PERGAMON

Phytochemistry 55 (2000) 189

PHYTOCHEMISTRY

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Book review

Studies in Natural Products Chemistry, Vol. 20: Structure and Chemistry, Part F
Atta-ur-Rahman (Ed.); Elsevier Science, Amsterdam 1998, 1350 pages, ISBN 0-444-50105-3, $773

This book represents volume 20 of the well established series *Studies in Natural Products Chemistry* edited by Professor Atta-ur-Rahman. Whereas the topics of these so far published volumes were focused mainly on structure, chemistry and synthesis of various types of natural products, for future volumes now a shift to bioactive natural products is announced in the foreword.

The book contains 17 chapters of 15 up to 127 pages written by experts active in the corresponding research fields. The literature is considered mostly until 1996. Similarly as in the foregoing volumes, without special focus a broad spectrum of topics is discussed. The greater part of the contributions is devoted to natural products from native sources as bioactive terpenes, *Taxus* constituents, *Narcissus* alkaloids, withanolides, constituents of Turkish *Salvia* species, bioactive agronycines, phenylpropanoid wood extractives, natural colourants, critinol from marine algae as well as cyclic peptides of the mycrocystin and modularine type from cyanobacteria. Some of them (withanolides, *Narcissus* alkaloids) represent quite comprehensive reviews with a lot of useful spectroscopic data. Further chapters of this volume are concerned with synthetic methods for selected natural products (methylcyclopentanoid monoterpenes, natural products by oxidative phenolic coupling, naphthylisoquinoline alkaloids, carotinoids), DNA-damaging natural products, in vitro models of human diseases, and preparation of chiral synthons using new reductive enzymes. From the 1350 pages of the present book, almost one third is covered by a comprehensive index for all 20 volumes, subdivided in general subjects, organic synthesis as well as pharmacological activity and biological source, which is very helpful for an effective use of the whole series.

In conclusion, this well-prepared publication can be recommended without any doubt for all scientists engaged in natural products chemistry, imparting valuable information selected by the reader from the multitude of treated topics. Unfortunately, the very high price will restrict the group of buyers mainly to libraries.

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PII: S0031-9422(00)00255-7