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BOOK REVIEW

Natural Plant Growth Inhibitors and Phytohormones: by V. I. KEFELI. Dr. W. Junk B.V., The Hague/Boston, 1978. 276 pp. D fl. 90, US $44.

As is clearly stated in the foreword (by M. Kh. Chailakhyan) and in the introduction, this book is mainly based on research carried out at the Timaryazev Institute of Plant Physiology of the USSR Academy of Sciences. This is both the advantage and disadvantage of the book. It gives a good summary of numerous publications of Kefeli and other Soviet investigators and access to much information which is not easily available in the Western countries. There is also an ambitious attempt to give a unified view of the complicated interaction between various growth regulators with a special stress on phenolics (the main sphere of interest of the author). However, Dr. Kefeli has scarcely succeeded in attaining the proper balance in the treatment of various substances and the book is not suitable as an introduction to the topic. Some substances are certainly overvalued (e.g. the chalcone isosalipurposide), whereas others ought to have received more space (ethene is only mentioned in passing). There is also a general tendency to overemphasize Soviet research and to neglect earlier work in other countries. Too many details are given about minor technical details (e.g. variations in chromatographic technique and elementary advice about how to measure the length of coleoptile segments, etc.). An extensive reference list (over 820 references, 164 of which are from Soviet literature) presents a valuable gateway to papers in the Russian language which I think is the main advantage of the book. It is a pity, however, that references are given only to *Fiziologiya Rastenii* and not to the English translation, *Soviet Plant Physiology*.

Editorial aspects are quite unsatisfactory. Printer's errors are found on almost every page; the spelling of some names varies on different pages, several figures are very poor (e.g. Figs. 28, 30, 43), many symbols or terms are unfortunate (as IAA for anthranilic acid on p. 62 and female cells on p. 186 and female plants on p. 138 where female seems to be used instead of vegetative). It is not stated how the English version of the book has been produced—by the author himself or through a translation from the Russian. Anyhow, the style is not sufficiently fluent. It is surprising that the publishers have printed the book without revising the text in any way. The price is rather high, which means that the book will be mainly found in libraries. Its value is as a reference book, not as a text-book for students.

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