Phytochemistry, 1968, Vol. 7, p. 335. Pergamon Press. Printed in England

BOOK REVIEW

Annual Index of the Reports on Plant Chemistry in 1962: Edited by T. KARIYONE, Hirokawa, Tokyo, 1967. 13 dollars (inc. postage), 199 pp.

FIRST published in 1957, this series is a continuation of Wehmer's *Die Pflanzenstoffe* which ceased publication as long ago as 1935. The index for 1962, the sixth issue, has been long awaited and there have clearly been difficulties which have delayed its production. In the preface to this index, Professor Kariyone states that he plans to bring it up-to-date, with the help of his gallant band of assistant editors, by producing the volumes for 1963 to 1966 by the end of 1968. At the same time, he hopes to publish several volumes to fill the gap between 1935 and 1957. Whether this latter project is worthwhile is debatable, since Walter Karrer's excellent and comprehensive *Dictionary of Natural Organic Constituents* (Birkhauser-Verlag, Basel, 1958) provides most of what a phytochemist wants to know of the literature prior to 1958. The earlier literature is also covered very adequately in R. Hegnauer's *Chemotaxonomie der Pflanzen.* However, there is no doubt at all that the Annual Index, once it is produced regularly for each current year without too great a time lag, will fill a considerable need and provide a valuable entry into the rapidly expanding phytochemical literature.

The index is basically produced by the editors combing the chemical and biochemical journals and "Chemical Abstracts" for every report of new work in plant chemistry. The results together with many formulae are then set out on a taxonomic basis, following Engler's Syllabus. This procedure has its advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that anyone working on the chemistry of a particular family or group can see at a glance new sources of known compounds and the new compounds that have been described during the year. The taxonomist interested in using chemical data in plant classification will also welcome this arrangement. A disadvantage of course is that it requires considerable searching to find, for example, what new isoquinoline alkaloids or what novel carotenoids have been isolated during 1962. There is, however, a compound index and if this were rearranged so that constituents were listed under their particular class, this difficulty would largely be removed.

Inevitably, there are occasional gaps in the coverage and some phytochemical data is only given very brief mention, e.g. when a large number of species are surveyed for a particular compound. Proof reading standards could be improved; for example, on p. 80 under Leguminosae, *Lathylus* appears for *Lathyrus*, patueltin for patuletin, and so on. It is unfortunate, too, that the structural formula for the glycoflavones appears in one place (p. 75) with the old incorrect representation of the C_6-side chain but in another (p. 48) with the right C-glucosyl attachment. These are, however, minor faults in a very worthwhile venture and all plant chemists, chemotaxonomists and systematists will be grateful to the editorial team under Professor Kariyone who have produced this invaluable index. We can only hope that the next issue will not be so long delayed.

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