

Phytochemistry of Plants Used in Traditional Medicine, edited by K. HOSTETTMANN, R. MARSTON, M. MAILLARD and M. HAMBURGER, *Proceedings of the Phytochemical Society of Europe, No. 37*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, 408 pp., £75. ISBN 0-19-857775-3.

This Symposium volume stems from a meeting held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in September 1993, which was attended by 300 participants from 40 countries. The title does not do complete justice to the contents within, since besides the phytochemistry much space is given to the biological properties of the phytochemicals which feature in every chapter. The range of secondary metabolites covered is considerable and many interesting phenolics, terpenoids, polyketides and alkaloids receive attention in these pages. The plant floras investigated vary from Papua New Guinea

and Bolivia through Ethiopia, Pakistan, Jordan and Sri Lanka to Panama and Indonesia.

The contributors are all distinguished in their respective fields and provide well written chapters. There is one contribution on non-cariogenic sweeteners by A. D. Kinghorn, but the remaining papers are concerned with the discovery of new plant drugs. Some emphasis is given to the treatment of tropical diseases such as sickle-cell anaemia (A. Sofowora) and malaria (J. D. Phillipson). An excellent review of ethnobotany by P. A. Cox opens the book and there are also contributions on anti-inflammatory drugs, bioactive polymers and anti-tumour agents. In all, this is an excellent collection of essays on medicinal plant chemistry and it deserves a wide circulation.

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Chemotaxonomie der Pflanzen. Volume XIb-1, Leguminosae, Part 2, by R. HEGNAUER and M. HEGNAUER, Birkhäuser, Basle, 1996, 512 pp., £244. ISBN 3-7643-5165-9.

The Mimosoideae subfamily are trees and shrubs mainly growing in the tropics and subtropics, with some concentration in the Southern hemisphere. The Caesalpinioideae is also mainly tropical, but does have some temperate members (e.g. the Judas tree, *Cercis siliquastrum*). Both subfamilies are economically valuable with plants used as fodder, for timber, in medicine (*Cassia*) for their oils (e.g. *Acacia*), tannins and dyes. Chemically, these are almost as rich in secondary metabolites as the Papilionoideae and many chemicals (e.g. haematoxylin, brazilin) are unique to these plants. It is not surprising, therefore that the Hegnauers have had to produce a separate volume to cover the phytochemistry and chemotaxonomy of these two subfamilies. This second volume follows the

earlier one (XIa) on general aspects of Leguminosae phytochemistry and will be succeeded by a third (XIb-2) which will deal with the numerous papilionoid species.

There is a veritable wealth of interesting phytochemical information in these pages, which is laid out carefully in a chemotaxonomic setting. There are many illustrative formulae and tables; the references are comprehensive and include titles and notes on their contents. It is well up to the high standard Professor Hegnauer has set himself for inclusiveness and accuracy. Furthermore, it is very much up-to-date and has an addendum covering 1995 references. We must be grateful to the authors for their indefatigable energy in preparing this monumental work and we look forward soon to seeing the final volume in the series on the papilionoids.

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Plant Drug Analysis, by H. WAGNER and S. BLADT, 2nd edition, Springer, Berlin, 1996, 384 pp. and 230 figures in colour, £129.50. ISBN 3-540-88676-8.

As the authors state in the preface: "in spite of other

available techniques, TLC still remains a most useful, quick, effective and low-cost method for the separation and identification of complex mixtures of plant constituents". They make this point abundantly clear here through the presentation of colour plates