

BOOK REVIEWS

Physiologie Végétale: Nutrition et Metabolisme: by PAUL MAZLIAK. Hermann et Cie., Paris. 360 pp, 86 F. (in French).

Introductory text books on plant physiology abound, but good ones which acquaint students with the fundamentals of the subject from a biochemical viewpoint in a readily understandable way are rare. This is such a one. The reader is taken step by step through the basic concepts of enzymology to a complete treatment of photosynthesis, nitrogen fixation and the primary metabolic pathways of higher plants. As the sub-title indicates, this is the meat of the book, the chapters dealing with water relations, mineral nutrition, and growth and development being more elementary, and no attempt has been made to cover either plant hormones or the effect of

light. My only criticism is that the bibliography, although adequate, does not draw attention to the growing number of useful, short, relatively cheap texts which have been published in recent years especially designed to cover those aspects of plant physiology which are missing here, and some of the titles quoted have been superseded by later editions. Nevertheless, this volume is bound to have an important impact on the first-year teaching of plant physiology. There are copious, well produced two-colour illustrations and tables which make understanding the principles involved an easy task, and one hopes that it may be soon available in other languages.

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Specialist Periodical Reports: Terpenoids and Steroids. Volume 4. Senior Reporter: K. H. OVERTON. The Chemical Society, London, 1974. 608 pp, £18.50.

This volume maintains the high standard of excellence established by previous numbers in the series, and Dr. Overton must be rightly pleased that the hard work which he and all his colleagues have put into the production of these reports has resulted in a collection which is not only immediately useful but is bound to have lasting value. My only quibble, and this applies to each series of Specialist Reports, is the absence of a subject

index. Much valuable information that is contained in each Report is likely to be overlooked because of this lack. Certainly I would be prepared to pay extra for such an index, and I would have thought the same was true for most others. The production is, as usual, good throughout and the inclusion of a list of selected reviews on terpenoid chemistry is welcome. Let no one be put off by the price; employment of a library research assistant would cost far, far more to produce the data in even one section. This is a must for libraries and all those aficionados of the terpenes.

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