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Received 12 October 1971.

A. E., Dept. of Animal Ecology,
Ecology Building, S-223 62 Lund,
Sweden

Arnold Wartenberg: Systematik der niederen Pflanzen.

Georg Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart 1972, 326 pp., 207 figs., 11,80 DM.

The small paperback, published in the edition of pocket manuals, deals with the systematics of bacteria, algae, fungi and lichens. It is not always easy for a single author to provide clear and easily readable information on such an extensive subject in the little space available and designed, as it is said in the subtitle, for such a wide range of experts (biologists, physicians and pharmacologists). Dr. A. Wartenberg, Professor of Botany, University of Saarbrücken, has, however, completed this task commendably and the result is a mine of veritable information. The general lay-out of the book, its division into 11 chapters, and the careful choice of data giving full details of all important aspects, provides readily the information required. In the Introduction, the author explains the rules of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, and gives the definition of the terms used in taxonomy. For the subsequent chapters, each devoted to one division of lower plants, the author has done well in adopting a simplified approach. Instead of enumerating all diagnostic features of the individual taxons, the characteristics only of

a certain species or genus typical of a particular group have been given. Standard morphological descriptions are often supplemented by biochemical and genetical data. The author has, for example, drawn a detailed and illustrative picture of caryological aspects. The text is accompanied with numerous line drawings of which the schematic illustrations of the life cycles of the individual organisms are particularly well-done. The systematic lists and the determination keys are differentiated from the remaining text by a different graphical arrangement.

Thus, the author has achieved a maximum of clarity, setting an example to manuals of a similar nature.

The scope of the book is too large to allow particular treatment of medically important species and of phytoparasitoses in general, and it is apparent that this was not the author's intention either. The book will be most useful to those seeking ready information on fundamental systematic groups of lower plants.

Dr. M. Otáňáček, C.Sc.