

Book Reviews

Studies in Natural Products Chemistry, Vol. 20: Structure and Chemistry (Part F). Edited by Atta-ur-Rahman (University of Karachi, Pakistan). Elsevier Science, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. 1999. xiii + 1350 pp. 16.5 × 24 cm. \$773.00. ISBN 0-444-50105-3.

Professor Atta-ur-Rahman has achieved a well-deserved reputation as an entrepreneur of research reviews having produced a very significant bookshelf full in this medium. This book is the 20th in the Studies in Natural Products Chemistry series. Previous volumes in this series have dealt primarily with the structure and synthesis of various interesting classes of natural products. Starting with the present volume, there is a shift in emphasis in favor of bioactive natural products. This enhances the interest of the series for medicinal chemists while sacrificing some of its appeal for organic and a subset of natural product chemists. This volume contains a 330-page cumulative index subdivided into three areas: general subjects, organic syntheses, and pharmacological activity. The indices make up essentially 25% of the book and will be most useful to those readers having access to the whole series. The rest of the book consists of 17 chapters ranging in size from 15 to 73 pages with the majority running 35–70 pages in length. The chapters are reasonably current with 10 citations being made to papers published in 1997 and some references ranging back to very early days in the last century. The quality of the printing, paper, and binding is excellent, suggesting the durability of this reference work. As is common to the series, there is no central theme, and only the rare scientist will read all of the chapters. The

topics have been submitted by individuals active in studying the subject matter covered and tend to emphasize the work of the group itself with less coverage given to the work of others. A very broad range of topics of contemporary interest is covered with selections describing products associated with a particular genus (*Taxus*, *Narcissus*, *Salvia*), compound type surveys (terpenes, withanolides, phenylpropanoids), compound reviews (crinitol, acromycin, microcystin, and nodularins), synthetic methods (monoterpenes, oxidative phenolic coupling total synthesis of naphthylisoquinoline alkaloids, and carotenoids), screening methods (DNA damaging natural products, *in vitro* disease models), structure determination (phenylpropanoid wood extractives), general types of agents (natural colorants), and chiral synthons generated by use of new reductive enzymes. Few will care to read all of these offerings, but virtually everyone can profit from reading some. The very high cost will almost certainly restrict its ownership to libraries. On balance, therefore, this volume maintains the high standard of the previous offerings in the series and represents an important archival resource.

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