

Book review

K. Maramorosch & S.P. Raychaudhuri (Eds), 1988. *Mycoplasma diseases of crops*. Basic and applied aspects. Springer-Verlag, New York/Berlin/Heidelberg/London/Tokyo. 456 pp.; 54 illustrations. ISBN 0-387-96646-3/3-540-96646-3. Price DM 178.

In the preface, the authors state that the purpose of the book is to bring together basic and applied information concerning several mycoplasma diseases of crops. The book consists of four parts. Part I deals with detection, characterization and cultivation of plant mycoplasmas. In Part II, attention is paid to interactions of mycoplasmas with plants, insects and viruses. Part III focuses on mycoplasma diseases of rice, potato, corn, citrus, egg-plant and other plants. Part IV describes chemotherapy and other methods of control.

The contents indicate that the title is slightly misleading, as only Part III concentrates on the diseases of crops. The quality of most of the contributions in this part is poor. For example, the paper on stubborn disease of citrus gives hardly any new information, with the text in many places literally copied from a contribution on the same subject in the book 'Mycoplasma diseases of trees and shrubs', containing papers of the Third International Union of Forestry Research Organization (IUFRO) Working Party Conference on Mycoplasma Diseases held in 1979. Also the contribution on a yellows disease of *Dodonaea* does not give any relevant information on diseases caused by MLOs, with the author himself admitting that so far the presence of an MLO has not been demonstrated in diseased plants.

In general, the book does not contain up-to-date information. Only in Part I do the contribution on SEM studies of MLOs and spiroplasmas, and the one on culture of the corn stunt *Spiroplasma* give pertinent new information.

The lay-out, with indistinctive division of paragraphs and very bold type, is not conducive to easy understanding of their essentials. Unfortunately the editing is rather poor. For instance, some contributions have a 'Summary', others have not. Some articles have numbered references in the text and authors listed by numbers in 'References'; others have not. The 'References' are also not presented in a uniform way. In some contributions but not in others, scientific names of plants and animals are provided with authors.

Completely superfluous, unusual in scientific publications and even bizarre, is the mention of ranks of contributing authors (page 285).

Although there are not many books on plant mycoplasmas, it is unfortunate that the present volume provides little information to fill the gap.

Jeanne Dijkstra