

important and highly recommended contribution to the taxonomy, systematics and biogeography of the Lepidoptera of southern Africa and beyond, as indeed are several other volumes in this series, which deserves to be more widely known.

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*The Buzz about Bees: Biology of a Superorganism* by Jürgen Tautz. Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg. 2008. 284 pp; 230 outstanding colour illustrations. Price: €29.95, \$39.95, £23.99 (hardback). ISBN 978-3-540-78727-3

The theme of this book is the concept of a honey bee colony as a superorganism in which the entire colony functions as one entity comprising many individuals. The author describes every known aspect of sociality in a honey bee colony, from communication through to longevity, as well as hive maintenance and the contribution of its physical structure, such as the comb, to the superorganism. The importance of the honey bee as a domestic animal is mentioned and the concept of the insect as a superorganism is discussed.

The honey bee is an extremely important species; ecologically it is critical to ecosystem functioning and is economically most useful to agriculture. Likening the honey bee to a superorganism provides an interesting perspective on honey bee biology while stimulating the reader's interest, all of which contribute to an enjoyable book.

The work was originally written in German by Jürgen Tautz, a professor at the Institute of Behavioural Physiology and Sociobiology of the University of Würzburg. Professor Tautz is an accomplished scientist with many articles in top journals, and he is a talented public speaker. The book was translated by David Sandeman whose writing style makes enjoyable reading. It is very well illustrated, with beautiful photographs by Helga Heilmann. It is an attractive book, printed on glossy paper, largely free of typographical errors and strongly bound.

The book focuses on the honey bee in Europe. The author has been bold in putting forward many theories, resulting in, what I consider, a few single-minded and surprising statements. But I

may be wrong and the reader should form his or her own opinion. Nevertheless, the essence of the book appears to be based on a good scientific knowledge of the European honey bee, and the bold statements are thought-provoking. I enjoyed reading this book and strongly recommend it to all those interested in learning how one of the most interesting, and intensely studied species functions, and about its contribution as an ecosystem 'service provider'.

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*Plant–Arthropod Interactions in the Early Angiosperm History – Evidence from the Cretaceous of Israel*, edited by V. Krassilov and A. Rasnitsyn, and authored by V. Krassilov, N. Silantjeva and Z. Lewy (Part I) and L.N. Anisyutkin, V.G. Grachev, A.G. Ponomarenko, A.P. Rasnitsyn and P. Vrsansky (Part II). Pensoft Publishers, Sofia, Moscow, and Brill, Leiden, Boston. 2008. 229 pp., incl. 58 colour plates, 36 black and white figures. Price US\$180, €115.00 (hardback). ISBN 978-90-04-17071-1).

This book is a richly illustrated synthesis and development of knowledge on the wide range of plant–insect associations that has been observed in several collections of Cretaceous megaflores from the Negev of Israel.

Although the interactions between modern arthropods and plants have been actively studied since the 1800s (today there is even an entire journal dedicated to the field), similar studies of these interactions as evidenced in the fossil record have lagged far behind. Traditionally, palaeo-entomologists and palaeobotanists have focussed on the alpha taxonomy of insect and plant fossils respectively, with little overlap in their research pursuits. However, a wealth of information can be garnered through careful evaluation of the insect-mediated damage seen on plants. In addition to providing clues as to the types of arthropods and other organisms that co-existed with the floras, this added dimension can reveal interrelationships that existed between elements of the biota, thereby contributing to our knowledge of the ecosystem as a whole. Yet, it has only been in the