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Book Reviews

The Lipid Handbook. Edited by F. D. Gunstone, J. L. Harwood and F. B. Padley, Chapman and Hall, 1986, xii + 571 + 314 pp. ISBN 0 412 24480 2. Price: £95.00.

Lipids are a large and important class of bio-polymers, -oligomers and -monomers. They are of interest in chemical, biochemical and medical laboratories and of great importance to the food industry. Additionally, they have increasingly been found to be involved in the biosynthesis of carbohydrates and are often attached to carbohydrates physically or even chemically.

This handbook is divided into two parts, the first section covering chemical aspects, occurrence and characteristics, physical properties, processing, and medical and agricultural aspects. Research concerned with the chemistry of lipids will find a wealth of information about structure, synthesis, separation and isolation, analytical methods and chemical properties. Biochemists and clinicians will find the chapters on lipid metabolism and medical and agricultural aspects particularly useful and there is a comprehensive and well illustrated chapter on the processing of fats and oils which should be of interest to the food industry. All the chapters contain extensive tables, especially the chapter on occurrence and characteristics of oils and fats, listing composition, world production, producing countries etc. for each type of oil. It should also be mentioned that each chapter contains a large, up-to-date reference section.

The second part of the book is purely a reference work, giving an encyclopaedic collection of physical properties and literature references for approximately 2000 lipids and derivatives, extracted from the database of Heilbron's Dictionary of Organic Compounds 5th Edition and supplement.

This handbook is an extensive and comprehensive source of information for anyone involved in lipid chemistry and the authors must be congratulated on the production of this major piece of reference work. Carbohydrate chemists will find it a useful auxiliary text.

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