

BOOK REVIEWS

CMI/AAB Descriptions of Plant Viruses. Edited by A. J. Gibbs, B. D. Harrison and A. F. Murrant. Commonwealth Mycological Institute, Kew, Surrey, England Nr. 1-20, June 1970; size 20.2 × 25 cm. Annual subscription for 2 sets of 20 each £ 3. or \$ 7.80 post paid.

A total of more than 600 plant viruses is listed in 'Plant Virus Names', issued in 1968 by the Commonwealth Mycological Institute. Moreover, the amount of information on these viruses is rapidly increasing. Handbooks soon become out of date and it is nearly impossible for any individual to collect and systematize the immense flow of data.

It is therefore greatly to be welcomed that a few British virologists, sponsored by the Commonwealth Mycological Institute and the British Association of Applied Biologists, are now endeavouring to bring order into the seemingly chaotic situation by publishing standardized and authoritative short descriptions of the better known viruses. The descriptions are being produced as loose sheets comparable to the CMI 'Descriptions of Pathogenic Fungi and Bacteria'. The loose-leaf system will allow a revision of individual descriptions when major advances of knowledge occur. The descriptions are prepared by virologists with special knowledge of the viruses in question, irrespective of their nationality.

Through standardization of the texts the information is easily accessible. It is grouped according to synonyms, main diseases, host range and symptomatology, strains, transmission by vectors, through seed or by dodder, serology, relationships, stability in sap, purification, properties of particles, particle structure, particle composition, relations with cells and tissues, notes (on possible diagnostic confusion with other viruses), and a selected list of references.

A few minor questions could be made here, e.g. why the heading 'stability in sap' is used when evidently only 'persistence of infectivity in sap' is meant, and why, when dealing with 'physico-chemical virus properties' under three separate headings a distinction is made between 'properties of particles', 'particle structure' and 'particle composition'.

Each year two sets of 20 descriptions will be published. The first series appeared in June 1970 and the second is to be published in October 1970. The choice and sequence of viruses covered in the first series seem to be completely by chance, but I have understood that the wellknown ones have first been chosen and that each set will include examples of several different kinds of viruses. The purchaser can easily arrange them alphabetically or in any other way. The first series contains descriptions of the viruses of cucumber mosaic, turnip yellow mosaic, brome mosaic, potato X, Prunes necrotic ringspot, raspberry ringspot, carnation mottle, turnip mosaic, lettuce mosaic, cacao swollen shoot, cacao yellow mosaic, tobacco rattle, beet yellows, tobacco necrosis, satellite, *Arabidopsis* mosaic, tobacco ringspot, tomato ringspot, prune dwarf and broad bean true mosaic. The authors of these descriptions are wellknown virologists: Bancroft, Bercks, Brunt, Fulton, Gibbs, Harrison, Hollings, Kassanis, Matthews, Murrant, Paul, Russell, Stace-Smith, Stone and Tomlinson.

Each sheet consists of three large-size pages of text and one page of illustrations.

Printing quality is high and the price has been kept so low (about Dfl. 26,- a year) that the publication is not only attractive to libraries and institutes but also to individuals involved in research, teaching and advisory work. The publication will soon prove invaluable.

L. Bos