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Book Review

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UV-B and Biosphere Edited by J. Rozema, W. W. C. Gieskes, S. C. van de Geijn, C. Nolan & H. de Boois, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1997. £127. ISBN 0-7923-4422-7.

This volume is based on a workshop of the same title held in Wageningen, the Netherlands in December 1995 and the papers it contains are reprinted from special issues of Plant Ecology **128** (1997). No indication is given of any updating and this appears to be limited to a handful of references.

Interest in UV-B, and knowledge about UV-related phenomena have both increased rapidly since the time of this meeting, which itself contained a lively enough mixture of topics. These have been divided by the editors into five groups: UV-B and aquatic ecosystems; two sections on UV-B and terrestrial ecosystems; UV-B and physiology of terrestrial plants; and interactions of UV-B with environmental factors.

The emphasis of the papers is mostly on primary productivity and also on structural changes brought about by UV-B, including some excellent contributions. Readers of Phytochemistry will surely find the coverage of UV-B and secondary metabolism inadequate though: not one chapter deals specifically with this important aspect of the subject. There are many passing references to flavonoids and UV-absorbing compounds, indicating that many of the contributors are aware of their importance, but nothing on the compounds, their biosynthesis, regulation or ecology seems short shrift by any reckoning.

I'm left with the feeling that I might usefully consult these proceedings from time to time but would be unlikely to consider spending the quite large sum asked for a volume that has already appeared in print elsewhere.

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