

BOOK NOTICES

Photosynthesis Bibliography, Volume 7, 1976: edited by Z. SESTAK and J. CATSKY. Dr. W. Junk BV, The Hague, Netherlands, 1980. 302 pp. \$66.00.

This is a straightforward listing of the 1976 primary literature on photosynthesis, with over 3300 references, arranged alphabetically according to the first author. Full titles are given for each paper and where appropriate these have been translated into English. The value of this compilation is enhanced by the accompanying author, subject and plant indexes. From the latter, it is clear that spinach is still the most favoured organism for photosynthetic studies, but wheat, maize, barley and *Chlorella* are not far behind. Clearly, this volume will be a boon to all workers in the photosynthesis field, although the significant gap between collation and publication is regrettable.

Organic Chemistry of Secondary Plant Metabolism: by T. A. GEISSMAN and D. H. G. CROUT. Freeman, Cooper, San Francisco, 1969—now available from Macmillan in paperback edition, 1981. 592 pp. £12.95.

It is a pleasure to welcome this paperback edition of what is widely regarded as one of the classic texts of phytochemistry. It is a brilliant and fascinating account of the biogenetic origin of all major classes of secondary plant products. In spite of the advances in biosynthesis since its publication, it is nevertheless still highly relevant reading to anyone interested in secondary plant products. There are so many hints as to likely biosynthetic pathways which have yet to be followed up experimentally. This important book deserves to be snapped up by those who missed it first time round, while it is still available at such a reasonable price.

Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Abstracts: edited by S. NAGARAJAN. Publications and Information Directorate, India. £7.00 annually.

Readers may like to know of the existence of this bimonthly abstracting service, which has been avail-

able since 1976. In a sense, it has taken over from the now defunct *Pharmacognosy Titles* and it abstracts some 109 journals, together with symposia proceedings, for papers dealing with medicinal plants. One, however, missed from this publication, the more esoteric aspects of *Pharmacognosy Titles*, notably the usually delightfully doubtful "Title of the Month" that used to appear as a frontispiece. In other respects, this abstract service is a useful entry into the literature of pharmacognosy with some emphasis on Indian medicinal plants. In the issue sent for review, for example, there is a special bibliography on emetic swallow-wort, *Tylophora indica*, a branching climber of Assam and Orissa, which contains alkaloids of antitumour activity.

La Conversion Bioenergetique du Rayonnement Solaire et les Biotechnologies: by A. DEMEYER, F. JACOB, M. JAY, G. MENGUY and J. PERRIER. Technique & Documentation, Paris, 1980. 314 pp. 175F.

The conversion of biomass and the replacement of fossil fuels by renewable energy sources derived from the sun have become increasingly fashionable topics in science over the last decade. The present book produced by five scientists from the University of Lyon is the first in the French language to provide an overall perspective of these fields. There are separate chapters covering in turn the nature of solar energy, the trapping of energy in photosynthesis, the production of biomass and then its conversion into usable energy forms by combustion and by fermentation. Practical examples are chosen from the French experience and also from that obtained in other countries such as Brazil and the book concludes with a useful, wide-ranging bibliography. To any newcomer to these subjects, this modest book can be warmly recommended as a concise and well illustrated introductory text.

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