

Strategies, fails to identify unique bacterial targets that have recently emerged, such as virulence genes and their protein products, or the vast array of new chemical structures for antibacterial testing available through combinatorial synthesis.

In spite of these shortcomings, this volume can serve as a concise, inexpensive introduction to antibacterial agents. Although no references are cited, there is a section which lists current sources for further reading for each of the six chapters.

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**Ethnobotany: Principles and Applications.** By C. M. Cotton. John Wiley and Sons, Ltd., Baffins Lane, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1UD, England. 1996. ix + 424 pp. 15 × 23.5 cm. ISBN 0-471-95537-X. \$49.95 (pbk).

Ethnobotany, the study of the uses of plants by aboriginal people, is undergoing a resurgence in popular and professional interest. Numerous edited books have reported recently on research activities in all corners of the globe. Adventurous accounts by contemporary ethnobotanists working in the field are as fashionable today as were accounts by the great naturalists in the late 19th century.

A comprehensive overview, more introductory than detailed in scope and content, this textbook is another cultural marker in the ethnobotanical revival. After defining ethnobotany, as part of a larger enterprise he labels ethnoscience, the author describes basic botanical principles and methods in the next three chapters. Three more chapters discuss traditional botanical knowledge and subsistence on both wild and domesticated plants, and the role of plants as materials in the production of traditional goods.

The book then shifts to phytochemistry, for only one chapter, before moving on to a discussion of anthropological work in ethnobotany. Folk taxonomy, the nature and meaning of individual plants, and culturally-derived patterns of use are outlined with many interesting examples from very different cultural groups. After chapters on palaeoethnobotany, and applied ethnobotany in commercialization and conservation, the author closes with a plea for sustainable development of our limited plant resources.

With a major emphasis on botany and some consideration of the cultural dimension, there is brief discussion about the role of chemistry in ethnobotany. Three primary applications of botanical knowledge are in agriculture (food), arts and crafts or production of materials and goods, and health (drugs). Pharmaceuticals are mentioned and discussed in greater detail than traditional herbal medicines.

For readers who are not very familiar with ethnobotany, and for those researchers who are involved in studying medicinal plants, this book provides a very good introduction. Many facets are presented and

discussed, though there still might be confusion regarding the differences between ethnobotany and economic botany, phytochemistry and pharmacognosy, and the interrelationships between these disciplines and the use of herbal remedies by members of certain cultural groups, including our own in the United States.

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**Handbook of Essential Fatty Acid Biology. Biochemistry, Physiology, and Behavioral Neurobiology.** Edited by Shlomo Yehuda and David I. Mostofsky. Humana Press, Totowa, NJ. 1997. x + 470 pp. 15.5 × 23.5 cm. ISBN 0-89603-365-1. \$145.00.

Advances in the understanding of the function and metabolism of fatty acids has paralleled recent significant strides in the definition of their chemistry and biochemistry. The role of fatty acids, and lipids in general, in health and disease, e.g. blood pressure and multiple sclerosis, is being increasingly appreciated. Nonetheless, fatty acid research has been relatively limited compared to other areas such as peptides and proteins. The effects of fatty acids on cognitive and behavioral functions, with a few exceptions, have received scant attention.

Thus, the objective of this book is to examine some of the important scientific aspects of fatty acids, from their biochemistry to their physiological consequences in health and disease with particular attention to their cognitive and behavioral roles. Toward this goal, the biochemistry and biology of fatty acids are reviewed in three parts: (I) biochemical properties, (II) physiology and health, and (III) learning, cognition, and complex behavior. Part I is comprised of six chapters that address permeability of the blood-brain barrier to circulating free fatty acids, fatty acid metabolism in the brain, the status of these lipids in alcoholism, biological properties of oleic acid, *n*-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids and cytokine synthesis, and fatty acid regulation of endocrine activity. The seven chapters in part II address omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids, alpha-linolenic and docosahexaenoic acids in infants, neural function following *n*-3 fatty acid depletion, polyunsaturated fats and learning, fatty acids, phospholipids, and schizophrenia, and the seizing brain. The last part consists of five chapters that consider essential fatty acids and behavior, oral and postingestive controls of fat intake, the physiological role of fatty acids in infancy, omega-3 fatty acid deficiency and behavior, and effects of essential fatty acid preparation (SR-3) on brain lipids, biochemistry, and behavioral and cognitive functions. Each chapter includes a comprehensive and timely list of references. The book includes a list of contributors and concludes with an adequate subject index.

In summary, this is a well-written summary of selected areas of specialized research in the field of fatty