Book Reviews

Spider: The Story of a Predator and Its Prey
Dick Jones
Facts on File Publications, New York, 1986
64 pp., $10.95

The sight of a spider on the living room coffee table is generally not welcomed even by the most enthusiastic entomologist—but "Spider," by Dick Jones, is a definite asset to any coffee table book collection. For this book, Jones, a prize-winning nature photographer, has focused his camera exclusively on eight-legged subjects and produced over fifty full-color photographs of a broad cross-section of the spider world engaged in a remarkable variety of pursuits. The photographs are complemented by line drawings illustrating the complexities of spider morphology and behavior.

As for the text, each chapter is prefaced with a literary epigraph aptly chosen from sources as diverse as the 1634 "Theatrum Insectorum" by Thomas Mouffet (whose daughter, readers may recall, was frightened by a spider while seated on a tuffet) to the New Testament. A brief introductory chapter summarizes spider basics (including anatomy, behavior, physiology, and taxonomy). The remaining chapters focus on spiders grouped according to ecological habits (e.g., vagrants, tube and tent dwellers, sheet and tangle web builders, and orb weavers). The text is readable and informal and is interspersed with personal anecdotes detailing accounts of author-arachnid interactions.

The book is not completely free of technical flaws. The author commits the not uncommon, yet nonetheless annoying, mistake of italicizing family names. There are also numerous typographical errors scattered throughout. Regrettably, some of the misspelled words are technical terms (e.g., "stabilimenta" instead of "stabilimenta" and "trachea—tiny tubes" instead of "tracheae—tiny tubes"). The complete lack of a bibliography (or even a list of recommended readings) is perhaps the most serious problem with this book. This omission is bound to be a source of frustration, not only for lay readers whose curiosity is piqued and who have no idea where to go to pursue their interest, but also for professional scientists who, for many reasons, may need to find the primary sources that were undoubtedly consulted in the writing of this book.

Shortcomings notwithstanding, the many fascinating aspects of spider natural history recounted by Jones are potentially useful to biologists looking to liven up lectures or even casual conversation at coffee breaks or cocktail parties. If nothing else, Jones inspires respect and even grudging admiration for this much-despised taxon with this book. "Spider" is well worth its purchase price not only as a gift for spider aficionadoes but also as therapy for self-styled arachnophobes.

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Insectos y Aceros de Importancia Agricola y Cuarentenaria en Chile
Roberto H. Gonzalez
Universidad de Chile, 1989
310 pp.
ISBN 956-7049-01-6

This publication comprises a catalog of pests that are important to agriculture in Chile. Included are not only those that cause economic losses to crops in the field and in storage but also pests that concern plant quarantine authorities in countries that import agricultural produce from Chile, chiefly the United States. The book should interest agricultural entomologists in Chile and in neighboring countries and quarantine entomologists dealing with imports from southern South America.

The work is a clearly written, comprehensive survey of pests species in all major orders. The systematic descriptions of individual orders and of some families sometimes are redundant. It is illustrated well with line drawings and helpful photographs in color and black-and-white, including black-and-white scanning electron micrographs. The inclusion of scales in these illustrations would have been helpful to nonspecialists, although the text descriptions usually include size range of specimens.

Pest management techniques or systems appropriate to Chilean agriculture are not discussed in this book. Parasites and predators are mentioned in some cases, and some success in the biological control of Icerya purchasi is described briefly. However, the reader looks in vain for a comprehensive treatment of the applicability of biological control. Some figures of "cronocontrol" have, at their center, representations of orchard sprayers, but the book still lacks a discussion of the appropriateness of insecticide use.

Nevertheless, this book is a useful addition to the growing literature on South American agricultural entomology.

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