

BOOK REVIEWS

Flavonoids and Bioflavonoids, 1981, Edited by L. FARKAS, M. GABOR, F. KALLAY and H. WAGNER. Elsevier Science Publishing Company Inc., 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. 1982. xix+534 pp. 17 x 25 cm. \$104.75.

This volume presents the proceedings of the International Bioflavonoid Symposium (6th Hungarian Bioflavonoid Symposium) which was held in Munich in September 1981, the first occasion on which this symposium has been held outside Hungary. Fifty invited lectures were delivered at this conference and all are presented in this volume, which in effect comprises a series of specialized, largely unrelated papers on the general theme of flavonoids. The timing of the publication of this volume is unfortunate in that it coincides with the appearance of the update of "The Flavonoids", a volume which has become widely recognized as "the bible" for flavonoid information. This update, namely "The Flavonoids - Advances in Research" presents a comprehensive series of review articles in all major sections of flavonoid chemistry by leading world-wide experts. As such, and at a comparable price, it represents very much better value for money and is potentially a much more valuable reference book. However, the present volume does offer additional and at times more specialized information in many flavonoid fields. For example approximately one-third of the papers describe in detail, subjects such as chemical manipulations and specific syntheses of flavonoids, flavonoid glycosides and a variety of related non-flavonoids. Of particular interest to natural products chemists are the reports of syntheses of acylated flavonoid glycosides and flavonol triosides by H. Wagner and his coworkers. New flavonoids from new plant sources and chemotaxonomic studies are detailed, as also are thought provoking articles on the significance of flavonoid data in evolutionary studies in the Embryobionta (O.R. Gottlieb *et al.*) and in higher plants (J.B. Harborne). The paper on ¹³C-nmr spectroscopy of glycosides by V.N. Chari covers much the same material as is presented in "The Flavonoids" update as also do some of the papers on the general subject of mammalian metabolism of flavonoids. In the proceedings of previous Hungarian Bioflavonoid Symposia I have always found the articles on pharmacological applications to be of interest, as it seems that the Hungarian Symposium is the main forum for presentation of this work. I was not disappointed with these proceedings in this respect either. Numerous papers are presented in this field, the most comprehensive being a review article on the pharmacology of benzopyrone derivatives by M. Gabor.

Space limitations prevent a more detailed discussion of the contents of this volume. Suffice it to say that in general the volume is well written and most importantly, well indexed, a feature which enhances its value as a reference work. It is printed in camera-copy form and as such is relatively free of errors. As a source of general information of flavonoids it is limited by its very nature and thus does not compare favorably with "The Flavonoids" update. However it does offer more detailed information in certain fields e.g. synthesis and pharmacological activity. In my opinion the book is over-priced for what it offers, and while not wishing to discourage potential buyers who seek information about specialist topics covered at this conference, I feel I can only recommend it as interesting, but not necessary, reading for the majority of researchers in the flavonoid field.

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New Plant Sources for Drugs and Foods from the New York Botanical Garden Herbarium, S. VON REIS and F. J. LIPP, JR., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 02138. 1982. 363 pp. 16 x 24 cm. \$25.00.

This reference work is intended to provide a listing of potential plant sources for new drugs and foods. It is a companion volume to the 1973 publication entitled *Drugs and Foods from Little-Known Plants: Notes in Harvard University Herbaria* by Siri von Reis Altschul; it follows the criteria and format of the earlier publication with few minor exceptions. Entries are arranged taxonomically by plant family, but cross indexing by genera and recorded use permits ready access to the information by persons without taxonomic training.

The book is a compilation of field notes from herbarium sheets in the extensive collection of the New York Botanical Garden. The publication is especially valuable because it makes information available to many scientists who would not have the opportunity, motivation or stamina to examine the herbarium material. The successful user of the compilation must recognize, however, the limitations inherent in its strength. The collecting notes record uses or alleged properties; they do not represent scientific verification of utility.

Flora of the United States and tropical America are well represented in the New York Botanical Garden Herbarium, and the correlation of notes on usage with herbarium material permits eventual adjustment for the inevitable errors in the provisional taxonomic designations of some accessions. The book enhances the availability and utility of knowledge of plants represented in the Herbarium. However, the