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978-1-107-64229-4 - Handbook of the Rubi of Great Britain and Ireland

By the Late W. C. R. Watson

Frontmatter

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HANDBOOK OF THE
RUBI OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND

Ac ne forte roges quo me duce, quo lare tuter,
Nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri.

HORACE: *Ep.* I. I.

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RUBI OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND
IRELAND

BY THE LATE
W. C. R. WATSON

WITH 50 DRAWINGS BY
RUTH M. BALL & A. W. DARNELL



CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1958

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107642294

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First published 1958
First paperback edition 2013

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-64229-4 Paperback

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FOREWORD

WHEN the author died in 1954, he had nearly completed his work and only a few trivial emendations and additions have been made. All the descriptions were complete with the exception of the section *Appendiculati* which has been prepared from his account of the series and sub-series. In the analytical key there was no method of arriving at the sections, subsections, series and subseries. As it seemed undesirable that the text should have to be consulted to arrive at the appropriate group, the group descriptions have been extracted from the text and incorporated into the key. Under the nomenclature only dates had been quoted, but it seemed desirable to have full references. This has been done with the exception of the group headings. No authority or reference for the group headings, many of which are new or have new status, had been given by the author, and it has only proved practicable to give basonym authorities. All new names and combinations have been published separately in a paper in *Watsonia*. All the type material from Watson's herbarium has been deposited at the British Museum (Nat. Hist.).

It is believed that the author would have wished to thank Miss Ruth M. Ball and Mr A. W. Darnell for drawing the illustrations; the authorities of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) and the South London Botanical Institute for the use of specimens and books; and the many fellow botanists for help received during his life-long study of the genus *Rubus*, which has resulted in this, his most considerable work.

P. D. SELL

J. E. WOODHEAD

April 1957

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PREFACE

Rubus is a remarkable genus in several respects. It has spread to all the continents; it shows signs of decay in its reproductive system whilst it is still in process of evolution, and so offers an opportunity of observing the origin of species. The best approach to a study of the genus is to try to identify the brambles met with, and in the endeavour, knowledge comes. The present work includes descriptions of all the forms found in Great Britain, Ireland and the Channel Isles, three-quarters of which are also found on the Continent.

On account of their relatively slow methods of distribution, their hardiness and the consequent preservation of old forms, the Rubi afford perhaps an unrivalled instrument for ascertaining the movement and succession of florulas and floras, if they are studied in connexion with the climatic and geological changes of the past.

If they may be comparatively unknown to most persons, they are nevertheless no strangers to any of us. From their wild habitats—woods and heaths, mountains and moors—they come to our hedges and garden fences, offering their flowers, like little roses, and then their fruit to our regard, after the cultivated bush fruits are all over. They readily accept the hospitality of a garden, and if taken in hand will be found, some of them, to yield delicious fruit if they are protected from the thrushes and allowed to ripen.

The principal object of the present work is to furnish the means of identifying any native species met with, and the means of understanding the causes and types of variation, and in some measure the probable natural relationships of the species. It has to be remembered, however, that the study of Rubi is still in an early stage of investigation, and there is room for much pioneering work in many directions.

A conspectus of species is prefixed to the descriptive part of the work, analysed to small ultimate groups of species, which are placed in order of frequency within their group. In addition the very common species are distinctively marked, and those other geographically restricted species are also suitably indicated. It is believed that these and other novel aids adopted in the main descriptions will speed identification and serve better than any other scheme.

Liberty has been taken to be very brief when brevity suffices; and the descriptions are never longer than is necessary. The normal style and

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order of description has every now and then been set aside, in the case of a common species, for a summary of the more striking characters. Interest languishes under a surfeit of routine analyses.

Experience will soon show that there is no 'hopeless wading through hundreds of descriptions', nor 'endless intermediates'; that one never comes across the fabled 'swelter of forms' or 'swarms of hybrids'; and that there is no need to use a microscope, nor to be an ecologist, a geneticist or a cytologist in order to come to the name and systematic position of any blackberry. This is not to say that there is not wide scope for the exercise of those useful modes of investigation.

The systematic arrangement of this work does not closely follow any previous author: it is partly on traditional lines, and partly an original arrangement adapted to suit the British species. In the matter of identification, although all the points of view have been considered that I could learn of, and all works consulted, general and local, British and western Continental, that I could manage to see, I have ended by following my own counsel, adopting nothing on the authority of anyone else.

In the account of the distribution of British and Irish species, because of the uncertainty of many of the older records I have relied almost entirely on my own determinations and my own fieldwork, carried out largely in vice-counties 1-5, 9, 11, 13-18, 20-22, 24, 27, 30, 36, 39, 40, 47, 49, 62 and H. 1 and 2, and abroad in south Belgium and west Germany around Aachen. Apart from this I have grown at least 300 of the British forms in my garden within the past forty years.

Since Rogers' Handbook was published in 1900 many species not before known for Great Britain and Ireland have been brought to light, and have increased the number from 200 to nearly 400. They are species that have mostly been already described on the Continent. Of the endemic species that have been added, some were collected and distributed in the last century, under wrong names; others were allowed to drop out owing to mistaken ideas about their systematic value, or because they had become extinct in their original station and no other was known. However, all of them are extant, many of them widely or very widely distributed, and they are important for the understanding of the evolution and history of the west European bramble flora. They have accordingly been incorporated in their place in the present Handbook.

It is pleasing to note that some of the species recently identified were

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already being collected by the fathers of British batology 100 and 140 years ago, contemporaneously with Libert and Lejeune, Weihe, Kaltenbach, Questier, Lefèvre and Mueller on the Continent. References in the distribution records commemorate some of these early British discoveries.

W. C. R. WATSON

BICKLEY, BROMLEY,

KENT

March 1954

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