

Environmental Control of Circadian Rhythms in Plants by K. S. Sundararajan, (Published by Agro-Botanical Publishers (India), Old Ginnani, Bikaner), pp. 120, Rs. 120/US \$ 22.

This book is a scholarly and authentic compilation of information about biological rhythms. This will be useful to students of the subject of chronobiology at the Master's degree level. In addition to giving a lucid introduction to the subject the book deftly handles research information on the state-of-the-art of chronobiology and the biochemical, biophysical and kinetic features of circadian rhythms. In addition to writing on plant circadian rhythms the author gives extensive descriptions of insect clocks and in the bargain delivers more than what the title promises. The author has modelled his book on a perennial classic (the third English edition was brought out by the publishers Springer-Verlag in 1973) by Erwin Bünning, who in many ways is a 'natural' successor to his countryman Wilhelm Pfeffer (1845-1920). K. S. Sundararajan acknowledges his debt to Bünning and this debt is most conspicuous in the last three chapters of the book.

Dr. Sundararajan's book comes to the Indian market at a most suitable juncture. Hopefully many more Indian authors will write monographs on this fascinating subject each from his own point of view.

Subjectivity in writing monographs, as long as the author is knowledgeable, can make for lively reading. The author of this book is an authority on plant circadian rhythms and alludes to his work on the circadian clock of the common Indian cotton plant *Gossypium hirsutum*. I wish he had cited more Indian examples to impress on his readers the ubiquity of the phenomenon as well as the stupendous periodicity of the world we inhabit. 1980 is the cut-off year in this book for literature coverage. In a PNAS paper in 1985 it has been reported that a high molecular weight polypeptide ($M_r \approx 230,000$ protein p 230) may be part of the circadian clockwork in *Acetabularia*.

While the general production is good it is most unfortunate that innumerable printer's errors and spelling mistakes have been overlooked. I counted as many as 250. For the price (which works out to a rupee a page) the reader has a right to expect more exacting publication standards. Hopefully there will be a second edition minus these irritants. I recommend this monograph to the student, librarian, researcher and the layman alike.

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NEWS

METEOR-OBSERVING RADIO LOCATOR TO DETERMINE WIND VELOCITIES

An automatic radio locator complex built in Kharkov (Ukraine), helps Ukrainian scientists to watch the flight of meteors, thereby determining wind direction and velocities at high altitudes.

Entering the earth's atmosphere at great speed, meteors burn themselves out at altitudes of 75-105 km, leaving a trail consisting of ionized gas which is scattered by winds.

The radio beam detects the trail of ionized gas and by following the movement of the gas gathers information on how and where air currents move.

This enables the scientists to prepare long-term weather forecasts. (*Soviet Features*, Vol. XXVI, No. 34, March 19, 1987, p. 1; Information Department, USSR Embassy in India, P. B. 241, 25 Barakhamba Road, New Delhi 110 001).