

Book Review

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Molnár, V. A. & Csábi, M. 2021. Magyarország orchideái. Orchids of Hungary. [In Hungarian with English explanations] – Department of Botany, University of Debrecen, Debrecen. 224 pages, 831 colour photographs, 71 distribution maps. ISBN 978-963-490-247-8, Price: 24 Euro + 6 Euro postage & package charge (EU + UK) – contact info: A. Molnár V.: mva@science.unideb.hu

Orchidaceae is a very diverse and widespread plant family with an estimated 800 plant genera and at least 24 000 species (Fay & Chase 2009). Orchids have fascinated eminent biologists and botanists, including Linnaeus and Darwin, but they continuously attract many people regardless of their profession or main interest. Orchids are highly vulnerable to environmental changes, including climate change, because of their complex life cycles and highly specialised pollination strategies (Molnár et al. 2012). While they produce many easy-dispersed dust-like seeds (see data in Sonkoly et al. 2016) to aid dispersal, in most cases it is necessary to have a mycorrhiza for successful establishment. In Europe, many species are highly threatened, and their successful nature conservation is often reliant upon extensive habitat management by light grazing or mowing (Kull et al. 2016).

This book by Molnár V. & Csábi introduces the reader to this colourful world of orchids, focusing on species occurring in Hungary. It is a richly illustrated book and a real field guide (with a size that fits into a pocket), with lots of detail and clear explanations in both Hungarian and English. The book contains 71 orchid taxa, with 831 photos to illustrate the different taxa and present various morphological stages, colour varieties, fruits and vegetative individuals. The book starts with a summary and short introduction to orchid biology, including their morphology, life history traits, phenology and diversity of their pollination. The authors then introduce the most important orchid habitats in Hungary, which is followed by an alphabetic introduction of species (based on the scientific names, although the authors also provide the Hungarian and English common names). Most species are introduced with 5 to 7 colour highly detailed photos, but frequent species or those with several subspecies or varieties are illustrated with an even higher number of colour plates (e.g., *Anacamptis morio* and *Dactylorhiza incarnata*). All species descriptions are supplemented by a distribution map, based on up-to-date distribution data for the species in Hungary (<http://floraatlasz.uni-sopron.hu/?lang=en>). At the end of the book there are a few pages about colour variations, flower aberrations and hybrids; a section about conservation status and threats; and some tips on how to photograph orchids in an eco-friendly way.

This is a very colourful book with detailed descriptions with cross-referencing to similar taxa, informative pictograms on phenology, pollination mode and pollinator taxa, soil reaction, light and water demands and habitat preference. To



sum up, this book is must-have literature for field botanists, plant experts and also hobby naturalists interested in orchid species in Hungary.

References

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