Book Reviews

THE OXFORD BOOK OF HEALTH FOODS. 2004. J.G. Vaughan and P.A. Judd. Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon St., Oxford OX2 6DP, U.K. 188 pages, color illustrations. \$27.95, hardcover. ISBN 0-19-850459-4.

"Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food"—Hippocrates (c. 460–400 B.C.E.)

There are many cultures around the world that subscribe to the same belief as Hippocrates, and a fine line often distinguishes food from medicine; frequently, they are one and the same. Though much has changed since Hippocrates, the belief in the healing power of foods has not faded away. The health food industry, including foods, nutritional supplements, and herbal products, is a multi-billion dollar business in the United States and is booming in other parts of the world as well. Though there has been much written about aspects of the health food industry, such as herbal medicines and even nutritional supplements, little has been written about the actual health foods. In *The Oxford Book of Health Foods*, J.G. Vaughan and P.A. Judd provide one of the first references to all of the varied products of this industry and to their "roles in diet as well as their contribution to health and well-being and sometimes use as medicine." Beautifully illustrated with botanical drawings, this book describes many food plants, such as common cereals (wheat, oat, rye, etc.), soy, carob, even dairy and honey, along with their by-products; it discusses herbal remedies from around the world, such as arnica (*Arnica montana*), ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), and devil's claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*); and it describes nutritional supplements, such as CoQ10 and probiotics. Each of the 121 entries includes descriptions of the nutritional as well as culinary value, claims and folklore associated with each product, and offers an overview of the evidence supporting these claims, offering a good summary of the therapeutic and nutritional information. It provides a good introduction into the basic components of nutrition, although some schools may consider this information outdated [see Walter C. Willett (2001), *Eat, Drink, and be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating* and Paul Bergner (1997), *The Healing Power of Minerals, Special Nutrients, and Trace Elements*]. It also offers a good summary of plant constituents that are seen as the active principles of many herbal products.

This book is well organized and easy to read. However, in achieving clarity and in making sure that their writing appeals to a wider audience with little botanical or nutritional background, some discussion of the research is not as thorough as it could have been, leading to incomplete and inaccurate information. Additionally, when offering

evidence the authors often do not make a clear distinction between "lack of evidence" due to insufficient research (since research into medicinal plants is still relatively sparse) and "lack of evidence" supporting the claims (i.e., research has not produced results supporting claims of traditional use), thus possibly leaving readers confused or with misleading impressions about a plant's efficacy. However, despite these few weaknesses, *The Oxford Book of Health Foods* is a valuable and excellent starting point for anyone interested in therapeutic and nutritional aspects of plants. It is also a beautiful addition to any botanical library.

ERIN SMITH, PhD
Herbalist and Ethnobotanist
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

LANDSCAPE PLANTS FOR TEXAS AND ENVIRONS. 2nd ed. 2002. Michael A. Arnold. Stipes Publishing LLC, 204 W. University Ave., Champaign, IL 61820. 1088 pages. \$68.80, hardcover. ISBN 1-58874-153-2.

The author aptly states that this text was developed for nursery and landscape professionals and as a study aid for students of Texas landscape plants. Having taught landscape plant classes at Texas A&M, I am fully aware of the enormity of this undertaking. The text is divided into two principal sections: the first covers general taxonomic concepts, plant adaptability, and the unique variability of Texas climatic and soil factors, while the second focuses on treatments of the individual plant taxa, nicely divided by their landscape uses.

Considerable effort was made in the first part to have a comprehensive explanation of plant taxonomy and morphology. Regrettably, in proofing this section, several mistakes were overlooked. The information about the International Code of Nomenclature needs to be updated from the 1980 to the 2004 edition. Not mentioning the 2004 edition is understandable, but there is also a 1995 edition that should have been referenced. The line drawings of various morphological features are clear and of good quality. One exception is the misrepresentation of the cyme. The diagram indicates quite properly that the first flowers to open are the single primary flowers, but the second buds to open should be the central flowers on the secondary umbels. Overall the author has made an effort to present the most currently accepted nomenclature, though there are several many people might question. On page 30 poison ivy is referenced to as *Rhus radicans* which has not been the accepted name for over 40 years. On page 175, while the garden chrysanthemum name was officially conserved as *Chrysanthemum ×morifolium* the remainder of the chrysanthemum species remain reclassified into other genera, such as the Shasta daisy to *Leucanthemum ×superbum*. On page 832 is an understandable name error. The viburnum here called *V. japonicum* has been misidentified in the Texas nursery industry for many years to the best of my recollection. Michael Dirr has it correctly identified as *Viburnum awabuki* in his book **Trees and Shrubs for Warm Climates** page 373. Of particular concern to me is the error on page 757: Pfitzer juniper is not *Juniperus chinensis* but *Juniperus ×pfitzeriana*. The change in taxo-

nomic status of Pfitzer juniper type cultivars dates back to Van Melle, 1947 and has been corroborated by Le Duc et al., 1999. It should also be noted that in some cases plant names listed among the synonyms are in fact good species, e.g., *Hibiscus grandiflorus* on page 251. On the other hand, some nomenclature is extremely up to date; for example, Arnold recognizes the potential new treatment of coleus as *Plectranthus scutellarioides* in the species synonym list. Because this is a text designed as a reference for students and professionals, I would have hoped that every effort would have been made to present the most current accepted name for each species. Granted, this is a daunting task. Still, with the advent of the Internet in recent years giving free access to such databases as the Missouri Botanical Gardens' TROPICOS, the affirmation of accented names is much more attainable. I can appreciate the enormity of proofreading that is involved when employing so many scientific names, so I only point out that some spelling corrections are needed in future editions or as addenda in future printings.

For future consideration, when addressing the expla-

nation of the species discussions on page 105, the author might consider introducing the heat tolerance concept developed about 10 years ago by Dr. H. Marc Cathey. This should be noted as the region under consideration has more plant limitations from the heat than from cold temperatures.

While I see some difficulties using this book as a course text, I do not feel that they are insurmountable. There is such a tremendous amount of good solid information that for the appropriate regions of the country I would recommend this book be considered both as a reference text and as a teaching tool. The excellent layout of information and strong presentation of material from the general taxonomy and general terminology with definitions to the specific information on each selected landscape taxa allows for ease of use.

ALICE LE DUC
Director of Education
The Sarah P. Duke Gardens
Durham, N.C.