Book review


A decade ago a treatise entitled 'Signal transduction in plants' would have been a slim volume containing speculative information on the roles of such molecules as cAMP and acetyl choline in plant cell signalling. The volume under review also runs to fewer than 200 pages, but on this occasion it is the consequence of a conscious decision by the editor to focus on specific areas where, over the last few years, our knowledge of the subject has blossomed. With the advent of molecular strategies to dissect signalling pathways in mutants of *Arabidopsis*, and the capacity to study changes in membrane transport using patch clamping techniques, signal transduction has become one of the sexiest topics in plant biology. This has resulted in plant scientists having the confidence to explore new avenues rather than pursuing the well-trodden paths documented to operate in animal systems.

The volume is well produced and contains up-to-date articles that are of a consistently high standard. The format of the contributions is similar, with each chapter having extensive referencing to contemporary literature and a concluding section providing both a brief overview and a hint of where the breakthroughs might come in future years. My only slight criticism is that some of the authors have contributed extensively to the review literature over the last couple of years and, inevitably, they have chosen to present data and viewpoints that have been aired previously. Perhaps on this occasion the editor might have taken the opportunity to seek contributions from those who would have placed a slightly different spin on their particular spheres of study. A question that remains is who will buy this volume? I doubt if it will find its way on to too many individuals’ shelves, but it is a topical and useful reference volume and I believe that libraries should certainly consider its purchase.

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