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## Book reviews: Syllabus of Plant families

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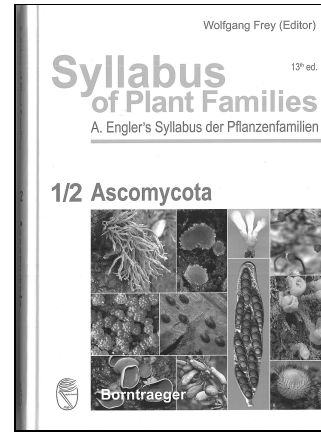
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## Book reviews

### Syllabus of Plant families

JAKLITSCH, W., BARAL, H.-O., LÜCKING, R. and LUMBSCH, H. T. 2016: *1/2 Ascomycota*. – In: Frey, W. (ed): *Syllabus of Plant Families*. Adolf Engler's *Syllabus der Pflanzenfamilien* 13th ed. – Gebrüder Borntraeger, Stuttgart, 322 pp.

Part “1/2” of Engler’s *Syllabus* presents a taxonomic survey of the Ascomycota, a diverse group of fungi known from a wide range of habitats, from tundra to tropical rain forests. The book contains an updated system based on the results of recent research, mainly derived from molecular data and habitat exploration. Cryptogams have been included in various editions of this classical work for 125 years, thanks to Adolf Engler, who first contributed with a volume comprising all fungi and the lichens (as separate groups) in 1892. Illustrations were added in the enlarged 7th edition of 1912. Gilg supported Engler thereafter, until the 11th edition, released in 1936, issued by Ludwig Diels as a single volume. The 12th edition by Melchior and Werdermann appeared in two volumes in 1954 and 1964, including a lichen chapter by Fritz Mattick in the first volume. After a long break, a 13th edition, released as yet in five handy volumes in English, written by well-known international specialists and edited by Wolfgang Frey, is a very welcome return. The work largely follows the style of the former editions in German.



The text of the introduction and the systematic arrangement of the lichens were written by Thorsten Lumbsch and Robert Lücking, whereas Walter Jaklitsch and Hans-Otto Baral treated the non-lichenized Ascomycota. The introduction is followed by the classification of the phylum Ascomycota which forms the major part of the book, where all taxonomic ranks from subphyla to genera are listed, and, in addition, some lichen species. The families are supplied with brief but careful descriptions concerning morphology, anatomy, chemistry and distribution, impressively complete and updated. Taxa with uncertain systematic positions are listed and a very useful collection of modern references is presented. Finally, the volume is illustrated in a very pedagogic and appealing way using line drawings from the 12th edition and 17 plates of c. 150 new colour photographs of high quality. The orders Thelocarcales Lücking & Lumbsch and Vezdeales Lumbsch & Lücking are described as new.

Engler’s *Syllabus* has, since its first publication in 1887, provided both researchers and students with a concise survey of the plant kingdom, including the fungi, and used to be a standard reference work that gradually became outdated as no new editions were released until recently. The 13th edition, however, again supplies us with a completely revised system of several plant groups, revolutionized by recent phylogenetic analyses based on DNA-sequences. The lichen parts compiled by two of the currently most distinguished researchers, successfully combines the results from both modern methods and classical biology.

*Ingvar Kärnefelt and Arne Thell*