

attractive to the viewer.” As the authors add, “There is ... no point in making a painstakingly accurate record of a plant if the viewer’s eye passes quickly over it.”

A short section discusses drawing techniques: putting a three dimensional subject onto a two dimensional surface; techniques for detailing surface shape and patterns; tonal variation using pencils; structural drawing and scales.

Central to the success and value of the book are around 40 pages devoted to understanding and using colour. A landscape artist once told me that her palette consisted of only seven colours, and black was conspicuously absent, since in nature there is no true black. It was therefore pleasing to find, in this book, instructions on how to construct black and gray shades using primary and complementary colours. A limited colour palette may seem constrictive. However, as is so capably shown in the book, with just six primary colours – cool and warm yellow, red, and blue, supplemented with only three others

– a violet, rose, and Sap Green, - almost any colour can be produced in a plethora of shades.

A further 20 pages are devoted to demonstrating a variety of techniques to develop patterns, textures, washes, surface bloom and sheen, contrasting highlights and lowlights, and the use of coloured pencils. The final 40 pages demonstrate the results of mastering the use of colour and technique to produce beautiful images of, as the book title suggests, “Exotic” plants.

This is one of the most useful books I have come across that deals with the artistry of botanical colour illustration – not just for the beauty of the completed works, but for the emphasis on theory and the understanding of the theory behind producing a coloured work of exquisite beauty. Its real value lies in the emphasis on mastering colour and techniques and the book should be on the bench, not the shelf, of every aspiring botanical artist.

Liff is hard, so laugh even harder

David Morrison

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden

The Taller Tree of Liff. By Brendan Lepschi. Over Educated Publications, Canberra. 2012.

32 pp. RRP AUD \$5 (paperback), postage costs vary.

Available from the author: Australian National Herbarium, Centre for Australian National Biodiversity Research GPO Box 1600 Canberra ACT 2601.

Email Brendan.Lepschi@csiro.au

In the middle of 1982, a couple of poms named Douglas Adams and John Lloyd rented Donna Summer’s beach house in Malibu (Los Angeles) and sat on the sundeck to write a book. In this book they tried to connect the contents of a gazetteer with all of the concepts that should be in a dictionary but are not because they don’t yet have a name. When *The Meaning of Liff* was published the next year it became rather successful and was reprinted regularly over the next few years. Therefore, over Christmas 1988 they sat down on the sundeck of a beach house in Palm Beach (Sydney) to expand this book into *The Deeper Meaning of Liff*, which was

just as successful when it was finally published in 1990.

Sitting in the town of Canberra, a location well known for its complete lack of beach houses, a young man named Brendan Lepschi looked on enviously and decided that three could play at this game. Sadly, not having the same quality of literary agent, or a collaborator to offer sage advice, Brendan chose *The Kew Index* rather than a gazetteer, when trying to find names for his list of as-yet unlabelled concepts. As a result, he entirely failed to meet any sun-tanned celebrities while writing his book.

Nevertheless, in the limited world of plant systematics *The Tree of Liff* (Better Than You Productions, 1997) was a success, even earning a positive notice in *Taxon* (Rudolf Schmid, 47: 534-535, 1998), as well as in the *ASBS Newsletter* (Alex George: 92: 32, 1997), and going through five printings.

Brendan is now 15 years older and 15 years wiser. Undeterred by his utter failure to overlook the azure waters of the Pacific while writing, he has now released the “resurrected,

revised, expanded and retitled” second edition of his book, *The Taller Tree of Liff*. As before, it provides “words for the various situations, objects and experiences encountered by botanists in their rich and exciting daily lives.” The main difference this time is that: “A few definitions from the previous edition have been omitted [and] ... To make up for the shortfall, some 35 new definitions have been added to this edition”.

Brendan’s book is thus required reading, in the same way as the *Macquarie Dictionary* isn’t. That is, Brendan’s book is entertainingly readable, unlike most other lexicographical tomes. It is shorter and funnier than any comparable phrase book, in almost any language. Learning a language would be a pleasure not a chore, if all lexicons were like this one.

Actually, the idea that there are things in the world for which there are, as yet, no names crosses cultural as well as scientific boundaries. For example, most Western countries are full of people who live together as husband and wife and yet are unmarried. A man cannot refer to such a woman as his “partner”, because that sounds too much like a business arrangement, nor can he refer to her as his “girlfriend”, because many husbands have one of them as a well as a wife. Swedes long ago decided to resolve this issue by creating a new word. The Swedish expression for cohabitation is “samma boende”, usually shortened to “samboende”. The man thus refers to the woman as his “sambo”. Inexplicably, this useful word has not yet caught on in the English-speaking world.

This example is relevant to this review because Swedish is a language that readily uses

compound words for new concepts. Modern English is not such a language, and thus it is necessary to steal words from elsewhere, instead (e.g. cul-de-sac, barramundi, dollar, muesli, moped, and cider). Hence the absolute necessity for books like *The Deeper Meaning of Liff* and *The Taller Tree of Liff*.

Mind you, the title of Brendan’s book is not quite as original as the author would have us believe.

