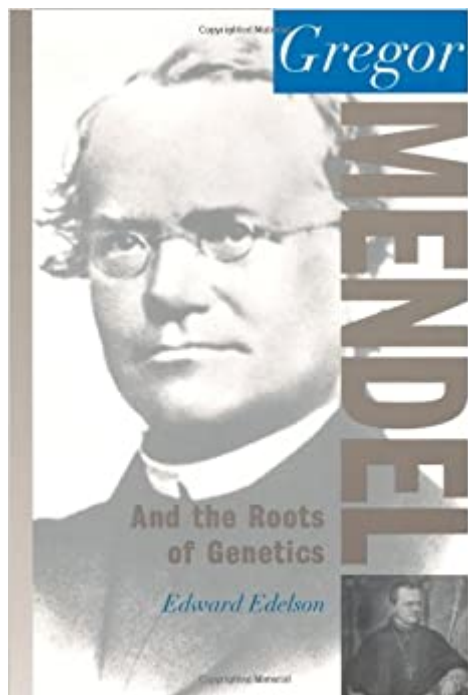




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Gregor Mendel: And The Roots Of Genetics (Oxford Portraits In Science)



Synopsis

When Gregor Mendel passed away in 1884, not a single scholar recognized his epochal contributions to biology. The unassuming abbot of the Augustinian monastery in Brno (in today's Czech Republic) was rediscovered at the turn of the century when scientists were stunned to learn that their findings about inheritance had already been made by an unknown monk three decades earlier. A dedicated researcher who spent every spare hour in the study of the natural sciences, Mendel devised a series of brilliantly simple experiments using a plant easily grown on the monastery's grounds--the garden pea. In the course of just a few years he made the famous discoveries that later became the centerpiece of the science of heredity. In an entertaining and thoroughly informed narrative, Edward Edelson traces Mendel's life from his humble origins to his posthumous fame, giving us both a brief introduction to the fascinating science of genetics and an inspired account of what a modest man can accomplish with dedication and ingenuity. Oxford Portraits in Science is an ongoing series of scientific biographies for young adults. Written by top scholars and writers, each biography examines the personality of its subject as well as the thought process leading to his or her discoveries. These illustrated biographies combine accessible technical information with compelling personal stories to portray the scientists whose work has shaped our understanding of the natural world.

Book Information

Series: Oxford Portraits in Science

Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press (October 11, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195150201

ISBN-13: 978-0195150209

Product Dimensions: 8.9 x 0.3 x 6.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.5 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,495,028 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #98 in [Books > Teens > Biographies > Science & Technology](#) #246 in [Books > Teens > Education & Reference > Science & Technology > Biology](#) #2603 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Scientists](#)

Customer Reviews

Grade 7-10-Before Mendel's experiments with plants, there was only folk wisdom and the general acceptance that offspring-plant, animal, and human-resemble their parents. Even at the time of his death in 1884, Mendel's work was not widely known in the scientific community. This biography provides details of the scientist's life and his experiments as well as the political and social context of his times. Sidebars in some of the chapters are listed in the table of contents, making it easy to locate the discussion of such related topics as "Heredity before Mendel," "Mendel and Darwin," "Did Mendel Cheat?" and "The Human Genome Project." A two-page chronology tracks important events in his life and the vital contributions he made to the study of genetics. Black-and-white photographs, reproductions of artwork, and pages from the scientist's notebooks and manuscripts accompany the text. Frances E. Millhouser, Chantilly Regional Library, VA Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"This biography provides details of the scientist's life and his experiments as well as the political and social context of his times."--School Library Journal

If you were to ask young science students who Gregor Mendel was, they would probably respond with "that pea guy." Ask any biologist, on the other hand, and the response would probably be something to the effect of "the originator of the science of heredity." But did you know that Mendel became a monk to be "freed from the bitter struggle for existence," or that he never passed his required teaching exams because of repeated nervous breakdowns? This book manages to recast the image of Mendel from a one-dimensional caricature into a complex human being, while providing an extraordinary introduction to the science of heredity and genetics. Everything about Mendel's history is presented without any apparent bias, including such controversial topics as the anti-Mendelian communist theories of Lysenko and later accusations about "fudged" data. Without question, you will be astounded by how much this single man changed the way we look at ourselves. What makes this book particularly valuable is that it is written at a reading level appropriate for middle-school students and curious adults alike. No school library should be without it, for it is filled with interesting details on his life as a man, monk, and scientist. From reading this book you'll learn that, during his lifetime, Mendel was better known for his studies in meteorology than biology. At the same time, you'll realize that Mendel, like Darwin, transformed modern biology forever. I have yet to read a better entry-level biography of this intriguing and complex figure.

My review is really a two fold review. First, I wish to compliment the publishers of the series of books

entitled, Oxford's Portraits in Science. This series brings to life some of the world's greatest scientists on a level easily understood for the everyday reader. One book in this series I am particularly impressed with is, Gregor Mendel: And the Roots of Genetics. For the past few years I have been publishing a series of science books in comic book form, The Adventures of Mr. Tompkins. When I was researching one of my Tompkins episodes, Mr. Tompkins meets Mendel, I discovered this series of books and I relied heavily on one of the books in the Oxford Book series, the Mendel Book. It was an invaluable resource.

Book is in decent shape, shipping was quick, good price.

Cool intro to one of our great scientists. What a genius Mendel was. Sure we always hear about Isaac Newton, Thomas Edison etc, but Mendel seems to be all but ignored. This book gives a nice overview of his life and work without being full of technical jargon. It's cheap too.

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