

Book Reviews

Polysaccharides: Syntheses, Modifications and Structure/Property Relations. By M. Yalpani, Elsevier Science Publishers BV, Amsterdam, 1988. xxii + 499 pp. ISBN 0 444 42890 9. Price £100.00, US\$171.00.

Carbohydrate polymers have been known as an important class of compounds for over a century. However, investigations into their structures and use had been considerably neglected for a long time due to the greater interest in simpler polymers such as polyolefins. The advances made in molecular biology over the last 30 years and its literally explosive development during the last 10 years, have led to the rediscovery of carbohydrate polymers.

The understanding of polysaccharides has been increased thanks to the vast improvements in analytical methods generally, and chromatographic, NMR and X-ray diffraction techniques in particular. The use of polysaccharides in the food and pharmaceutical industries has also increased dramatically, thus stimulating research into synthesis and new applications of carbohydrate polymers.

This book by M. Yalpani covers structures and properties of polysaccharides, methods for isolation and purification, analytical techniques, synthesis of new carbohydrate polymers, chemical and enzymatic modifications, and much more. In addition to providing the reader with a wealth of information which is supported by numerous up-to-date references, it contains a vast number of tables and figures.

Yalpani has succeeded in writing a book which must be considered the most comprehensive and up-to-date summary of the work done on polysaccharides, and not only does it give answers, but it will also wet the appetite of any reader to investigate these compounds further. It should not be missing in any laboratory involved in research or analysis of polysaccharides.

K. Jumel
John F. Kennedy