Notes R.B.G. Edinb. 38(2):286 (1980)

BOOK REVIEW

What's in a name? How to cite a person's name might seem to the outsider a particularly recherché topic, but for practising taxonomists it is a matter of some importance. This paperback* lists a huge number of botanists, major and minor, whose names are perpetuated as the authors of flowering plant taxa. It gives their full names, their life span if completed or birthdays if not, and how *Index Kewensis* would abbreviate them as authors. They are naturally recommendations and in many cases local established usage will continue to take precedence. Edinburghers, for instance, will still refer to Sir William Wright Smith as W. W. Smith and not as the seemingly less respectful W. Smith; others will hesitate to deprive E. K. Balls of his initials. It is nevertheless very useful to have all the publishing De Candolles, Schulzes and Smiths brought together, and in the same way that *Botanico-Periodicum-Huntianum* is a fine guide for citing botanical publications so is this a helpful means of rationalizing the citation of authorities. Of course, it is virtually impossible for it to be complete. Most taxonomists who browse through from Aalders to Zwicky will spot omissions, a note of which the compilers will welcome in order to make the next edition more complete. Most institutions would without much effort easily supply such corrigenda.

I. C. HEDGE

* *Draft Index of Author Abbreviations compiled at the Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.* 249 pp. Her Majesty's Stationery Office. £5.50.