

Book review

Taxonomy of viruses. A series of 20 posters with explanatory booklet, 1979. Centre for Agricultural Publishing and Documentation (Pudoc), Wageningen, The Netherlands. Booklet of 22 pages together with 20 black-and-white posters 50 × 70 cm, containing in all 15 diagrams and over 120 micrographs. ISBN 90-220-0719-7. Price Dfl. 20.

During the fourth International Congress for Virology in The Hague, September 1978, the International Committee on the Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) had arranged an exhibit showing various aspects of the classification and nomenclature of viruses. Historical data and a synopsis of the present situation were presented. Some virus groups were dealt with in some detail.

The exhibit attracted much attention and it was suggested to make the posters available for distribution in a reproduced form. This has now been done by Pudoc.

This series of posters is about viruses of humans and animals, bacteria and plants. Plant viruses receive proper attention. Posters 8 and 9 give a synopsis of the classification of plant viruses based on morphology and type of nucleic acid. Micrographs exemplifying all morphological types are shown. Two posters (18 and 19) are devoted to the newly recognized geminivirus group, comprising single strand DNA plant viruses, the particles of which occur in pairs. The name of this group was approved by ICTV during the congress in The Hague and the text of the posters was revised accordingly (as was the case with other posters, where needed). A separate poster (20) deals with the tobamovirus group of which the most thoroughly studied virus, tobacco mosaic virus, is the type member. Four posters are concerned with families which include animal as well as plant viruses, i.e. rhabdoviridae (posters 12 and 13) and reoviridae (posters 14 and 15).

The posters show blocks of text, tables, schematic drawings giving all kinds of information (morphology, structure, relationships, genomic structure), and many electron micrographs of purified virus and of virus in situ. A simplified printing technique was used to keep the price low. It is a pity that, as a result, the contrast is poor in some photographs, obscuring much detail.

The accompanying booklet contains explanatory texts, of varying circumstantiality, for each poster or pair of posters. With information on the history of virus taxonomy and many characteristics of the virus taxa concerned it is a useful addition to the poster series. One should be aware, however, that it is not a comprehensive taxonomic treatise and thus is not meant to replace the complete and systematic review of all virus taxa by Matthews (*Intervirology* 12 (1979): 129–296).

This poster series may be useful for all those who study taxonomy of viruses and particularly for those who must pass information on this subject to others. The posters are delivered in a strong carboard cylinder.

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