

Book Reviews

Chitin Sourcebook: A Guide to the Research Literature. By E. R. Pariser and D. P. Lombardi, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1989. ix + 686 pp. ISBN 0 471 62423 3. Price: £116.00; \$174.50.

Chitin is the second most plentiful natural polymer and yet has had comparatively much less attention than starch and cellulose. The alkaline deacetylation of chitin produces chitosan. Currently, chitin and chitosan are commercially manufactured on a large scale from the outer shells of crustaceans. Applications of chitin, chitin derivatives and chitin-related enzymes have been discovered in virtually every significant segment of the economy, and the number, importance and variety of their industrial uses are growing rapidly.

The *Chitin Sourcebook* is an introduction to the field of chitin research and development and contains the titles of 503 research publications, books and patents on chitin, chitin derivatives and chitin-related enzymes. It is composed of nine sections: occurrence of chitin, chitosan, and their derivatives; applications of chitin, chitosan, and their derivatives, including agricultural products, animal nutrition, biomedical, chemical industry, cosmetics, fibre and textiles, food industry, metal chelation, paper technology, pharmaceuticals, plant protection and water purification; chitin related enzymes; methods of preparation and production; structure and properties; methods of analysis and characterisation; index of chemicals; index of authors; and finally, the bibliography. The first seven sections contain keywords and keyphrases relating to particular topics. This wide ranging list of contents illustrates the potential of chitin — but the polymer has a long way to go to catch up on starch and cellulose. If it could be collected more easily it would have a stronger position in commerce.

This book seeks to be highly selective in order to remain as concise and useful as possible, providing industrial product managers and those involved in the research and development of the subject with quick access to the wealth of scientific data available from published literature.

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