

Book Review

Figs of Southern and South-Central Africa

John and Sandra Burrows

2003, Umdaus Press (Pty) Ltd, PO Box 11059, Hatfield 0028, South Africa
501 colour plates, 91 pen-and-ink figures, 379 pages, 310 x 240mm
collectors' edition — ISBN 1-919766-25-1
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'Figs of Southern and South-Central Africa' is anachronistic! The modern world, with its hectic lifestyle and overambitious goals, propagates reams of beautiful, rehashed texts. The Achilles heel of descriptive sciences, such as plant taxonomy, is that they accumulate inaccurate baggage which is perpetuated by this mindless rehashing of information. How refreshing to encounter a book which has been meticulously researched from its foundations. Such an approach is costly in effort, finance and time; however, the product speaks for itself. The authors have unravelled nomenclatural puzzles, come to terms with species boundaries, geographic and environmental variation and produced convincing species accounts, an achievement which escapes many similar popular books.

While uncompromising in its scientific accuracy, the book is sympathetic to the layperson (and many a scientist averse to using botanical keys) in being liberally illustrated. The colour photography has been contributed from various sources and documents habitat, habit and morphology of flowering and fruiting material. The family is without doubt photogenic but it takes talent to capture the artistic images

which liberally adorn the text. Line drawings are too seldom used in modern literature because, when executed with skill, they are peerless in conveying information. The pen-and-ink drawings complement the photographic record superbly.

Figs have great horticultural appeal and the book provides useful information for nurseries and indigenous gardeners in the chapters entitled 'Figs, birds and other wildlife' by Duncan Butchart, and 'Growing figs' by Geoff Nicholas.

Simon van Noort outlines the obligate mutualisms that exist between figs and fig wasps in a fascinating chapter. Scanning electron micrographs illustrate the micro-morphological evolution of wasp body parts and colour photographs depict the remarkable ovipositors of parasitoid wasps. A comprehensive geographic table is provided, outlining figs and their associated wasp fauna.

In all, the book covers 88 species, 48 indigenous and 17 exotic fig species. The remaining species are allied genera of the Moraceae, including mulberries (*Morus*), breadfruit (*Artocarpus*) and the delightful herbs of *Dorstenia*. It is an excellent buy for the professional botanist and layperson alike.

Trevor J Edwards

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The history of southern Africa involved interactions between indigenous hunter-gatherers and a range of populations that moved into the region. Here we use genome-wide genetic data to show that there are at least two admixture events in the history of Khoisan populations (southern African hunter-gatherers and pastoralists who speak non-Bantu languages with click consonants). We included the central African Mbuti and Biaka populations as negative controls. In all Khoisan populations, the amplitude of the LD decay curve is larger when using the French as a reference than when using the Yoruba as a reference (Fig. 2A). Start by marking Figs Of Southern And South Central Africa as Want to Read: Want to Read saving! Want to Read. Currently Reading. Read. Figs Of Southern And S by John Burrows. Other editions. Want to Read saving! Error rating book. Refresh and try again. Rate this book. Clear rating. Original Title. Figs of Southern & South-Central Africa. ISBN. 1919766243 (ISBN13: 9781919766249). Central Africa, Southern Africa. Edit. Figs of southern & South-Central Africa. This edition was published in 2003 by Umdaus Press in Hatfield, South Africa. Edition Notes. Includes bibliographical references (p. 359-363) and indexes. Genre. Identification., Pictorial works. Other Titles. Figs of southern and South-Central Africa. Classifications. Dewey Decimal Class. The authors of Southern African Ferns and Fern Allies spent 11 years on this authoritative work, which covers the 48 native figs of the region, as well as introduced cultivated species and other members of the Moraceae. Each indigenous species has a distribution map, a detailed b/w illustration, and photographs of habitat, bark, leaves and fruit. A key to the indigenous species is provided. Customer Reviews.