Chapter 1 sets the tone with a very thorough exposition of how priorities for species domestication were set (more tables rather than solid text would have made for easier comprehension). Considerations such as genetic diversity and hence fruit characteristics within species, vegetative versus seed propagation, through to marketing are all covered, with regional preferences shown. There is some overlap in species chosen for each region, but this gives insight into different approaches or tastes, although more on the resource security and options amongst 'farmers' would have been appreciated. Most of the case studies are within Africa.

This book is no substitute for the excellent publications on the biology and husbandry of individual species that are produced by organisations dealing with underutilized species. However, it has a wealth of information, and is an excellent introduction to the modern approach taken by both governmental and NGO bodies on securing a future for these tropical tree species.

Ian Martin

Vegetables and Fruits. Nutritional and Therapeutic Values. By T. S. C. Li. Boca Raton, Fl, USA: CRC Press/Taylor and Francis Group (2008), pp. 286, US$ $129.95. ISBN 1-4200-6871-7. doi:10.1017/S0014479708007333

This is an interesting compendium that attempts to assemble ambitiously a large amount of data on fruits and vegetables available in the North American market. It draws on many sources to describe the therapeutic values of plant derived food. There is a growing interest in the health benefits of traditional foods and this volume provides a fascinating list of health claims associated with a wide range of fruit and vegetables. This reinforces the view that food is man's first medicine, although, of course, identification of active components and stringent verification of health claims remain, in most cases, challenges for the future. The disclaimer that the information provided in this volume should not be relied upon for medical purposes, reinforces this viewpoint. However, the extensive and generally up to date reference list will be a useful starting point for those who wish to follow up on particular points in more detail.

The presentation of much of the information in landscape tables does seem unconventional and I found this format awkward to follow. The nutritional tables suffer from the problems of all data of this type: there is no indication of cultivar, growth stage, harvest stage or storage conditions. All these factors can influence greatly the levels of phytochemicals and so the values give only a broad indication of the content one may expect in a given sample. I found the appendices most useful as a starting point for using internet-based searches of sites such as Wikipedia where much more detailed information can be found for many of the plants and nutrients listed in this volume.

Mark Taylor

Encyclopedia of Fruit and Nuts. Edited by J. Janick and R. E. Paull. Wallingford, UK: CABI Publishing (2008), pp. 900, £195.00. ISBN 978-0-85199-638-7. doi:10.1017/S0014479708007345

This mighty volume contains key information about virtually every known species of fruit and nut, and the numbers associated with the book are impressive: contributions from over 120 authors, and over 320 species represented. Browsing through some of the more obscure species can become highly addictive with such a comprehensive work.

The book is organized by botanical family, which assumes some prior knowledge by the reader, although a comprehensive index is included. Most chapters follow a set format, with sections on history and origins, production, uses, botanical details (taxonomy, reproductive biology) and horticultural aspects. The last section generally includes basic practical information on propagation and cultivation, and also on pest/disease problems and the extent of breeding activity and cultivar development. Chapter length varies from over 12 pages for major species such as *Malus* or *Citrus* to less than a page for some of the lesser known species.

The book has a useful glossary, and the illustrations consist of line drawings (some of which are outstanding) and over 80 colour pictures of generally good but slightly uneven quality. Many chapters also contain useful tables, particularly for the various pests and diseases afflicting each species.

It is difficult to see how this book could be substantially improved; most chapters are comprehensive and provide as much information as most readers will require, in a very amenable way, with a list of further reading for those who need more. The price, whilst putting the book beyond the reasonable reach of all but the most committed specialists, represents something of a bargain. Libraries with any interest in these important crop groups should not hesitate to add this outstanding work to their collection.

Rex Brennan

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