

<i>Microlaena avenacea</i>	bush rice grass; oat grass
<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>	forest rice grass
* <i>Miscanthus nepalensis</i>	Himalayan fairy grass
<i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i> ssp. <i>imbecillis</i>	oat grass
<i>Rytidosperma gracile</i>	forest fairy grass
* <i>Rytidosperma racemosum</i>	
<i>Uncinia uncinata</i>	watu

BOOK REVIEW

‘Common Ground: Who’s Who in New Zealand Botanical Names’.

By Val Smith. ISBN 978-0-473-30847-6.

Published in a limited edition in 2015 by Wordsmith, 80 Mill Road, Lower Vogeltown, New Plymouth 4310, N.Z. assisted by Wellington Botanical Society’s Jubilee Fund and the George Mason Charitable Trust.

This book arrived in our letterbox just a day or two before this newsletter went to the printers. The author, a keen gardener, plantswoman, outdoor enthusiast and amateur botanist, became curious about the people whose surnames gave rise to the botanical names of many of our indigenous plants. This book is the result of that fascination.

The softbound volume, of just over 300 pages, covers the lives and careers of some 250 people, dating from Aristotle (384 BC to 322 BC) right through to contemporary botanists who are personally familiar to many of us, and for whom a botanical name commemorates the person. The majority of those people carried out botanical work; the rest had some other link to scientific endeavours. Each one has a page devoted to their biography, interests, major publications and achievements, plus a relevant colour image. For example, James Adams (1839 – 1906) has a biography accompanied by a photo of *Hebe adamsii*. The photographs are of high quality, in most cases taken by the author, and are often of plants that are less well known to many of us, which adds to their interest.

The foreword is a reprint of the response of H.H. Allen (first director of DSIR’s Botany Division) to a cyclostyled predecessor to this book; “Those Troublesome Names”, which was published in 1944 as Bulletin No. 1 of the Auckland Botanical Society. A Botanical Bibliography and an extensive list of Biographical References occupy the final 37 pages of this most pleasing and fascinating volume. Highly recommended to anyone who has an interest in our New Zealand flora, and the people who have studied and investigated it.

Orders to Val Smith, email: valdsmit@xtra.co.nz, Ph. (06) 758 3521.

\$35.00 incl. packaging and postage (within NZ).

Payment by cheque (to V D Smith) mailed to address above,

or by direct credit to V D Smith, TSB Account No. 15-3949-0301444-00.

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Nick Miller