Book reviews

Thorbecke, G Jeanette; Leslie GA (eds.): Immunoglobulin D: Structure and function. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, vol. 399. New York: The New York Academy of Sciences 1982. 410 pp. Soft bound $ 80,–.

In addition to the ontogeny of IgD, its phylogeny and effects and functions, as well as its gene regulation and structure are discussed in this conference report. Immunoglobulin D was discovered in 1964 by David Rowe while working with John Fahey at the National Institute of Health, Washington D.C. It is normally found only in small amounts in human blood serum, and although not very much is known about its biological functions it is clear that it plays an important role as a receptor immunoglobulin during the differentiation of B-lymphocytes. IgD is now known to be a predominant isotype on the surface of most B-cells. Most of the knowledge available on the organization and structure of immunoglobulin genes has come from the use of recombinant DNA techniques which compare the DNA from cells either committed or noncommitted to Ig expression. The molecular genetics of IgD expression in the mouse DNA has been studied. All C_H genes in DNA are in the germline arrangement and share a single V_H gene. The nucleotide sequence of the complex and the flanking DNA has also been elucidated. At least five forms of delta chain mRNA in normal mouse spleen, mouse B-cell lymphomas and mouse and human myolomas have been found and characterized. IgE and IgD have striking structural and biological similarities.

H. F. Linskens, Nijmegen

Manthey Gerda: Fuchsien. Stuttgart: Ulmer 1983. 189 pp., 89 figs. (in color), 2 tabs. Hard bound DM 68,–.

Every geneticist must remember the old-fashioned group photographs of Gregor Mendel which shows him holding a fuchsia flower in his hand while staring at it with the motionless look of a by-gone era type photo. They showed that the ingenious discoverer of the laws of inheritance had a close relationship with a fuchsia breeder in his home-town, a certain Johan Nepomuk Twrdy of Brno (1806–1883), one of the most important fuchsia breeders of the 19th century. He can be considered the forefather of the book we are introducing to-day. There is a nostalgic wave of rediscovery of grandma's pet plant which was introduced by another clergy man, Père Charles Plumier. From his explorations in San Domingo he brought back a decorative ornamental plant called Fuchsia triphylla flora coccinea, a threeleaved fuchsia with red flowers. Linneaus accepted this name, which honoured another famous botanist, Leonhard Fuchs, professor of medicine at the University of Tubingen. No wonder that German breeders feel a special attachment to this wonderful flowering plant. This fuchsia renaissance in Germany gives birth to a book by an enthusiastic lady: Mrs. Gerda Manthey. As a member of the German Fuchsia Society, she is knowledgeable about the topic she discusses. Experience in the breeding of fuchsia finds its results in this excellent illustrated book of fuchsias. The growing community of fuchsia lovers in Germany will discover a fine presentation of not only all aspects of culture, treatments, pests and diseases, but also of propagation and cutting of decorative forms. The popularity of fuchsia may be due to the fact that this species can be maintained in temperate green houses and the easy handling of pot-plants on expositions. The author gives a detailed history of fuchsia breeding, but also a lot of information on species, varieties and hybrids. A complete list of all known and registred cultivars is given in alphabetical order. This book is also handy because it contains quite a large number of addresses of fuchsia societies all over the world as well as addresses of breeders, of botanical gardens with special fuchsia collections, and of commercial breeders. The book will not only be an enjoyment to the eyes but also will be handy to amateurs and professional breeders.

H. F. Linskens, Nijmegen