



# International Oaks

The Journal of the International Oak Society

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*...new species from Mexico, measuring the pace of evolution, the fabulous history of folk taxonomy, the oak-loving birds of India, amblings in Italy...*

Issue No. 32 / 2021 / ISSN 1941-2061



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## **International Oaks Issue No. 32**

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ERRATA – Issue No. 31

Page 117: currently accepted nomenclature for *Q. liebmannii* is *Q. liebmannii*.  
Pages 6, 11, 161: correct spelling of the author's name is Josef Souček.



## INTRODUCTION

# The Multifaceted Oak

“For that matter, how did you come to love oaks?”

This question posed by Tim Boland in his very heartfelt Foreword to this volume made me think that the year gone by has undoubtedly been for many of us a time of reflection. Perhaps (hopefully?) not just on our personal choices but on the collective ones that are taken in our names.

In a *bilan* of 17 years of planting oaks in Southwest France (Chassé), Allen Coombes writes, in a perfect answer to Tim’s question, though he had no idea it had been asked, “...which other group of trees would be chosen?”.

Yes indeed.

What other genus holds such species diversity, ecological and environmental importance, evolutionary, historical, and cultural significance – not to mention such astounding beauty? Obviously I am, as are those cited above, not entirely impartial. Nevertheless, oaks would very likely tally more points than anybody else in any “objective” survey pondering the above criteria.

It seems to me that though this could perhaps be said about any volume of *International Oaks*, this particular one is an exceptional illustration of the myriad interfaces with which it is possible to come into contact with our favorite genus.

The act of naming things is unique to *Homo sapiens* – some anthropologists would argue even a necessity. As Cameron shows brilliantly herein apropos the common names of oaks, their creation reveals not only something about a specific relationship to the “thing” named but also about the complexities of linguistic evolution and the relationships between different histories and cultures. Our perceptions of things influence the names we give them, and these in turn influence our experience of them.

Those of us involved in the botanic rather than the linguistic interface with the genus are nevertheless seldom far from having to think about names, as this volume abundantly shows: taxonomic revisions, the resurrection of hitherto invalid names, new investigations leading to the recognition of novel species (González-Villareal; McCauley), as well as the patient, ongoing efforts to properly establish cultivar names (Russell et al.) are our

stock in trade. So welcome, welcome, *Quercus centenaria*, *Q. mexiae*, *Q. huicholensis*, and welcome back, *Q. pennivenia*.

The environmental and ecological dimension of oaks in India is beautifully depicted in the portrait given by Shahabuddin and Menon of the importance of *Q. leucotrichophora* forest for the avifauna. The poetry of their names will not escape your attention. In India, as elsewhere, it is impossible today to discuss oaks without ringing some alarms as to the threats they face and advocating conservation measures. Li et al. explore these issues as regards *Q. rex* in Southwest China, reporting on their attempts to better understand germination and seedling establishment. Hackenmiller tells us how a chance encounter with an incredible oak led her and her family on a quest by bike to find the elusive Cedar Bend Savanna (USA), a remnant oak savanna that is part of the 2,000 acres of this ecosystem that remains from an estimated 30 million that sprawled across that middle of the country two hundred years ago. Stimulated by yet another chance encounter with a California oak, the type of *Quercus ×ganderi*, Giseburt considers how variation in seed and seedling leaf morphology may provide hints as to the identity of the pollen source.

Since 1962, when *Silent Spring* was published, it seems to me that more time, money and effort have gone into cataloging destruction rather than implementing fundamental change to stop it. So maybe trees can only rely on themselves. Can long-lived organisms such as oaks cope with the challenge that rapid climate change represents? In answer to this highly debated question Kremer presents in this volume empirical results that provide data on the speed of adaptation in oaks, specifically, *Q. robur* and *Q. petraea*.

Who then, can we rely on? Though, unfortunately, in these pages there is no answer to that, Montserrat explores different aspects of the acorn-as-food, motivated by a general growing feeling that there must be another way to “feed the world” than continuing on with current calamitous agricultural practices.

For obvious reasons, this issue of *International Oaks* does not have its usual lot of travel/garden reports. Nevertheless, taking advantage of a brief (and illusory) lull in the plague, Santini was able to visit Il Bosco delle Querce di Ome (Italy) early last October and thus tells us the tale of the passion of two oak nuts, Antonio De Matola and Francesco Gandini, that led to the creation of this garden and its oak collection. Then, in late October, turning around to head about 1,500 km in the other direction, he set out to explore the incredible morphological diversity of *Q. pubescens* in Sicily, which, as you will see, brings us right back to the question of names.

It is quite likely that, like last year, distribution of *International Oaks* will be slower than usual. I hope that next year the cause of these delays will be behind us, that we will be able to meet face-to-face unmasked in Taiwan for the 10<sup>th</sup> IOS Conference, and that the world will be a generally brighter place to be.

**Béatrice Chassé**

Editor

