

Around the World in 80 Plants: An Edible Perennial Vegetable Adventure in Temperate Climates. Barstow, Stephen. 2014. Permanent Publications. East Meon, U.K., distributed in the U.S. by Chelsea Green, White River Junction, VT. xviii + 284 pp. (paperback). GBP 19.95, USD 29.95. ISBN 978-1-85623-141-1.

With a growing number of guides to perennial vegetables, Stephen Barstow's book occupies an under-served niche. Barstow has been growing perennial vegetables in Norway for decades at a latitude of 64.5° north. Previous works (e.g., Toensmeier 2007) tend to focus on plants which flourish in tropical and warm temperate climates. Barstow's garden includes more than 2000 plants, but in this book he focuses on leaf and stem vegetables (a few of which may be better known as root crops).

The book is divided into 75 sections, each profiling a particular plant (or, in some cases, 2-3 related species). Profiles include distribution, history of use, available cultivars, horticultural advice, and cooking tips. Similar species are often mentioned in passing. Species covered include those with a history of cultivation as well as species which are rarely cultivated and most commonly gathered from the wild.

The profiles are organized into six chapters focusing on plants native to (or particularly associated with) a given geographic region. While this format justifies the "Around the World" of the title, it makes information difficult to locate. Different *Allium* species are sprinkled through the book in each of the chapters. Species mentioned in passing may be from an entirely different part of the world than the chapter suggests. Placement of cosmopolitan species is idiosyncratic; *Sonchus* appears in the chapter "The Far East and Australia".

Barstow covers several plants which have received little attention in the existing literatures on edible plants and perennial vegetables. Of particular note is the profile of *Hablitizia tamnoides*, a species which isn't even mentioned in several recent comprehensive references covering edible plants.

Barstow's enthusiasm is clear and infectious. Despite the confusing organization, his book is an interesting guide to many poorly known perennial vegetables. With its emphasis on cold-hardy plants, this work will surely be welcomed

by perennial vegetable enthusiasts living in colder climates.

LITERATURE CITED

Toensmeier, E. 2007. *Perennial Vegetables: From Artichokes to Zuiki Taro, a Gardener's Guide to Over 100 Delicious, Easy-to-Grow Edibles*. Chelsea Green Publications, White River Junction, VT.

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Hidden Histories and Ancient Mysteries of Witches, Plants, and Fungi. Dugan, Frank. 2015. American Phytopathological Society, St. Paul, MN. xii + 180 pp. (paperback). USD 62.96. ISBN 978-0-89054-465-5

Frank Dugan has made his career as a plant pathologist at both the USDA and Washington State University, but this collection of essays shows that his interests, talents, and expertise extend far beyond that field. With this latest work he has shown himself to be quite adept at digging up and reconstructing the "physical evidence of the ethnobotanical knowledge" of Old World Europe. Within this geographic area, his focus is mostly on the particularly obfuscated stories of women and the plants they utilized through time. He extends an additional focus to the frequent Old World/New World ambiguities that arise when historians look at the muddled transfer of knowledge, culture, and tradition between Europe and the Americas. At his best, Dugan conducts a symphony of compelling stories from well-cited ethnobotanical facts. Most chapters are engrossing and well-trimmed—primed for the attention of university students, botanists, and other scholars seeking inspiration from a reconstructed ancient European history. Taken collectively, any reader should be thoroughly convinced that "there can be little doubt as to the great antiquity of plant lore and the high importance of women, especially as bearers of that knowledge."

One driving theme of the work is to create "authenticity" by separating folklore from "fakelore". As such, the author has read and cited exhaustively to support each historical mystery he seeks to clarify. These wonderful references greatly increase the value of the work. This is particularly true for the reader interested in an analysis of ancient texts with