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Book reviews

W. FREY & R. LÖSCH: Lehrbuch der Geobotanik. Pflanze und Vegetation in Raum und Zeit.2. Auflage [Handbook of geobotany. Plants and vegetation in space and time].

Springer/Spektrum Akademischer Verlag, Tiergartenstrasse 17, 69121 Heidelberg, Germany; 2004, XIV, 528 S., Geb., ISBN: 978-3-8274-1193-8, Price: $59.95.
http://www.springer.com/spektrum+akademischer+verlag/

The authors succeeded in creating the very actual and comprehensive textbook for students of geobotany. This second edition follows the last one in modern representation and it was fulfilled with some new, actual and, at the present time, necessary information for a geobotanist from parallel botanical disciplines. The textbook is well arranged and richly structured by its text, graphs, pictures, tables and schemes. The contents of teaching are divided into 10 chapters with other subchapters. After the first two introductory chapters, the third chapter Floristics and Areals presents floritic areals, cosmopolitanism and endemism, floristic geoelements, areal types, floristic structure of the Earth, biodiversity, species richness, phytogeographical areas and phytogeographical regions. The fourth chapter deals with geobotany itself, structure of communities, syntaxonomy, multivariable methods in phytocoenology, syntaxonomy and syndynamics. In the fifth chapter, the historical geobotany is discussed. The most space is devoted to plant ecology in the sixth chapter – from abiotic environmental conditions through autecology and ecological physiology, competitive relations to ecosystems and their modeling. In the seventh chapter, the ecological bases for populations and communities and reproductive ecology are presented. The eighth chapter deals with adaptations and strategies of living. The ninth chapter describes the individual vegetation zones and biomes in the Earth. The influence of human activities to biotopes, their conservation, risk to species and ecosystems are discussed in the tenth chapter. The textbook has a very rich list of literature, well arranged and informative graphs, schemes, tables and figures. At the beginning, there are explanatory notes to abbreviations, symbols and mathematical constants. At the end of the book, a comprendious alphabetical dictionary of terms helps to use the textbook more quickly and easily.

I can recommend this textbook to university students, teachers, employers in nature protection, in state administration and self-administration dealing with environmental problems, foresters, farmers and to everyone which is interested in vegetation and its conservation. It should not be missing in any library of educative institutions and environmental organizations.

S. MOCHNACKÝ