

Edwards, J.H.: *Human Genetics*, Outline Studies in Biology. London: Chapman and Hall 1978. 80 pp., 29 figs., 7 tabs. Soft bound £ 1.75

This eighty page booklet contains 10 chapters which go from classic genetics: (1) 'the units of inheritance', (2) 'the chromosomes', a.s.o. to (10) 'some further topics'. This latter chapter contains 22 items in an complete alphabetical order (e.g. 'a paragraph on dermoid' between one on 'cousin marriage' and one on 'genetic engineering'). The book is evidently written by a physician who invokes medical students to study the heredity of diseases. As a basic introduction to the mechanism of heredity it is inadequate. The overall impression is that there is much enthusiasm but a lack of acuity. Many passages are interesting and even critical but too long to be understandable. The paragraph on recessive disorders (4.2) gives no clue to the interpretation of a pedigree. Unconventional notations (p. 9 on purines and pyrimidines; p. 67 on pedigree notation) will be confusing (even to the author on p. 9). Some statements are misleading, e.g. 'the chromosomes are the genes' (p. 19). Some tables (e.g. 7.1) and figures (e.g. 9.2) are not understandable. Although ch. 8 deals with artificial selection no definition of selection is given in the text nor in the glossary and it is not inserted in the index. Judged from this outline human genetics is a very simple science. S.J. Geerts, Nijmegen

Hiatt, H.H., Watson, J.D., Winsten, J.A. (eds.): *Origins of human cancer*. Vol. 4: Cold Spring Harbor Conferences on Cell Proliferation.

New York: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory 1977. 1960 pp. Hard bound \$ 45,-

The 'Origins of Human Cancer' is based on a Cold Spring Harbor Conference on Cell Proliferation held in September 1976. The program was very full, and more papers (119) were presented than in any meeting ever held at Cold Spring Harbor. Altogether the three volumes have a total of 1889 pages. Book A deals with Incidence of Cancer in Humans (Sections 1-8: Effects of Geography and Genetic Background, Changing Patterns, Effects of Occupation, Industrial and Agricultural Chemicals, Air and Water Pollutants, Effects of Drugs, Effects of Radiation, Effects of Diet). Book B is continuous with Mechanisms of Carcinogenesis (Sections 9-14: Electrophilicity, Modifying Factors, Aryl Hydroxylase Genetics, Damage to DNA and its Repair, DNA Viruses, RNA Viruses). Book C contains papers on Human Risk Assessment (Sections 15-19: Animal Cancer Tests, Short-term Assays - Predictive Value, Possible Dietary Carcinogens, Public Policy Panels, Further Strategies and Standard Setting).

Written by experts (such as Bruce Ames, John Cairns, Joyce McCann, Irving Selikoff, George Todaro), each section reviews current literature and presents new material acquired during experimental and clinical observation.

The books have an excellent author and subject index. At the end of each article the literature is listed. The volumes are well produced and the tables, diagrams and photographs are clear. The price has been kept within reach of most people and the value for the money is excellent.

These three volumes contain our present knowledge of such an important subject as the origins of human cancer. They will unquestionably have a wide circulation among clinical and animal oncologists, molecular biologists, biochemists, geneticists, virologists, immunologists, toxicologists and scientists from industry. No scientific library will be complete until it contains the 'Origins of Human Cancer'. M.Ch. Herrmann, Erfurt

Krüssmann, G.: *Handbuch der Laubgehölze. Bd. III: Gattungen PRU-Z.* 2. Ed.

Berlin-Hamburg: P. Parey 1978 VIII, 496 pp., 844 figs. Hard bound DM 228,-

Volume III is the last of the descriptive works of this handbook; the index-volume should follow in a short time. This third volume includes all the genera from *Prunus* L. - *Rosaceae* to *Ziziphus* Mill. - *Rhamnaceae* according to the alphabetical order of the scientific names of the genera, species and infraspecific taxa.

The enlargement of this part in comparison with the first edition (1962) is very extensive; it comprises 146 pages with 55 new genera. Newcomers are, e.g. *Pseudowintera*, *Psidium*, *Roystonea*, *Sapium*, *Thevetia*, *Trema*, *Wikstroemia*.

Illustrations are very important for a handbook about broad-leaved trees. It is remarkable that the number of figures (339) is increased nearly twofold relative to the first edition. In addition, we find an increased number of tables (152) and 16 colortables for the first time. The illustrations in general, not only the line etchings but also the photographs, are of good quality and closely correspond with the text.

Some views are of a high practical value: cultivars and their relations to relevant species, e.g. in the genera *Prunus*, *Pyracantha*, *Tilia*, *Viburnum*. The user will also find some new keys, e.g. for the forms of *Prunus laurocerasus* and for the species of *Pyracantha*, *Wisteria*. But this very welcome enrichment should in future be better employed for the larger genera. In this manner this excellent work will be further improved.

The outstanding contents of this well known standard work must be emphasized. W. Vent, Berlin

Announcement

The Fourth John Innes Symposium 'The Plant Genome' and The second International Haploid Conference

will take place on 10-14 September, 1979 at John Innes Institute, Norwich, England.

Subjects will include: Chromosome Organisation, Genetic Instabilities, Organelle Genomes, Haploid Production, Achievements Using Haploids.

There will be a workshop on haploidy on 14 September.

The Ninth Bateson Memorial Lecture will be given by Prof. J. Heslop-Harrison, PhD, DSc, FRS, FRSE. Information: Justine Speed, symposium secretary, John Innes Institute, Colney Lane, Norwich NR4 7UH, England.