

Book reviews

Atta-ur-Rahman (Ed.), Studies in natural products chemistry, in: Bioactive Natural Products (Part J), vol. 29, Pub: Elsevier, 2003, ISBN 0-444-51510-0, p. xiii+902, Cost: EUR 410/USD 410/GBP 273.50

Once again Atta-ur-Rahman has produced another excellent volume in the now extremely well established series “Studies in Natural Products Chemistry”. This is the 29th overall volume, and the ninth volume focused on “Bioactive Natural Products”; further groups of volumes are those on “Stereoselective Synthesis”, “Structure Elucidation”, and “Structure and Chemistry”.

Volume 29 contains fifteen chapters, embracing the isolation, synthesis and biological properties of a very diverse group of natural products from a variety of terrestrial, fungal, and marine sources. The topics include the structure–activity relationships of the ecdysteroids (Dinan), cancer chemopreventive and anti-inflammatory terpenoids (Akihisa, Yasukawa and Tokuda), drimane sesquiterpenoid synthesis (Suzuki, Takao, and Tadano), the synthesis of bioactive diterpenes (Banerjee, Ng, and Laya), unexplored microbial resources (Ishibashi), *p*-terphenyls from fungi (Cali, Spatafora, and Tringali), halogen-containing antibiotics from *Streptomyces* (Dezanka and Spidek), natural bridged biaryls (Baudoin and Guéritte), lactam building blocks in alkaloid synthesis (Toyooka and Nemoto), synthesis of carbasugars (Rassu, Auzzas, Pinna, Battistini, and Curti), biosynthesis of anti-carbohydrate antibodies (Pazur), protease inhibitors from plants (Polya), screening of natural products for cyclooxygenase and lipoxygenase activities (Jia), chemistry and biology of lapachol and derivatives (Ravelo, Estévez-Braun, and Pérez-Sacau), and the chemistry and pharmacology of the genus *Dorstenia* (Ngadjui and Abegaz). Refreshingly, these contributions

are truly global in scope, reflecting the efforts of groups in 11 countries.

The well-established quality of the series is certainly maintained in this volume, and, as in previous volumes, there is an excellent fusion of chemistry, structure elucidation, synthesis and biology in the various chapters, clearly aimed at engaging a diverse audience. A very comprehensive subject index (95 pages) concludes the volume. Perhaps the only detraction is that the series now needs a collective index of previous chapter topics in each successive volume.

In summary, this is another superb volume in a highly valuable series on natural products for which Professor Atta-ur-Rahman is once again to be congratulated. Although the volume should be an important and essential asset for those libraries supporting the efforts of natural product research groups, the price is way, way beyond the budget of many libraries these days, and certainly individual scientists will not have the resources to afford such a treatise. Yet it is these researchers and students around the world who most need access to the information. The publisher should very seriously consider making individual chapters from the volumes in this series downloadable for a reasonable price in order to enhance global accessibility to important review volumes such as this.

Geoffrey A. Cordell

*Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacogeny
College of Dentistry
University of Illinois at Chicago
Chicago, IL 60612-7231, USA
E-mail address: cordell@uic.edu*

Available online 24 June 2005

doi:10.1016/j.phytochem.2005.05.016

Zhiqiang An. Handbook of industrial mycology, in: Mycology, vol. 22, Marcel Dekker, New York, 2005, ISBN 0-8247-5655-X, p. 763

I highly recommend this book. The volume is one in an impressive series with the two previous concerning other aspects of fungal biotechnology. Secondary metabolism is emphasised at a time when it is being ignored foolishly

in favour of “molecular biology”. However, in vivo biological efficacy and toxicity profiling are not tackled at all in the book. It is dominated by contributors from the USA, and Europe is represented poorly. There are 8 sections with 26 chapters: “The economic importance of fungi is almost impossible to exaggerate”.

Chapter 1 addresses the history, current situation and future trends in industrial mycology with Demain as