines operating within different conceptual frameworks, often presented in mathematical terms, though clearly explained throughout. It will reward the conscientious reader with new insights and inspiration.

Flower and Fruit: Morphology, Ontogeny, Phylogeny, Function and Ecology

Leins P. & Erbar C.

October 2010, Schweizebart Science Publishers, Stuttgart, 439 pp.

€ 69.00 (Hardback) ISBN 978-3-510-65261-7

<http://www.schweizerbart.de/publications/detail/isbn/9783510652617/Flower-and-Fruit>

This translation of the textbook 'Blüte und Frucht' provides a thorough treatment of the reproductive organs of angiosperms, including chapters on floral structure and classification, along with how specific adaptations are connected to pollination and seed dispersal. The translation is accurate albeit with occasionally faltering prose. The text is illustrated by over 250 high-quality figures, many in colour. Despite some overlap with another recent book (Understanding Flowers and Flowering; Beverley Glover, OUP 2007), this book goes into considerably greater anatomical detail, and will prove particularly valuable by providing access for English speakers to the wealth of botanical literature in German.

A List of the Terrestrial and Marine Biota from the Azores

Borges, P.A.V., Costa, A., Cunha, R., Gabriel, R., Gonçalves, V., Martins, A.F., Melo, I., Parente, M., Raposeiro, P., Rodrigues, P., Santos, R.S., Silva, L., Vieira, P. & Vieira, V.

November 2010, Príncipeia, Cascais, Portugal, 432 pp.

€ 15.00 (estimated, Hardback) ISBN 978-989-8131-75-1

<http://cita.angra.uac.pt/biodiversidade/publicacoes/ver.php?id=311>

This collaborative work documents the terrestrial and marine (mainly coastal) biota of the Azores archipelago, listing over 8,000 resident taxa and 300 non-breeding birds. The groups considered are: fungi, lichens (and associated fungi), diatoms, bryophytes, vascular plants, terrestrial flatworms, earthworms, terrestrial nematodes, molluscs, arthropods, terrestrial and marine vertebrates, marine macroalgae and coastal marine invertebrates. The presence of each taxon on all nine islands is documented, along with whether they are endemic, native or introduced. The checklist follows a consistent format throughout and includes a comprehensive alphabetical index of all species. A free PDF version can be downloaded at http://www.azoresbioportal.angra.uac.pt/files/publicacoes/Listagem_ml.pdf.

Forthcoming reviews

Climate Change Impacts on Freshwater Ecosystems. Kernan M., Battarbee R.W. & Moss B. (eds) Wiley-Blackwell (2010).

Biogeography. Lomolino M.V., Riddle B.R., Whittaker R.J. & Brown J.H. 4th edition. Sinauer (2010).

Biogeography: An Ecological and Evolutionary Approach. Cox C.B. & Moore P.D. 8th edition. Wiley-Blackwell (2010).

Biodiversity in Southern Africa. Vols. 1-3. BIOTA. Klaus Hess Publishers, Göttingen & Windhoek (2010).

A Natural History of the New World. Graham A. Chicago University Press (2010).

Ecosystem Function in Savannas. Hill M.J. & Hanan N. CRC Press (2010).

The Ecology of Place. Billick I. & Price M.V. (eds). Chicago University Press (2010).

Fifty Years of Invasion Ecology: The Legacy of Charles Elton. Richardson D. Wiley-Blackwell (2010).

Tropical Rain Forests: An Ecological and Biogeographical Comparison. 2nd Edition. Corlett R.T. & Primack R.N. Wiley-Blackwell (2011).

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