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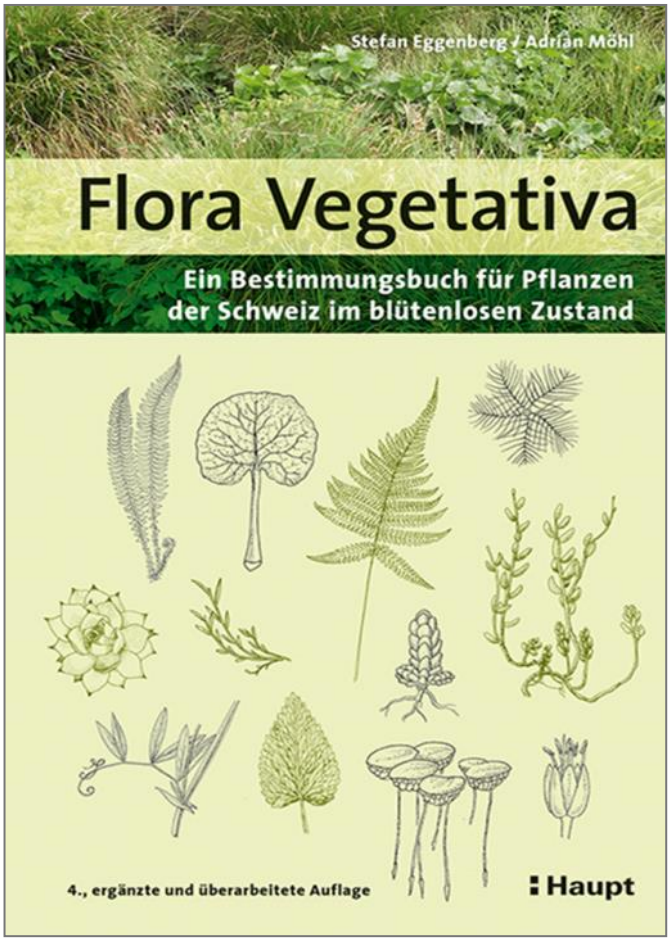
Book Review

Eggenberg, S. & Möhl, A. (2020) Flora Vegetativa – Ein Bestimmungsbuch für Pflanzen der Schweiz im blütenlosen Zustand. – 4., ergänzte und überarbeitete Auflage. 768 pp., Haupt Verlag,. ISBN 978-3-258-08177-9. 68,00 €.



In 2020, the new 4th edition of *Flora Vegetativa* was published. This book is an illustrated guide to the flora of Switzerland, but thanks to previous editions it has already become well known amongst a wide circle of people involved in floristic studies throughout Europe. A review of the 2nd edition was published by J. Dengler in issue 26 of the EDGG Bulletin.

In the new edition, the basic structure has been preserved. All species (and there are more than 3,000 of them) are divided into three groups – spore (horsetails, clubmosses, and ferns), angiosperm monocotyledons and angiosperm dicotyledons. I must note that gymnosperms are not included yet. Species are arranged within each group in alphabetical order of Latin family names. Dark squares with the corresponding letter on the text block help to navigate this rather voluminous book, which has almost 770 pages.

A general key is given in the introductory part, which gives the main features of monocots and dicots, as well as the main diagnostic features of families, accompanied by appropriate illustrations, which allow the primary identification of plants at higher taxonomic levels. Similarly, the description of almost every family also begins with an illustrated key, which is placed on a grey background so as not to confuse it with the description of the species. Species are arranged in plates, mostly four per page. Quite detailed illustrations are marked with diagnostic features which should be paid special attention to for correct identification. As the book title suggests, the main focus is on the vegetative characteristics of plants, which are extremely important for the identification of species in the field at any phenological stage. Taxa which are morphologically similar are indicated and appropriate cross-references are provided to enable comparison of their distinguishing features. Information on life span, specific binomials and German names, plant height range, altitudinal zone, ecological and phytosociological (at alliance level) preferences, as well as chorological type are also given. Some of this information is presented in abbreviated form, and explanations for them provided in the introductory parts. Each description is accompanied by a map of the species distribution in Switzerland. Such maps are based on the updated version of the Atlas of the Swiss flora. These maps are quite detailed but small. However, the book's frontispiece includes beautiful color maps of the altitudinal vegetation belts, floristic regions, bedrocks, and biogeographical regions of Switzerland, which, in combination with the distribution maps, gives the reader an idea of the patterns of species distributions.

The main differences between the 4th edition and the previous ones are that almost 150 new species have been added. These are aquatic plants of genera *Callitriche, Lemna, Utricularia* etc., as well as entire families, such as *Nymphaeceae, Ceratophyllaceae, Potamogetonaceae*. In addition, information is added on a number of neophyte species, in particular from difficult-to-identify genera such as *Amaranthus*, Aster (including *Symphyotrichum*), and *Chenopodium*. Taxonomy and nomenclature have been improved for some species. And most importantly, the authors took into account the remarks and comments received from readers and users of the previous edition. In particular, a mistake noted in J. Dengler's review of the 2nd edition regarding the nomenclature of *Bromus erectus* subspecies was also corrected.

Although *Flora Vegetativa* is published in German, I think that it has already found its fans among the non-German speaking audience, to which the author of this review in particular belongs, since the detailed drawings give a quite sufficient idea of the main diagnostic differences of the species. However, for such readers, I would recommend the compilation of a small glossary of morphological and ecological terms, which will allow more effective use of this excellent publication.

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