Peters

Beech Forests

There are some good reasons to start a global study of beech forests. One reason may be the importance of beech for man. In many places and in many ages, beech has played an important role in people's lives (Table 1). Already in old ages beech was useful for nuts, fuelwood and bokiz, beechwood tablets carved with runes, from which probably our word 'book' is derived. Beech still plays an important role in people's lives. Another reason for a global study of beech forests is that it lifts us above the detailed but fragmented image of a local study. My study of beech forests started out of love for these often beautiful forests, and, gradually, a small project grew into a world wide study. Table 1. Beech names. Scientific name Name Language Meaning - origin beech English bhagos (Indo-European) Fagus sylvatica do Buche, Rotbuche Gennan beuk do Dutch do bok Swedish do bog Danish do Mtre, fayard French hetre = hester (Gennanic), indicating young beeches do haya Spanish do faig Cathalan do faggio Italian do fagus Latin phagos = glutton (Greek), referring to edible nuts do fagul Romanian do buk Czech F. sylvatica subsp. orientalis kayin Turkish Fagus crenata buna Japanese unknown do sobaguri Japanese noodle chestnut (old), indicating hairy cupule penduncles F agus japonica inubuna Japanese inferior beech Fagus spp.

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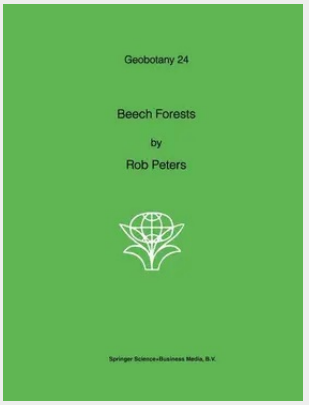

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