

Book Reviews

The Encyclopaedia of Food Science, Food Technology and Nutrition. Edited by R. Macrae, R. K. Robinson & M. J. Sadler. Academic Press Limited, London, 1993. ISBN 0-12-226850-4. Price £1100.

This encyclopaedia covers the very broad range of disciplines and topics required in the study of food, from its production to the role and metabolism of nutrients. The range of topics is thorough and comprehensive, including individual foodstuffs, handling, composition, processing, chemistry, analytical techniques, microbiology and nutrition.

The book comprises eight volumes, seven containing subject matter and the eighth comprising the complete contents list and index. The compilation must have been a mammoth task and the editors, advisers and contributors are to be congratulated and complimented on the excellent result. Although the editors acknowledge that it was not possible to cover every aspect of the subject in minute detail, the range of topics is very extensive, and a valuable source of information for students and practitioners in the field. The entries are well presented and where appropriate including tables (providing much data), useful diagrams and formulae. Each entry has a valuable bibliography for those seeking further in-depth information.

The use and structure of the encyclopaedia is clearly explained. I found it very easy to use, with a good index and extremely well cross-referenced, as is vital in a work of this complexity. It includes useful dummy references, which direct the reader to the appropriate entry (e.g. Vitamin C to Ascorbic acid, Oranges to Citrus Fruits) and this greatly facilitates its use.

In my opinion this is an excellent reference work, comprehensive and comprehensible, and although rather expensive, it provides good value for money. It will become a popular and well-used reference work in libraries, and be of great use to lecturers and students of food in general. However, it also provides readers who have a much wider range of interests with a valuable source of information. A work to be recommended.

K. D. A. Taylor

Ullman's Encyclopaedia of Industrial Chemistry. Vol. A22–A24. Edited by B. Elvers, S. Hawkins, W. Russey & G. Schulz. VCH, Weinheim, Germany, 1993.

One of life's pleasures is thumbing through the pages of an encyclopaedia, whether it be the *Encyclopaedia*

Britannica, and ABC of gardening, or this all-encompassing encyclopedia of industrial chemistry. As with all previous volumes these are packed with facts, structures and pictures of industrial processes. For both the industrialist and the non-industrialist there is hardly a page that will fail to fascinate, and for those who seek physical constants of key elements or the intricacies of design of particular processes, these volumes will be essential browsing.

Volume A22 commences with polyvinyl compounds and ends with reduction. Early highlights include excellent chapters on potassium and its compounds, with numerous flow charts of industrial processes; around 100 pages on propane and its derivatives, with the usual mixture of physical and chemical properties, production, usage and even toxicology; and a very useful summary on the prostanoids. This chapter includes a good list of the prostanoid-like drugs and a brief summary of the main synthetic approaches. The longish gestation period of these volumes is evident from the rather poor coverage of other eicosanoids, and it is not obvious if they are covered elsewhere. This volume also includes other pharmacologically important compounds including drugs used in psychiatry (psychopharmacological agents) and the beta-blockers. Both of these chapters contain what appears to be an exhaustive list of drugs, including trade names and some physical data. There is a super chapter by the Reverend Lancaster on pyrotechnics—an inspired choice of author; and this follows a series of chapters on various heterocyclic compounds: pyridines, pyrazolones, pyrimidines, pyrroles, pyrrolidines and quinolines. In a volume that spans POLY to RED there are of course lengthy chapters on industrially important protein products, radiation chemistry, a superbly informative chapter on radionucleotides (90 pages), and a very useful survey on radio-opaque materials. The final chapter on reduction provides an excellent introduction to the various methods of reducing organic functional groups. The coverage is more than adequate though there is no mention of stereoselective reduction.

Volume A23 proceeds from refractory ceramics to silicon carbide, and most of the volume is taken up with coverage of various natural resource materials. These include a fascinating chapter on natural resins (all you ever wanted to know about amber, elemi, frankincense and myrrh); 250 pages on rubber (both natural and synthetic); 180 pages on silica, silicates, silicon and silicon carbide; and a less weighty chapter on resources of oil and natural gas. This chapter describes all aspects from methods of exploration through to the applied