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BOOK REVIEW

THOMPSON, J. P., SKERMAN, V. B. D.: *Azotobacteraceae:* THE TAXONOMY AND ECOLOGY OF THE AEROBIC NITROGEN-FIXING BACTERIA. — Academic Press, London—New York—Toronto—Sydney—San Francisco 1979. 417 pp. US $ 32.00.

Over the past twenty years, revolutionary advances have been made in the most of the biological nitrogen fixation research areas. Among N_2-fixing diazotrophs, the *Azotobacteraceae* is the only family in which all the representatives are known to fix dinitrogen. None of the belonging genera, however, is of an agronomic importance comparable with symbiotic *Rhizobium* spp. On the other hand, *Azotobacteraceae* possess great ecological value in the maintenance of nitrogen balance and cycling in many aerobic environments.

The authors of this excellent monograph chronologically review taxonomy of the *Azotobacteraceae* as it developed in the literature since 1901. Further, they assembled a comprehensive collection of both local isolates and reference strains. The collected strains were then examined in several ways including classic, systematic, and numerical analyses. The recognized taxa are described in great detail and the results are summarized into about sixty highly informative tables, figures, and keys. As a result of modern hierarchical classification and ordination procedures, several recommendations are given and disagreements with other authors or Bergey's Manual (1974) are discussed or pointed out.

The book provides a very clear, instructive and exceptionally comprehensive information about the *Azotobacteraceae*. Undoubtedly, it will serve as a unifying publication, excellent reference material and practical manual as well.

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