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Book Review

***Plant Lipid Biosynthesis: Fundamentals and Agricultural Applications*; Edited by John L. Harwood, Society for Experimental Biology Seminar Series No. 67, University Press, Cambridge, 1998. 378 pp. ISBN 0-521-62074-0 £65**

As the editor puts it in his introduction, these are exciting times for plant lipid biochemists. For the first time, it is possible to see the very real application in agriculture of knowledge about the biochemistry of plant lipids, and particularly about their biosynthesis. New crops with unusual but useful fatty acids are just around the corner, while engineering frost resistance into crop plants by genetic manipulation has become possible.

The present volume stems from an S E B Meeting held in Kent in April 1997. It contains twelve chapters reviewing recent research progress on three topics: (1)

de novo fatty acid biosynthesis, (2) fatty acid modification and (3) complex lipids, their assembly, genetic manipulation and environmental aspects. In addition, for the benefit of the general reader, there is a splendid opening chapter by Professor Harwood introducing all the background necessary for understanding the basic biochemistry of plant lipids. Also, there is a final chapter by S.W.J. Bright and T.R. Hawkes of Zeneca Agrochemicals outlining enthusiastically the future goals of industry in developing new oil seed crops.

This is a first class addition to the literature of plant biochemistry. It is essential reading for anyone wishing to keep up to date with recent developments in plant lipid research.

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