BOOK REVIEW

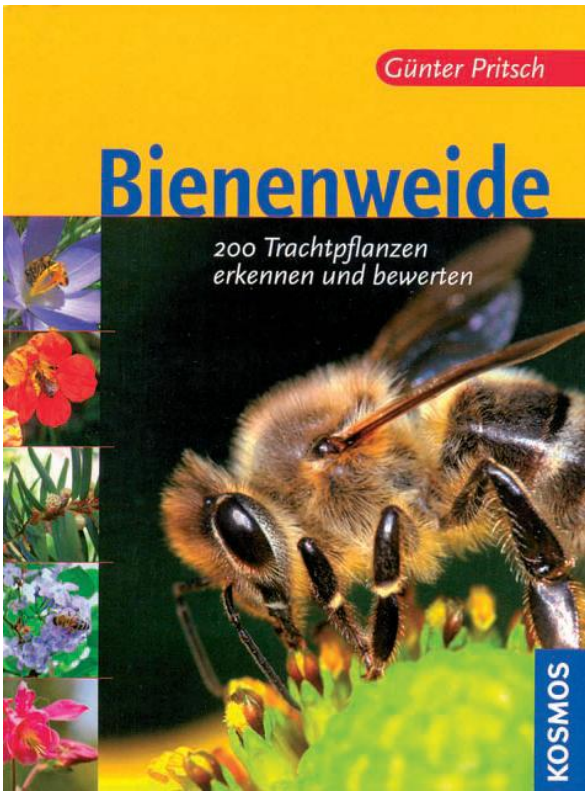
GÜNTER PRITSCH – "Bienenweide", published by Kosmos, Stuttgart, 2007, 168 pages, 335 colour photos, 6 tables, hard cover, A5 format (22.0 x 16.5 cm). Price € 22.90, ISBN 978-3-440-10481-1.

Normal development and health of bees are strictly dependent on their food resources, which are nectar, honeydew, and floral pollen. The knowledge and selection of bee forage plants supplying these raw materials ensure the proper functioning of a bee colony and, as a consequence, proper commercial production of apiaries.

The book "Bienenweide" ("Bee pastures") prepared by Günter Pritsch is its second expanded edition (the first edition appeared in 1985). The issues presented here are divided into three parts. In the first part, the author introduces the reader to the problems of bee forage and the need to enrich food sources for insects. He notes the climatic factors that affect the rate of nectar and pollen production in flowers.

The second part of this study includes a presentation of 200 plant species valuable for beekeeping. The author has included their botanical descriptions illustrated with numerous colour photographs. Most of them present flowers or inflorescences of various plant species at full bloom and honey bees visiting them to collect nectar or pollen. He shows flowering times for particular taxa as well as the period of nectar and pollen production of their flowers. Numerous bee forage species include plants grown in home gardens, parks and other urban plantings as well as those that provide bee forage in natural habitats.

In the third (last) part of the book under discussion, the author gives detailed data concerning the forage value of various species of herbaceous and woody plants. He presents in tabulated form taxa providing nectar, honeydew and pollen as well as includes data on sugar concentration in nectar and estimated honey yield of plants per hectare. The author draws attention to the role of insects in pollination and, as a consequence, in fruit and seed set under the conditions of free insect visitation of flowers and restricted pollinator access. In the second part of this chapter he specifies, in the order of flowering, 169 herbaceous plant taxa as well as 113 tree and shrub taxa that provide forage during different periods of the growing season. The author also demonstrates 26 tree taxa that provide honeydew and insects using this type of forage.



More important terms are given in bold print in particular chapters of this book and although it is written in German, the book also contains Latin names of species, which signifycantly facilitates the perception of the content for the readers who do not know German. The final part of this study contains a reference list and an alphabetical list of species names in both languages.

The reviewed book "Bienenweide" ("Bee pastures") is a compendium of knowledge on honey bee plants. Its advantage is its rich photographic documentation in the form of excellently reproduced colourful photographs and tabulated data which are easily accessible for the reader. It can be a valuable scientific resource for researchers involved in evaluation of the apicultural value of both crop plants and plants found in natural plant communities. This book can also provide valuable information to practicing beekeepers interested in species selection designed to expand food resources for the honey bee and other pollinators. It can also be recommended as the literature of the subject to university students in the fields of agriculture and horticulture.

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