

Book Review

Organic Synthesis Highlights II

H. Waldmann (ed.)

VCH, Weinheim, Germany, 1995

420 pages: DM 98.00

ISBN 3 527 29200 4.

This book is a well-organized collection of 40 essays on recent advances in synthetic chemistry. The editor, Professor H. Waldmann, has recruited a group of six authors from industry and four from universities in Germany and Switzerland. The topics are divided into three sections: one on new methods including asymmetric synthesis, organometallic reagents, silicon-mediated reactions, applications of enzymes, cyclization and general methods, a second section on the applications of new and old methods in total synthesis of classes of natural products, and finally some important individual targets of recent times.

The readership for a book such as this could be defined as anyone interested in improving their knowledge of

recent research in organic synthesis. The book is a useful starting point for the postgraduate student who needs to know about the Sharpless epoxidation or dihydroxylation, the synthesis of taxanes or calicheamicin, or any of the other 36 topics in the book. Often the researcher finds it difficult to know where to start: this book provides that useful and concise six-page summary with a substantial number of key references. Clearly such material is always spread over a large number of papers in the primary literature, and so the accounts in the book will provide a convenient quick entry into any of these topics. The hard-pressed university lecturer who needs to give that one extra lecture on a topic with which he or she is not quite familiar will also find this book invaluable.

The absence of a paperback version may well reduce the number of private copies sold, but I would certainly recommend the purchase of this book to any serious chemistry library; it is an excellent overview of modern synthetic chemistry.

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