

Book Reviews

All unsigned reviews have been made by the Editor.

General Biology

BIOTIC PRINCIPLES, Herbert L. Stahnke, 654 pp., Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., Columbus, Ohio, 1961.

Another completely new elementary college biology text. The organization of the book follows the so called functional approach, but there are variations in the usual sequence of topics in the elementary course. To be sure, evolution occupies the last chapter, and reproduction is a unit near the rear end. But quite strange to this reviewer are some topics' placement. For instance, the principles of immunology are taken up in a remarkably brief treatment of the bacteria. The nitrogen and carbon cycles are taken up in the chapter on elimination of waste.

Although these strange sequences are noticeable, the treatment of topics is usually quite detailed. The exceptions are the lower plants, bacteria, and viruses. However, such topics as the chemical basis of life, cell structure, and reproduction are in great detail. The author's favorite topic of scorpions and venomous bites shows up throughout, including the appendix. The illustrations are well done.

In short, there seems to be an uneven emphasis which does not reflect traditional elementary biology courses or the newer treatments. Genetics and ecology are often not emphasized, but cell structure is. The book reads well although often there is an emphasis on terminology which does not seem warranted. It is an important text to review for possible adoption.

BIOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENCE OF LIFE, Clarence J. Goodnight, Marie L. Goodnight, and Richard R. Armacost, 460 pp., \$6.95, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1962.

A text written for an introductory course in general biology. There are 20 chapters arranged into four major sections. The first section treats human anatomy and physiology; the second, structure and function of higher plants as well as a survey of the plant kingdom; the third, survey of the animal kingdom; and the fourth, genetics, evolution, ecology, and conservation. Each chapter is concluded with a summary and review questions. There are 241 illustrations distributed uniformly among the 20 chapters, as well as a glossary and an index.

The organization of the text is conventional,

but the authors have made a genuine attempt to present the information in such a manner that students with diversified backgrounds and interests should both be interested and challenged. Structural details have been minimized; the relationships of structure and function have been stressed without involving much organic or biochemistry.

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BIOLOGY, Louis A. Leslie, Ed., DDC Learning Aid Series (No. 30), The Dictation Disc Company, 170 Broadway, New York 38, 1961, (Recording—33 $\frac{1}{2}$).

A review of this learning aid for biology is quite an interesting experience. The terms as defined by the narrator, are accurately described, and are facts that are commonly encountered in biology.

The place of utilization of such a recording is questioned by the reviewer. It is felt that the narration was quite fast, leaving the impression that the narrator was working against time in order to get the terms covered.

The most effective area of utilization would be as a review after reading of a specific chapter or unit in the text. Also, if a pupil had been absent during a class discussion, the record could be used by such pupils as an aid in defining certain terminology used in the unit.

Experimentation would have to be carried out to determine the value of such a teaching aid as an introductory lesson, and in general, it was the opinion of the reviewer that a more extensive introduction would be required before the recording could be effectively utilized by the pupil.

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THE GIANT GOLDEN BOOK OF BIOLOGY, Gerald Ames and Rose Wyler, 99 pp., \$3.95, Golden Press, Inc., New York, 1961.

The reviewer would judge that this beautifully illustrated book is aimed for elementary school pupils or even junior high school level. The format is quite attractive although its dimensions will prevent its easy book shelf storage. The artist has done a superlative job with pictures which are largely suggestive rather than strictly anatomically correct.

The foreword is written by Harvard's George Wald who is quite interested in elementary biology teachers. The authors indicate that they carefully read AIBS reports in placing an emphasis on molecular biology,

genetics, and evolution. DNA is carefully described and even embryology is taken up in some detail. Yet the ecological approach is not ignored for there are beautifully written chapters on it. Approximately half the book is on genetics, embryology, and evolution.

A most unusual elementary biology book which reflects current trends in more sophisticated and advanced treatments. Every elementary teacher will want this book.

Botany

PLANTS, VIRUSES, AND INSECTS, Katherine Esau, viii + 110 p., \$3.75, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961.

The title of this book is misleading, since most of the text is devoted to a review of our knowledge of the translocation of organic materials in plants. Viruses and insects rate a chapter each, but they are considered principally in relation to our knowledge of the vascular tissue of plants.

Esau has given us an excellent discussion of the structure and probable function of the components of the phloem. Conduction of organic material is effected in the enucleate sieve elements at rates of 50 to 100 cm/hr or more. She believes that the mechanism is a mass-flow rather than diffusion, and that the movement into and out of the sieve elements is brought about by the activities of nucleate cells associated with them.

This book is recommended to teachers as a means for stimulating student interest in plant structure and physiology.

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PLANT LIFE OF PALESTINE, Michael Zohary, Ed., 262 pp., \$8.00, The Ronald Press Company, New York 10, 1962.

This book presents a geographical and ecological survey of the vegetation of the area comprising Israel, Jordan, and the Gaza Strip. The land is a strange combination of desert, sand dunes, calcareous hills, heavy clay soils, and extensive swamps and marshes, a part of it occupying the deep rift of the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea. The annual rainfall ranges from scarcely an inch to as much as 40 inches, with wide fluctuations from year to year, especially in the desert regions. The area has been the meeting point of three great floras, one from the north, one from the Mediterranean, and one from Africa and Asia to the south and southeast. All these factors of soil, climate, and geographic position have given it a far richer flora than is to be found in most areas of similar size. The more than

2200 species, at least 160 of them endemic, are distributed among 718 genera. Centuries of human occupation have also had profound influences on the flora.

The book utilizes the heavy language of modern ecology, much of which could have been avoided without loss of clarity. It will give much new meaning to the taxonomic data already available for the area. The Bible student will probably find it disappointing. The typography and illustrations are excellent. The price for 226 pages of text and illustrations seems high, but this may be unavoidable in a book which is so highly specialized.

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RADIATION BOTANY, A. H. Sparrow, Ed., 100 pp., \$10.00 yearly, Pergamon Press, London, 1961.

The first issue of this journal "devoted to plant radiobiology and closely related fields" is a collection of excellent papers which, at first glance, seems to justify the addition of another journal to the already burgeoning list. Closer inspection reveals that many of the papers would have been more closely associated with similar research areas if they had been published in journals devoted to cytology, physiology, or morphogenesis. In these papers, radiation enters the picture as a tool for the investigation of some fundamental problem. As a consequence the papers are quite substantial, but the coherence within the journal seems artificial.

Nevertheless the first issue does credit to the publishers, to the editors, and to the authors. Although all the papers in this issue are in English, the journal will be multilingual and each article is provided with summaries in French, English, and German. Typographical errors abound in the German but the French and English summaries, as well as the text, are singularly free of them. There are few reproductions of photographs, but those included are very clear. If the high quality is maintained the new journal should provide a valuable reference for the effects of radiations on plants. It is also possible, with some reservations, to regard as a service the grouping together of investigations in various disciplines which employ radiations as a tool.

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THE LICHEN FLORA OF THE UNITED STATES, Bruce Fink, 426 pp., \$12.50, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1935 (Third printing, 1961).