

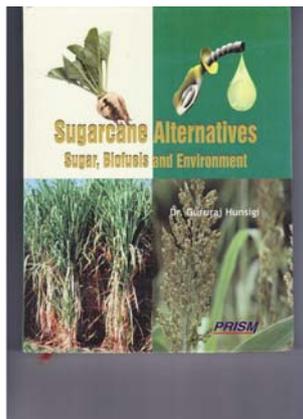
BOOK REVIEWS

Drosophila as a model system to study the key genes that regulate axon degeneration and regeneration. A second review on the nervous system by Thomas and colleagues describes the process of transposition of DNA repeats called LINES in the nervous system and its relevance in development, disease and evolution.

The *Annual Review* series is eagerly awaited, as the volumes give an overview of research in broad as well as specialized areas. In the days of open-access journals, the *Annual Reviews* continue to be sought after for their important insights and future perspectives in various fields. This volume would be of interest not only to researchers in the area of cell and developmental biology but also those would like to work in interface areas of biology, particularly those who are looking for new research problems.

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Sugarcane Alternatives: Sugar, Biofuels and Environment. Gururaj Hunsigi. Prism Books Private Limited, Bengaluru. 320 pp. Price: Rs 1500.

Although sugarcane first originated in New Guinea, circa 6000 BC, scriptures provide evidence that it has been under cultivation for at least 5000 years in India. It is a tropical crop grown typically under long warm conditions around which disputes concerning the sharing of Cauvery waters continue. It is also a crop which controls market forces. For example, while Karnataka grows the cane, the harvesting depends on labourers from Tamil Nadu.

Being an old crop in India many agro-economic practices are followed related to

its method of cultivation, use of varieties resistant to fungal pests, harvesting, use of its juice for preparation of jaggery and crystalline sugar and the use of left-over fibrous bagasse for newsprint. It is gratifying to have this book for a quick reference.

Being an old crop, I expected to learn about the breeding work on sugarcane done in India, in particular at Coimbatore, but there is limited or no coverage of this important topic.

I have often wondered which out of the three crop plants; sugarcane, sugar beet and cassava is photosynthetically the most efficient in terms of carbon dioxide fixed into sucrose per hectare. However, there is no discussion of this. On the other hand, there is some useful discussion of sugarcane being developed as an energy crop for manufacture of bio-fuel ethanol and biodiesel.

The book is printed on good quality paper between an attractive cover and should be useful for agricultural institutions.

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