

This book is of a much higher standard all round than previous volumes in the series. However, I still feel it is very over-priced and that will be a major factor preventing it from reaching as wide an audience as it possibly deserves.

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Biotechnologies: Challenges and Promises. Sextant 2. By Albert Sasson. UNESCO. 1985.

Biotechnologies: Challenges and Promises is the second volume in a new series published by UNESCO. The aim of the series, explained in the cover, is to guide the unknowing through 'an ocean of sometimes complicated and often confusing information'. To emphasise this noble objective the series has been given the pretentious title of Sextant (after the navigation aid). Happily, the book rises above this and I found it interesting and informative.

This book covers an enormous range from genetic recombination to energy from biomass. Each chapter briefly outlines the development and techniques associated with a particular area of biotechnology before going on to consider specific commercial applications. There are also general chapters discussing specific problems and identifying new directions for the subject.

I found the chapter entitled 'Development of Bio-industry' particularly interesting, especially the subsection dealing with 'patents and the exploitation of inventions'. The author discusses the problems associated with patenting living organisms with considerable common sense.

This book is not a standard textbook but rather an introduction to, and an analysis of, biotechnology. As such it should be of especial interest to those who continually ask that most difficult question, 'What is biotechnology?'

The book is a paperback with a garish cover. However, the typography is good and the only real criticism I feel I can level against it is that it lacks an index. *Biotechnologies* should find a place in the collection of any institute which is concerned with the commercial utilization of living organisms. I can recommend it as an interesting and stimulating volume.

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