



## BOOK REVIEW

**Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Volume 8.** Edited by Y. P. S. BAJAJ, Biotechnology in Agriculture and Forestry Series, Springer, Berlin, 1995. 476 pp. DM 468. ISBN 3-540-58298-3.

The indefatigable editor of this series of volumes on the tissue and cell culture of plants has assembled another 26 chapters to make up the eighth volume. Although a number of well known plants are included here, such as yarrow, dill, arnica, greater celandine, St. John's wort and great burnet, there is evidence that the series is beginning to run out of steam. Several of the contributions are definitely lightweight and report broadly negative results in describing the lack of synthesis of potentially useful plant chemicals, especially of terpenes. These chapters have, however, to be balanced against the number of more successful ventures into the *in vitro* culturing of tannin-containing plants. There are three notable contributions from Japanese authors on the production of hydrolysable tannins in cultures of

*Geranium thunbergii*, *Sanguisorba officinalis* and *Heterocentron roseum*. There are also two interesting reports on the flavonoids of the osage orange tree and of the inside-out flower where the compounds produced *in vitro* differ somewhat from those found in the intact plant. The chapter by Ghisalberti on *Eremophila* also deserves mention. Although this genus fails to produce its typical terpenoids in culture, it makes the phenylpropanoid verbascoside and the author has contributed a nice review on the natural occurrence of this potentially valuable antimicrobial agent. As with earlier volumes, this production is amply illustrated with tables, figures, diagrams and references. Quite a lot of phytochemistry is included and I did notice a number of minor errors here. Otherwise, this book can be recommended as an excellent source of information on secondary metabolite synthesis in plant cell culture.

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