

tiny, at least for my eyes, and not all the key features are highlighted. And while the Basidiomycota are well covered, only a small sample of flask and cup fungi is included. I was surprised that only one representative earth-tongue is illustrated, given the interest in them by grassland surveyors. As for the crusts, those resupinate or 'whitewash' fungi, it was a brave decision to include them, but without microscopic features to help I doubt whether accurate identification is possible.

Although the format matches the handy size of other Collins guides, this is a big book, 5cm thick, and heavy with it. Of course, to illustrate and describe 2,400 species you need a big book, but in terms of practicalities this trend towards more and more species is surely self-defeating. Many fungi in this book are rarely encountered, and others are impossible to identify without resort to a microscope. A smaller book with a larger font and more complete illustrations of the commoner or more easily recognised fungi might have been a better strategy for a *field* guide.

I am grateful to Buczacki and co for describing and illustrating so many British fungi. It will make for invaluable browsing with a magnifying glass. But the book is too unwieldy for easy use out of doors. And it is not one for beginners.

**Peter Marren**



### **High Nature Value Farming in Europe**

**35 European countries – experiences and perspectives**

Rainer Opperman, Guy Beaufoy and Gwyn Jones (eds)

Verlag Regionalkultur, Basel 2012  
544pp, colour throughout  
ISBN 978-3-89735-657-3

£40 hbk plus p&p (e-mail: [book@efncp.org](mailto:book@efncp.org))

This is an impressive volume bringing together an enormous amount of information on farming systems across Europe. High Nature Value (HNV) farming is a more positive way of describing the low-intensity agricultural practices, some following centuries of working with the grain of the land, that are so often key to the continuance of thriving semi-natural ecosystems. Think of seasonally grazed mountain pastures, traditional hay meadows and orchards, mosaics of wood-pasture and small-scale family farms on marginal land. These landscapes and the wildlife they support are disappearing across Europe, as the economic and social realities of modern life push them towards either abandonment or large-scale intensification.

The book begins with an explanation of HNV farming, including reference to the way in which complex plant and animal communities have co-evolved with farming practices over hundreds or perhaps thousands of years. There then follows an overview of the types of HNV farmland across Europe.

The core of the book is country-by-country descriptions of HNV farming, each written by a national expert. For many countries, just identifying and mapping

this type of farming are major tasks. Sadly, official statistics often miss key areas. Descriptions of individual farms keep the focus of this section on the importance of understanding the daily reality of making a living (usually at a subsistence level). The amazing variety and complexity of these farming systems is clearly portrayed. Just a glance at the photographs shows how significant these ways of life are, not just to wildlife but also to our cultural heritage.

The book finishes with a series of reflections on the current situation and future prospects. A key point is that many people still take for granted the many benefits of these age-old farming practices. Unless their profile is raised and politicians and their electorates realise how important they are, we could lose them, and certainly their relevance within the rural economy, within a lifetime. Solutions that ensure their continued existence are there, but as so often, any meaningful progress comes down to a question of political will. The book has a joint foreword from the current EC Commissioners for Agriculture and the Environment. In this, they recognise the importance of these farming systems and explain how the 'greening' of the Common Agricultural Policy can help to reconcile modern agriculture with maintenance of High Nature Value farming. I hope they are right.

Highly recommended for anyone who wishes to understand this important subject.

**Andrew Branson**



### **Gardening for butterflies, bees and other beneficial insects**

Jan Miller-Klein

Saith Ffynnon Books, Flintshire 2011  
262pp, colour-illustrated  
ISBN 978-0-9555288-0-4 £19.95 pbk

This is a colourful gazetteer of plants suitable for attracting insects to the garden through the seasons, and it contains lots of useful information about creating and planting a wildlife garden, including several case studies. For someone like myself, lacking the basic knowledge about which garden flowers (other than native species) are good for bumblebees, this is a great book to dip into. It does, however, slip up a bit on distinguishing between genuine British wildflower species and garden ones, and some of the wildflower names are incorrect. For instance, Meadow Crane's-bill is called 'wild blue geranium', while Red Valerian (correctly classified as a garden plant) is called Valerian (which is a British wild species). Nevertheless, these are forgivable given that this is a book to be used as an aid to plant gardens. For people with little knowledge of wildlife gardening, I would recommend using this book alongside Jill Hamilton's excellent books, *English plants for your garden* and, for those across the border, *Scottish plants for Scottish gardens*. The tips on growing wild flowers from seed or cuttings are particularly useful and set this book apart from others.

**Sue Everett**