



## Book Reviews

**Who's Who in Food Chemistry—Europe.** Edited by R. Battaglia, W. Pfannhauser & M. Murkovic. Springer Verlag, 1996. ISBN 3-54060-239-9. 241 pp. Price: DM 98.00.

If you are looking for a suitable referee for a scientific paper on food chemistry, this important little book is an answer to prayer! It was evidently born at the EURO FOOD CHEM VIII Conference held in Vienna, 18–20 September, 1995 and was compiled following a questionnaire. There is an alphabetical index of names, followed by a within-country alphabetical listing from which there are many notable absences. Let us hope that, in the next edition, the gaps will be filled. Food chemists really should ensure that they are included! Each entry has his own specialities listed and the whole book clarifies the location of national and European expertise and effort. Congratulations to the editors for an important first step!

**Gordon Birch**

**Food—The Chemistry of its Components.** 3rd Edn, by T. P. Coultate. RSC, 1996. ISBN 0-85404-513-9. XII + 360 pp. Price: £14.50.

More excellent even than the first two editions, there can hardly be better value for money than this text. Dr Coultate covers the chemistry and behaviour of food components including taste, flavour, colour, nutrition

and processing, and presents the material in a way that is lively and suitable for students. The sweetness section is done well, though one or two of the AH,B assignments (e.g. sucrose, fructose) are questionable; the sourness description was also good, though the generalisation that undissociated acid matters more than hydronium ion concentration seems unlikely. I was also troubled by the assertion that vinegar contains 10–15% ethanoic acid.

Sections of the book devoted to proteins, lipids and carbohydrates (a pity about the oxygen atom missing at C-2 of the structure for glucose on p. 18) are very well presented, as also colours, flavours, preservatives, minerals, nutrients and undesirables. The most important food component of all is water and Dr Coultate devotes much time to its structure and hydration interactions with other components. Probably this aspect of food science will become of paramount importance within the next two decades for both preservation control and elucidation of sensory mechanisms such as sweetness. I would therefore take slight issue with Dr Coultate's statement that "... to consider water's interactions with foods as a whole we are forced to leave molecular niceties behind..." (p. 330). However, this minor reservation must not detract from the excellence of this third edition of *Food—The Chemistry of its Components*, which I shall continue to recommend heartily to my students.

**Gordon Birch**