

Book review

A. Johnston and C. Booth (Eds), 1983. Plant pathologist's pocketbook. 2nd edition. Commonwealth Mycological Institute, Kew. VIII + 439 pages. ISBN 0 85198 460 6. Hardback £ 12.00 (US \$ 25.20), paperback £ 6.00 (US \$ 12.60).

This large-sized pocketbook provides ample information on plant diseases, their prevention and control, and on many kinds of techniques and methods used in the field and in laboratories where plant diseases are studied.

The first edition comprised 267 pages and appeared in 1968, on the occasion of the First International Congress of Plant Pathology in London. The more voluminous new edition is compiled by two editors and contains contributions of an increased number of scientists.

The distinct chapters of the book are readable as separate entities, each consisting of an introduction, detailed information and references. Separate chapters are dedicated to, for instance, fungus diseases, bacterial diseases, virus diseases, mycoplasma-like organisms as plant pathogens, non-infectious disorders, etc. Practical tables as well as a complete glossary are added.

The general tendency of this new edition seems to be the maintenance of the original text as much as possible with the addition of some more recent data. The results are not always optimal: in the chapter Mycological techniques (culturing fungi) inoculating chambers are mentioned, but laminar air-flow systems are not considered. In the chapter on Techniques, serology is presented as in the former edition; at the end only two short sentences are added on the use of ELISA.

Only some chapters have been rewritten completely and then by another author. An example of an adequately rewritten and modernized chapter is that on fungicides; it is to the point and contains a clearly arranged table. The rewritten chapter on virus diseases, however, is too much detailed for a pocketbook edition and in comparison with the other contributions. The very many references at the end are partly irrelevant, whereas some important references are missing. This chapter is not an improvement over that in the first edition.

In this second edition, the sequence of chapters or parts of chapters has changed but not always for the better: the Glossary of plant pathological terms still is to be found somewhere in the middle of the book. The position of chapters like Plant-parasitic nematodes, and Insect and other arthropod pests, suggests that the pocketbook mainly concerns plant diseases caused by fungi. The chapter Select bibliography of plant pathology is oriented towards British literature; references from abroad are not always up-to-date.

New chapters are: Mycoplasma-like organisms as plant pathogens; Effects of air pollution on crops; Cultural practices for the control of crop diseases; Biocontrol of fungal plant pathogens using fungi; Parasitic higher plants; Plant pathogens and biological control of weeds; Disease forecasting; Crop loss assessment, and Post-harvest losses.

This new information together with the already existing chapters and advices (like: Presentation of results; Hints for speakers, and even the atomic weights of some common elements) makes the new 'pocketbook' a very useful miniature encyclopaedia for students and workers in the field of plant pathology.

A. van Zaayen