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Nota di contenuto	; 1 Introduction: Establishing the state of the art -- the role of morphology in plant systematics / Louis P. Ronse De Craene ; Craene, Louis P. Ronse De, Livia Wanntorp ; Wanntorp, Livia ; 1 -- ; 2 Spatial separation and developmental divergence of male and female reproductive units in gymnosperms, and their relevance to the origin of the angiosperm flower / Richard M. Bateman ; Bateman, Richard M., Jason Hilton ; Hilton, Jason, Paula J. Rudall ; Rudall, Paula J. ; 8 -- ; 3 New flowers of Laurales from the Early Cretaceous (Early to Middle Albian) of eastern North America / Maria von Balthazar ; Balthazar, Maria von, Peter R. Crane ; Crane, Peter R., Kaj Raunsgaard Pedersen ;

Pedersen, Kaj Raunsgaard, Else Marie Friis ; Friis, Else Marie ; 49 -- ; 4 Tracing the early evolutionary diversification of the angiosperm flower / James A. Doyle ; Doyle, James A., Peter K. Endress ; Endress, Peter K. ; 88 -- ; 5 Changing views of flower evolution and new questions / Peter K. Endress ; Endress, Peter K. ; 120 -- ; 6 Centrifugal stamens in a modern phylogenetic context: was Corner right? / Paula J. Rudall ; Rudall, Paula J. ; 142 -- ; 7 Evolution of the palm androecium as revealed by character mapping on a supertree / Sophie Nadot ; Nadot, Sophie, Julie Sannier ; Sannier, Julie, Anders Barfod ; Barfod, Anders, William J. Baker ; Baker, William J. ; 156 -- ; 8 Comparative floral structure and development of Nitrariaceae (Sapindales) and systematic implications / Julien B. Bachelier ; Bachelier, Julien B., Peter K. Endress ; Endress, Peter K., Louis P. Ronse De Craene ; Craene, Louis P. Ronse De ; 181 -- ; 9 Multiplications of floral organs in flowers: a case study in Conostegia (Melastomataceae, Myrtales) / Livia Wanntorp ; Wanntorp, Livia, Carmen Puglisi ; Puglisi, Carmen, Darin Penneys ; Penneys, Darin, Louis P. Ronse De Craene ; Craene, Louis P. Ronse De ; 218 -- ; 10 Ontogenetic and phylogenetic diversification in Marantaceae / Alexandra C. Ley ; Ley, Alexandra C., Regine ClaBen-Bockhoff ; ClaBen-Bockhoff, Regine ; 236 -- ; 11 Floral ontogeny of Acacia celastrifolia: an enigmatic mimosoid legume with pronounced polyandry and multiple carpels / Gerhard Prenner ; Prenner, Gerhard ; 256 -- ; 12 Floral development of Napoleonaea (Lecythidaceae), a deceptively complex flower / Louis P. Ronse De Craene ; Craene, Louis P. Ronse De ; 279.

Sommario/riassunto

Genetic and molecular studies have recently come to dominate botanical research at the expense of more traditional morphological approaches. This broad introduction to modern flower systematics demonstrates the great potential that floral morphology has to complement molecular data in phylogenetic and evolutionary investigations. Contributions from experts in floral morphology and evolution take the reader through examples of how flowers have diversified in a large variety of lineages of extant and fossil flowering plants. They explore angiosperm origins and the early evolution of flowers and analyse the significance of morphological characters for phylogenetic reconstructions on the tree of life. The importance of integrating morphology into modern botanical research is highlighted through case studies exploring specific plant groups where morphological investigations are having a major impact. Examples include the clarification of phylogenetic relationships and understanding the significance and evolution of specific floral characters, such as pollination mechanisms and stamen and carpel numbers.
