

and regulation. These types of studies are actively taking place but were not covered in this book. The topic is a vital one necessary to develop rapid detection methods for phycotoxins and their producer organisms and to uncover the ways these potent and life-threatening toxins are produced. As it stands the book will have a general appeal to anyone, especially phytochemists, interested in a better understanding of the topic. Probably more important it will appeal to the more serious

researcher wishing to keep up with this increasingly diverse and widespread subject so that they can find new ideas and directions for their own research in Seafood and Freshwater Toxins.

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Plant Resources of South-East Asia No. 18. Plants Producing Exudates

E. Boer, A.B. Ella (Eds.); Backhuys Publishers, Leiden, The Netherlands, 2000, hardbound, €57, ISBN 90-5782-072-2

This book is a readable, well-organized, interesting description of the most economically important plants of South East Asia, and contains a great deal of useful information. It seems to present a thorough survey of its intended material, and in my opinion supercedes earlier publications that touch upon or include some of the same species, such as the cited “Gums, Resins and Latexes of Plant Origin” (1995) by J.J.W. Coppen, who also contributed to this volume. Also, I liked the clear definitions used, the excellent illustrations, and the inclusion of so many different aspects relevant to the selected species which were described in depth. The book is well enough written, and in relatively non-technical English, that the material should be readily accessible by scientists and generalists alike.

Although I did find it a useful and comprehensive volume, I was a little perturbed to note some inaccuracies and inconsistencies, as I read through the text. For example, the Foreword points out that the annual production of *Hevea brasiliensis* rubber is 5 million t—in fact, by 1998, data which was available in 2000 when the forward was written, annual production had risen to 6.6 million t. Similarly, the Introduction indicates that the solids content of *H. brasiliensis* latex is over 50%,

instead of the actual 25–40%. Fortunately, the detailed description of this species in Section 2 (p. 73) does accurately report these, and many other facts. Nonetheless, inaccuracies also appear for other species, such as the statement that latex from *Ficus elastica* can be used for all applications of natural rubber, including dipped and extruded product types. The author of this section does later point out that the *F. elastica* rubber is of low molecular weight and hardens with time — but these properties actually *prevent* it from being used for most natural rubber applications. Thus, new researchers hoping to make use of the book should be sure to double-check the facts stated if accuracy is essential. Another deficiency was the lack of references to the long list of plants in Section 4 “Plants producing exudates, but with other primary uses”. This comprehensive list would have been more useful if the reader had also been given a key reference upon which to base an expanded literature search into the individual species, rather than just the species name.

The comments in the previous paragraph, do not reflect “fatal flaws” in this generally fine book, and I consider that the book is well worth acquiring by those interested in this topic.

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