

## Introduction

David Mabberley's erudite botany is so profuse and of such breadth that there can be no theme to this collection of papers with which to title the volume other than the man himself, and so we simply called it MABBERLEY. There are, of course, very prolific scholars whose scholarship is sound, and shining ones whose oeuvre is of respectable size, but we can think of no one alive in our field who has achieved so brilliant and sustained a torrent of work. We can marvel at the drive, intelligence and stamina that have yielded it, but when considered alongside the taxing labour of teaching, administration, curation, travel, and involvement in committees which David has maintained, not to mention sustaining decades of currency in the systematics of *all* vascular plants for successive editions of *Mabberley's plant-book*, his contribution is almost unimaginable.

David's principal mentor was the great E.J.H. Corner whose well-known association with Singapore led David and the late mycologist Chang Kiaw Lan, also one of Corner's students and editor of the *Gardens' Bulletin Singapore* at the time, to publish a Festschrift for his 70th Birthday in this journal. So it was to Singapore Botanic Gardens that we turned for David's. We were delighted by the Gardens' positive response, and only too pleased to pay homage in this volume not only to David but also to Corner.

One of David's exceptional aptitudes has been that of creating and sustaining large networks of professional and personal relationships with colleagues throughout the world and over decades, and so we had a very large group of potential contributors. On hearing of our plans, David warned us to expect only a very small percentage of those approached to contribute to be able to do so. But on this occasion his prediction was entirely wrong! Indeed, we have found ourselves in the unenviable position of having to make very difficult decisions to defer a number of papers, and we express particular gratitude to those authors whose manuscripts, indicated below, we have not in the end been able to accommodate in this volume. They will be published in *Gardens' Bulletin Singapore* 71(2), identified as part of the Festschrift.

And so to the papers. We begin with biography, including an account of David's illustrious career with special emphasis on Australia by Barbara Briggs & Karen Wilson, followed by Mark Large's enumeration of his positions, roles, publications and awards. Anne Sing, who was for nearly a quarter of a century David's research assistant in the Oxford Botany School as it was then known, provides some personal insights into his work, recalling life in the MabLab. Nigel Taylor then draws in Corner and his Singapore legacy. We turn next to David's interest in the history of botany and botanical illustration with a series of papers on *Flora Danica* (Ib Friis), Rumphius' *Herbarium Amboinense* and Linnaeus (Charlie Jarvis), *Flora Graeca* (Hans Walter Lack), the artists Knapp and Bauer (Christa Riedl-Dorn & Mario Riedl), and the solving of a Banks & Solander mystery in Pacific *Coprosma* (Peter de Lange et al.). Six taxonomic papers on tropical groups follow, including Martin Cheek & Diane Bridson on African *Keetia* (Rubiaceae), David Frodin on the pachycaul *Polyscias* (Araliaceae) in Malesia, Caroline Pannell on *Aglaia* (Meliaceae) in Borneo, Zacky Ezedin & George

Weiblen on *Ficus* (Moraceae) in New Guinea — a genus in which Corner was expert, Daniel Thomas & Wisnu Ardi on *Begonia* (Begoniaceae) in Sulawesi, and Rogier de Kok on *Cinnamomum* (Lauraceae) in Indo-China.

Next, anatomy and morphology, with Pieter Baas, embodying David's important Leiden connection, on the peculiar wood anatomy of *Alstonia spathulata* (Apocynaceae). When David arrived in Oxford from Cambridge and Corner in the early seventies, he both brought with him and encountered there, particularly in the late Frank White, then curator of the Oxford Herbaria, an unwillingness to enjoy the safe haven of mainstream thinking. This he in turn worked to instil in his students: David Baum and Alistair Hay each discuss, from atomistic and holistic perspectives respectively, issues around conventional morphological fragmentation and 'character evolution', drawing in part upon the ground-breaking thinking of Corner. David's interest in tropical ecology is saluted by William Hawthorne & Cicely Marshall on rapid biodiversity assessment based on their work in tropical Africa but of general application. The volume ends with four biogeographic papers. The first is another orthodoxy-challenging paper in which Michael Heads provides a vicariance perspective on the world-wide biogeography and ecology of Meliaceae, a family on which David has worked through much of his career. Wong Khoon Meng & Louise Neo follow on Borneo's 'Middle Sarawak' phenomenon, Peter Boyce & Wong Sin Yeng on Borneo's extraordinarily large rheophytic aroid flora, and Ruth Kiew & Saw Leng Guan, on the biogeography of the Riau pocket, bringing us back again to Corner.

Of the deferred papers: Todd Stuessy has written on information content for classifications. David has long been involved in tropical Asian botany and floras, and a summary of advances in continental Southeast Asia and Malesia is provided by David Middleton and many co-authors who coordinate regional flora-writing. Peter Bernhardt, Gerardo Camilo & Peter Weston contribute a study of insect pollination in two New South Wales understorey shrubs in the Proteaceae. A quantitative analysis of New Guinea palm ethnobotany by Zoe Dennehy & Rodrigo Cámara-Leret resonates with David's interest in the long historical impact of human life in rain forests.

We would like to conclude by expressing our gratitude to Singapore's National Parks Board (NParks), especially Kenneth Er, CEO of NParks, for agreeing to publish this special issue of the Gardens' Bulletin and welcoming us as guest editors. We are extremely grateful to the permanent editorial team at Singapore Botanic Gardens, David Middleton — Editor-in-Chief, Lily Chen — Managing Editor, Felicia Tay — Graphics Editor, Ada Davis and Daniel Thomas — Copy Editors, and Jana Leong-Škorničková — Editorial Board, for the enormous amount of work they have put into its production. It has been a pleasure to work with them. This Festschrift would self-evidently not be possible without the contributing authors to whom we are thoroughly indebted, and to the referees, both those explicitly acknowledged and those who remain anonymous. Various of the contributing authors have also acted as referees for others' manuscripts, for which we further thank them, and we would also like to express our gratitude to the following colleagues for contributing to this volume with their general assistance and/or expert critical reviews: Pieter Baas, Daniel Blanchon, Josef Bogner, Mike Crisp, Iain Darbyshire, Terry van Druten, Amparo Echeverry, Diane Fraser, Rhys Gardner,

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While this volume is celebratory, it is tinged with sadness, as, while it was in proof, David Frodin died in hospital in London on Monday 12th August at the age of 79. We mourn the loss of a truly remarkable botanical scholar, with whose death another direct personal and intellectual link to Corner, who was Frodin's doctoral supervisor at Cambridge, has gone.

There has been, it seems, a rhythmic aspect to these Singapore tributes from us to David Mabberley and from David and Kiaw Lan to John Corner: both appear in the year following the occasions they celebrate. David's 70th birthday was on the 16th of May 2018. We congratulate him on passing that milestone, entirely in character — working on several new books at once! And we look forward to many more.

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