

BOOK REVIEW

Regulation of Secondary Product and Plant Hormone Metabolism: edited by M. LUCKNER and K. SCHREIBER. Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1979. 247 pp. £22.

This volume records the 22 papers presented at one of the six Symposia which made up the Twelfth Meeting of FEBS held in Dresden in 1978. Although the papers are reproduced by camera copy, the book is attractively produced and has a hard wearing outer jacket. It is difficult, however, to imagine that library copies will be that heavily used, since it is not entirely clear to whom these papers are addressed. None of the authors has had enough space to present a coherent review of his subject, so that the articles are essentially extended research papers, the details of which have already appeared in the primary literature. Clearly, the bringing together of research papers bearing on the same overall topic often produces a useful publication, but here it is a problem finding the common theme which unites these different contributions. Papers discussing microbial systems and higher plant or-

ganelles follow each other indiscriminately. Several articles cover shikimate metabolites but these are not grouped together in any way and in any case together they are not really representative of present progress in this field.

The crux of the matter is that our present knowledge of regulatory processes in secondary metabolism is still rather vague and fragmentary, so that it is no reflection on the hard-working organisers of this symposium that their volume fails to make a decisive impact on the reader. Undoubtedly, the seeds of future experiments lie within these papers and anyone wishing to enter this difficult field and develop the subject further will do well to consult this book. Since a wide range of diverse topics are covered here by a number of distinguished plant scientists, the general reader will also find something of value and stimulation by browsing through these papers.

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