



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN



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**Wonder Drugs. A History of Antibiotics.** Helmut M. Böttcher; translated by E. Kawerau. 285 pp. J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1964. \$4.95.

First published in German (as *Wunderdrogen*) in 1959, this excellently translated English edition should be a boon to teachers of economic and medical botany, to pharmacognocists and pharmacologists, and to others interested in plant drugs. The author is not a scientist but a science writer. He has done a masterful job in this book. He takes the story and history of antibiotics back to ancient Egypt, where, much to the amazement of many medical men, moulds and related plants were employed as curative agents. The knowledge that the other ancient classical peoples had of the lower plants and their properties is discussed. Böttcher takes the reader up through the well known discovery of penicillin to the much less well known and understood searches for other antibiotics from cryptograms that have been going on since the advent of the earliest antibiotics in modern medicine. The book could have been interestingly illustrated in many places, but it is written as such a fascinating narrative that this lack is not really a detraction. This is a book that might well—for its readability, coverage, and accuracy—be prescribed reading in any economic botany course and in college tutorials in biology and pre-medical fields.

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**Seaside Plants of the World.** Edwin A. Menninger. 303 pp. illus. Hearthside Press, New York, 1964. \$9.95.

Gardens by the sea present special problems in planning, planting, and maintenance. This book has been prepared as a guide to the landscaper, horticulturist, and homeowner who must combat the effects of salt, sand, and wind. The first chapters of the book define and discuss the various problems and emphasize that each garden must be considered individually with respect to its exposure to the sea. The encyclopedic listing and description of plant materials which form the bulk of the volume call at-

tention to the great numbers of plants which may be used but which too often are not easy to obtain. Mr. Menninger has keyed each plant for availability as well as hardiness and has arranged the materials by landscape use and adaptability to the three belts of exposure: Belt I, the front line of defense in which plants are subjected to the full blast of salt spray and sand; Belt II, an intermediate area with salt-tolerant plants essential but protection supplied by the plantings or barriers in Belt I; and Belt III, where salts in the soil may be easily washed away and where adequate protection may be provided for the plantings under most situations. The book is profusely illustrated with photographs of individual plants and of seaside gardens in many parts of the world. It is a gold mine of information for the seaside gardener and is reasonably free of errors. The Californian will be surprised to see the California native shrub, *Garrya elliptica*, listed as a native of New Zealand. Plate 14, a view of the ocean front at La Jolla, California, identifies the conifers as Torrey pines when most of the conifers visible in the picture are Monterey cypresses. Plate 181, a rose, is identified as *Cistus albidus*. Likewise, it is unfortunate that Mr. Menninger has adopted certain names, e.g., *Echites echites* and *Ecastophyllum ecastophyllum* from Small's *Manual of the South-eastern Flora*, which are not in accord with the current codes for plant nomenclature. However, such errors as these are minor and, along with the few typographical errors, will doubtless be corrected in subsequent printings. The book meets a long felt need and will doubtless be consulted for many years to come as an authoritative reference on seaside gardening.

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**The Peyote Cult.** Weston La Barre. New enlarged edition. 260 pp. illus. Shoe-string Press, New York, 1964. \$7.50.

The original publication in 1938 of *The peyote cult*, Number 19 of the *Yale University Publications in Anthropology*, was the doctoral thesis of Weston La Barre who is now Professor of Anthropology at Duke University. It rapidly became the authorita-