For example, I find that in manuscript no. 283 in the Bodleian Library, entitled *The Mirroure of the Worlde* (a 15th century manual of moral instruction for the laity) there is this text:

But liche as Godde planted erthely paradys ful of goode treis and with fruit and in the myddes he planted a tree that men calle the tree of liff because that his fruit hadde vertu to kepe the liff of theyme that sholde eete therof from dethe, from sekenesse, from agyng, and fro febilnesse.

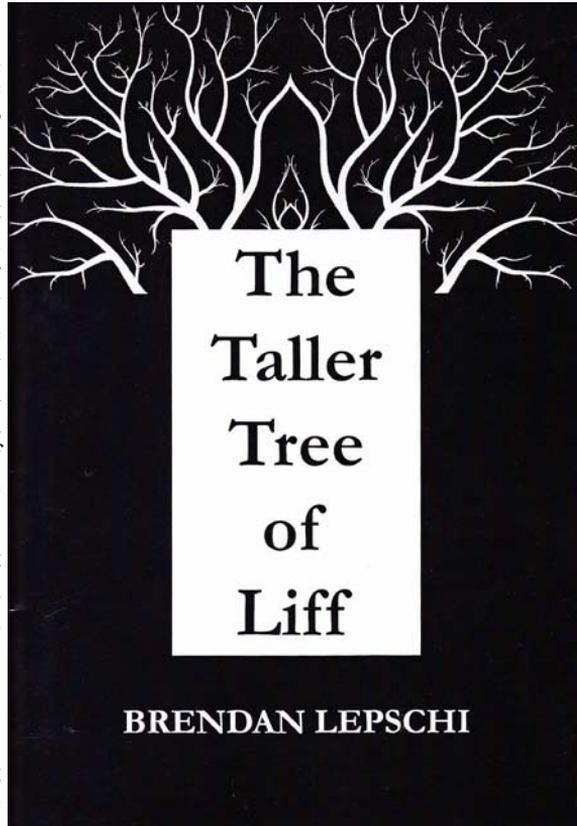
If only Brendan’s book had the same beneficial effects as these fruits,

then he would certainly have achieved fame and fortune by now.

In the book a large number of women are thanked during the preliminary text, but after that the personal references are restricted to “male botanists”, “older male botanists” and “senior managers” (the latter under various synonyms). Clearly, females should be demanding an equal level of disparagement in the book, particularly older ones. In this regard, I offer the following additions to the book:

Hemistylus (n.)

The fashion sense of older female botanists. Cf. *schmalzia* (for males).



Morisonia (adj.)

Descriptive of the state achieved by imbibing *liquidamber* (q.v.).

Samba (vb.)

To cohabit as husband and wife without being married.

Zamia (adj.)

Two specimens that look like the same species but you know they aren't.

Zombia (n.)

One who spent too long in an old herbarium, breathing naphthalene.

So, buy yourself a copy of the book, check out the required writing style, and create your own definitions. There are two "blank" pages at the end of the book apparently provided for this very purpose.

An introduction to insect-induced plant galls in Australia

Lyn Cook

School of Biological Sciences, The University of Queensland, St Lucia

Life in a Gall: The Biology and Ecology of Insects that Live in Plant Galls. By *Rosalind Blanche* **CSIRO Publishing, Colingwood, Victoria. 2012. 80 pp. ISBN: 9780643106437. RRP AUD \$29.95 (paperback)**

www.publish.csiro.au/pid/6814.htm

I grew up in the bush, but I didn't really "see" the bush until I moved to the city. In a small timber town, plants were either good (useful) or rubbish. Rubbish was to be weeded out, cut down or burned and I earned pocket money for cutting down "weeds" such as "she-oak" (pronounced with a sneer) and sally wattle (spat out with disgust). Hillsides were to be kept clear of any encroaching bush for pasture and any orchid, daisy or non-palatable shrub or herb was to be pulled or sprayed. Any insect, and most mammals that were not domesticated, were pests. By the time I left home at 17 to go uni for the first time, I had no idea that the trees and shrubs that I spent my weekends chopping down on our bush block in the foothills of the Macleay River catchment were even native. I had never heard of galls.

How things have changed. I now go to our bush block, which has become "overgrown" with the absence of chainsaws, tomahawks, cattle and horses, and see the *Diurus*, *Cordylina*, *Pultenaea*, *Dianella*, *Lomandra*, *Casuarina torulosa*, *Acacia melanoxylon*, and hundreds of other plant species in this diverse part of the mid-north coast. And I also see the galls. They are everywhere. On the eucalypts

along the creek line, I have discovered two previously unknown species of scale insect that induce conspicuous galls several centimetres long. On the *Melaleuca salicina* on the creek flats I discovered another undescribed galler, sparking an Australia-wide search that has now uncovered more than 50 undescribed scale insect galls of Melaleuceae. There are galls on the acacias, there are galls on the peas, there are galls on the casuarinas and there are LOTS of galls on the eucalypts. Most of these are probably undescribed. That's a thing about Australian plant galls induced by insects – they are very

diverse and largely undescribed.

Even for those gall-inducing insects that have been formally described, there is scant information readily available for them. The

