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BOOK REVIEWS

NUMATA, M. (ed.): *ECOLOGY OF GRASSLANDS AND BAMBOOLANDS IN THE WORLD*. — Dr. W. Junk bv Publishers, The Hague—Boston—London 1979. Coedition with VEB Gustav Fischer Verlag, Jena. 299 pp.

The collective work on ecological aspects of the world grasslands was compiled by the editor from "an orthodox plant ecological view". Sixteen authors contributed 23 chapters, dealing consecutively with (1) soil, climate, grasses and grassland distribution in different regions of the world, (2) with autecology, phytocenology and productivity of some grassland species, with phytosociological classification, with structure and succession of grassland vegetation, as well as with productivity and simulation models of grasslands and grazing lands. Three chapters of the last section (3) describe similar topics in bamboo vegetation.

Most chapters of the book are written in a classical descriptive way giving a balanced overlook and yielding a great amount of information from all the world. Only some of them give outlook of modern ecological conceptions, e.g. those which discuss some autecological problems, productivity questions and modelling procedures. There is no doubt that the book will be a valuable reference work.

B. SLÁVÍK (*Praha*)

STARR, M. P., STOLP, H., TRÜPER, H. G., BALOWS, A., SCHLEGEL, H. G.: *THE PROKARYOTES. A Handbook of Habitats, Isolation, and Identification of Bacteria*. — Springer-Verlag, Berlin—Heidelberg—New York 1981. 2596 pp. Cloth DM 880,— ; approx. US \$ 410.00.

Intensive interest in microbiology has continued since Pasteur carried out his pioneer works with microorganisms and has brought countless numbers of important discoveries which have influenced life conditions of mankind very positively. It seems the same will be true even in the near future. Great expectations of microbiology are connected particularly with genetic engineering, general progress of biotechnology, and with the participation of microbiology in solving the world energy crisis. Thus it is understandable that an enormous amount of microbiological literature is published every year. But even in such a situation, the book reviewed, which is a representative treatise on prokaryotic organisms, will have an extraordinary position.

The book "The Prokaryotes" has the subtitle "A Handbook of Habitats, Isolation, and Identification of Bacteria" and is a remarkable work of encyclopedic character, which collects practical knowledge concerning laboratory manipulations and diagnostics of bacteria and actinomycetes. The preparation of the book required several years' effort of the editors, who gathered contributions from 182 experts. The first section brings information on general problems of microbiology. The chapters of the other 22 sections are devoted to the specific organisms or their groups. Every chapter contains instructions for their selective isolation and identification with detailed descriptions of working techniques and prescriptions for the preparation of culturing media. Additional information can be obtained from extensive reference lists at the end of every chapter. Comprehensive subject and author indexes help the reader to orientate readily in any problem he wishes to follow up.

In my opinion, the book will become the central source of information for all scientists and specialists who work with prokaryotic organisms in any field of pure or applied microbiology.

J. VELEMÍNSKÝ (*Praha*)