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THE REVISION OF FLORA EUROPAEA VOLUME I

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Resumen. *Flora Europaea*, publicado entre 1964 y 1980, es un catálogo sintético de las plantas vasculares de Europa. Ha proporcionado una base para investigaciones de taxonomía y corología de la flora del continente, y desde el momento de su publicación ha habido un gran incremento de la bibliografía taxonómica de Europa. En la actualidad, se está revisando en la Universidad de Reading el primer volumen de *Flora Europaea*, con objeto de incluir nuevos datos, poner al día el texto original y satisfacer la necesidad de una flora general de Europa. Habrá un incremento de un 10% del texto original del volumen I, que se publicará en su segunda edición probablemente en 1990.

Summary. *Flora Europaea*, published 1964-80, is a synthetic catalogue of Europe's vascular plants. It has provided a basis for further research on the taxonomy and distribution of the flora of the continent, and since its publication there has been a great increase in European taxonomic literature. The first volume of *Flora Europaea* is currently being revised at Reading University in order to include new data and to update the original text, and to satisfy the need for a general flora of Europe. There will be an increase of some 10% in the text of Volume I, which will be published as a second edition probably in 1990.

Flora Europaea (TUTIN & al., 1964-80) is a synthetic catalogue, with keys and descriptions, of the vascular flora of Europe. Some 11,500 species are included, together with subspecies, and the Flora brings together basic data on geographical distribution, chromosome numbers and, where appropriate, ecology in Europe. The Flora is in English, which is a widely used scientific language, and attempts to present an overall European view of the continent's flora and to avoid the chauvinism and inconsistency of taxonomic

treatment of species that has inevitably arisen in such a geographically and culturally diverse region. *Flora Europaea* has brought together opposing views and has sought to resolve or reconcile them, whilst drawing attention to areas of taxonomic difficulty where further research may be required.

The synthesis of available data on the European Flora by *Flora Europaea* has provided a basis for further research on the taxonomy and distribution of the continent's vascular plants. Recent years have seen the initiation or completion of numerous floristic projects, notably in formerly floristically unexplored parts of southern Europe. Not only do these regions have the richest floras in Europe, but also the floras are increasingly under threat from development by industry and tourism. Since the publication of the first volume of *Flora Europaea* in 1964, there has been an enormous increase in taxonomic, biosystematic and floristic literature, not only in Spain but also in Italy (culminating in a new Flora (PIGNATTI, 1982)), Greece (STRID, 1986) and elsewhere. This new research has not rendered *Flora Europaea* obsolete, but it has made sections of the work out-of-date. There is still a demand for a complete, general Flora of Europe, one that incorporates as much as possible the latest information available.

Thus *Flora Europaea* Volume 1 is currently being revised at Reading University. The revision of this volume is being funded by a grant from the *Flora Europaea* Trust Fund of the Linnean Society of London, and a Research Fellow (AKERROYD) has been working from October 1983 under the supervision of the *Flora Europaea* Editorial Committee (Secretary, Prof. MOORE). As well as incorporating post-1964 data and making use of sources of information made available during the preparation of later volumes (1968-80) of *Flora Europaea*, the revision has been an opportunity to correct small errors and inconsistencies in the text. In 1964 the editors had not assembled all the resources that were employed in the subsequent volumes and they had not perfected the machinery of editing so large and complex a project.

A survey of European taxonomic literature has shown that there are some 500 potential new text entries to be considered for inclusion in a revised Volume 1 of *Flora Europaea*. The majority of these are species and subspecies that have been described new to science from Europe since 1964, but some 50 taxa are either species new to the European flora that are known elsewhere or adventive species that have become naturalized in Europe during the last 25 years. About 30 taxa in the existing text will disappear, either being based on erroneous reports or synonymous with other European taxa. In practice, about a third of the species and subspecies described as new

to science have not been accepted in the revised volume, but are included as synonyms or in notes under other species. The circumscription of species adopted by *Flora Europaea*, viewing them in a broad European context, may be seen to be too wide by some taxonomists. It does, however, present some sort of resolution of opposing viewpoints, and is a practical solution to the problem of producing a completed work in a relatively short space of time. The major changes to the text introduced by the inclusion of new taxa do not take into account the great body of minor addenda necessitated by new data available for chromosome numbers, ecological phrases and geographical distribution, as well as changes to descriptions facilitated by access to recent collections of little-known or misunderstood taxa. There will be an increase of some 10% in the text of Volume 1.

The revision will be completed by the end of 1988, and the revised volume will be published by Cambridge University Press, probably in 1990. *Flora Europaea* has proved to be a commercial success and the revision of Volume 1 thus has a sound economic basis. Above all it has been widely used by botanists all over Europe as a standard text of reference. It is appropriate that, at a time when floristic studies are flourishing in Europe, *Flora Europaea* should make a further contribution to the critical evaluation and synthesis of the diffuse data and literature on the flora of Europe.

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