

## **BOOK REVIEW: BROMELIACEAE: PROFILE OF AN ADAPTIVE RADIATION**

The book's primary author is David Benzing, with contributions by a number of other people, including Harry Luther, Mark Dimmitt, and Walter Till. It was published by Cambridge University Press in 2000.

In many ways, the book, which is over 700 pages in length, is an expansion of, and elaboration upon, Dr Benzing's 1980 book, *The Biology of the Bromeliads*. The latter book, which is still available, may be worth considering as a considerably cheaper (but much less comprehensive) alternative to this book.

The book's preface contains this summary of its contents:

*"... This book is divided into three parts beginning with a short overview of Bromeliaceae intended to set the stage for the core of eight chapters devoted to vegetative and reproductive structure and function, ecology, associations with other organisms, and finally evolution and phylogeny. The third section presents the special topics..."*

There is little doubt that this book presents the most comprehensive, and integrated, consideration of these topics available today. The chapters on bromeliad nutrition and reproduction are particularly useful from a grower's perspective, as they provide you with insights which can then be used to improve your approach to growing these plants.

The six chapters in the "special topics section" cover a diverse range of matters. They range from consideration of taxonomy and evolution issues for several genera, such as tillandsias, through to the commercial and cultural uses of bromeliads.

The book concludes with a comprehensive list of references cited in the text and several indexes.

If you have not completed the equivalent of high school biology/botany, then you may find parts of the book difficult to read. However, it is worth persevering with your study of this book for the insights it offers.

**Year of Review: 2004**