

Book Review

Bioactive Carbohydrates: in Chemistry, Biochemistry & Biology. By J. F. Kennedy and C. A. White. Ellis Horwood Ltd (John Wiley & Sons Ltd), Chichester. 1983. 331 pp. ISBN 0-85312-201-6. Price: £32.50 (Paper: £12.50).

Dr John Kennedy and Dr Charles White have filled a long felt need among both teachers and students at undergraduate level. Even post-graduates moving into the area of applied carbohydrate research have hitherto found no convenient compendium of chemical and biochemical knowledge from a functional viewpoint.

After dealing with problems of classification, structure and conformation of monosaccharides, oligomers and polymers, the authors give a succinct outline of their chemistry, analysis and synthesis. Whatever one's ultimate interests, these first 115 pp. provide a sound foundation for subsequent developments and should be required reading and the basic knowledge of any carbohydrate scientist. Thereafter, other themes are touched upon which may be of more or less interest. They include monosaccharides and their derivatives, a brief excursion into the oligosaccharides, a useful chapter on polysaccharides which is comprehensive in coverage if not intensive in depth. Then, successively, glycoproteins and proteoglycans, glycolipids, nucleic acids and antibiotics are reviewed, with a penultimate chapter on synthetic derivatives. The final chapter on technological aspects and applications is perhaps the least satisfactory, but some germinal references are given for those who are keen to pursue their investigations further.

The book is well produced, attractively bound and, overall, the authors are to be congratulated on producing such a useful text.

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