

BOOK REVIEW

Avidov Z. and I. Harpaz: Plant Pests of Israel. Israel Universities Press 549 pp. 180 fig. Jerusalem 1969.

In 1930 F.S. Bodenheimer published "Schädlingsfauna Palästinas", the first inventory of plant pests of a country about which hardly anything was known on this subject. This book served as a manual for all economic entomologists although it became quickly outdated. Twenty years after its publication Bodenheimer himself realized that a new book on this subject should be written, for tremendous changes in agriculture of Palestine have been taking place and new facts about insects have been accumulating. He urged than Avidov to take upon himself this task. This was done, in 1961, when Plant Pests of Israel was published. It included all the accumulated knowledge on economic entomology until then.

Thirty years have passed since the appearance of the first inventory on insect pests. In the course of this period new crops have been introduced, new pests came into existence, and, due to the work of several entomologists, a great deal of information on many important pests accumulated. All these new events and findings found their expression in the new book by Avidov. In view of the tremendous amount of work involved in writing a book of this scope Avidov called upon two of his able coworkers for assistance and cooperation. Dr. I. Harpaz wrote the chapters on gall mites, scale insects and some dipterous families, whereas Dr. Swirski compiled the chapter on the aphids. However a serious drawback this book had; it was written in Hebrew and thereby was prevented from being read by the entomological public at large. This drawback was amended by its translation into English which appeared early this year under the authorship of Z. Avidov and I. Harpaz. Again, it was not a mere translation. During the eight years from the appearance of the Hebrew edition to the translation further facts about the insect pest fauna were obtained, irrigation areas increased and the new crops have become well established in the country creating new problems of insect pests; the Ministry of Agriculture changed its policy regarding crops - emphasis on export being given, and again, new pest control problems came up, and finally changes in our approach to pesticides called for changes in pest control practices, all these made it necessary to revise the book thoroughly, which the authors did.

On the one hand, certain chapters were added, others were enlarged or slightly changed, always drawing information from the latest publications on the subject. On the other hand, the chapters dealing with pests other than arthropods and mollusks were deleted, also storage and warehouse pests were excluded, making thus a book of pure entomological plant pests. (Exception to this is a small chapter on injurious snails in Israel).

The pests are dealt each separately, the sequence of the chapters being based on the Zoological Taxonomy of the pests.

The discussion on most pests includes a short description of the species based on characteristics that can be recognized without the aid of a stereoscopic microscope, the description is followed by an account of the biology, ecology and economic importance of the pest. These discussions are followed by suggestions regarding measures of control. In this case less attention has been paid to the kinds of pesticides to be employed, as these recommendations change very often, but more emphasis has been given whenever possible to problems of biological control. The entomophagous insects and their role are briefly discussed. When available agrotechnical measures are proposed.

The book is accompanied by many fine figures. With the exception of a few (Rodolia cardinalis for instance) they give a fine illustration to the subject referred to.

At the end of the book there are two plant indices; the one lists the host plants and their respective pests, arranged alphabetically by the generic names of the plants, the other lists the host plants arranged alphabetically according to their English common names. At the end comes a general index of animal names, both scientific and common. A complete list of references is given at the end of the book.

Finally, the publishing company, Israel Universities Press, was most successful in their efforts to promote the external appearance of the book. Teachers, entomologists, natural-history men and insecticide companies interested in this subject in this part of the world will find in it a most helpful rich source of information.

E. Rivnay