

NEW JOURNAL REVIEW

Biochemical Systematics: edited by E. SCHOFFENIELS and T. SWAIN. Volume 1, Number 1, January 1973. Pergamon Press, Oxford. £12 (\$30.00) per volume.

Biochemical Systematics can be regarded as hiving off from *Phytochemistry* those papers making a substantial contribution to systematic botany, and attracting similar contributions from the animal and microbiological side. The opportunity to bring together material from these various sources is to be welcomed. There is much activity at the present time in evaluating the significance of chemical constituents as taxonomic characters. This has given rise to some apprehension about the intention of 'chemical taxonomy', so that biochemical systematics is probably a less objectional description of the somewhat broader area now covered. Here not only are the chemical products of the organism used as characters; the biochemical machinery used in their production may also be considered as a character in classification. From here the further logical step is to look for links between such biochemical mechanisms and specific morphological features which differentiate one organism from another. This must be the ultimate objective of biochemical (or even more truly speaking physiological) systematics. It is to be hoped that the contributors to the Journal will do their utmost to help in achieving this objective by pointing out, wherever possible, the functional as well as the taxonomic significance of their observations, and that the editors will encourage them so to do. It is nice to see that their views are invited as well as their data.

All the twelve papers in this first number fulfil the intention of the Journal, but plant topics predominate. No doubt this unbalance will be remedied when the opportunities provided by the Journal as a vehicle for biochemical systematic studies become more widely known.

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