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tinuity of format throughout as well as remarkable freedom from mechanical errors. On balance the book admirably accomplishes its objective of bringing together the current thinking on critical aspects of cambial growth. It is an important reference for advanced plant scientists who wish to keep abreast of developments on growth dynamics of the perennial woody plant.

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Pharmacology of Oriental Plants. Edited by K. K. Chen and B. Mukerji. 106 pp. illus. Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1965. \$6.50.

Comprising the Proceedings of the Second International Pharmacological Meeting of 1963 (Section on Pharmacology of the International Union of Physiological Sciences), this volume of 10 articles offers interesting and valuable information about plants of the Orient, many of which have not been well known to western scientists. The jacket states it succinctly: "Though certain of the Oriental plants have been known for centuries, apparently the last words on their properties and uses have not been said."

The contributors are pharmacological scientists from Japan, China, India, Russia, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Canada, and the United States. Topics treated include licorice root as an inhibitor of peptic ulcers; mode of action of *Schizandra chinensis*; effects of ginseng extract on the adrenal cortex; activity of a sesquiterpene from *Nardostachys jatamansi*; anti-cancer alkaloids of *Vinca rosea*; *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, a new medicinal herb; the pharmacology of Rauwolfia alkaloids; history of early work on *R. serpentina*; recent pharmacological research on medicinal plants in mainland China; and pharmacology of Chinese materia medica. Several of the articles carry bibliographies that will be of value especially because of the limited familiarity of western scientists with some of the materials treated.

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Selenium. Geobotany, Biochemistry, Toxicity, and Nutrition. Irene Rosenfeld and Orville A. Beath. 411 pp. illus. Academic Press, New York, 1964. \$15.00.

This volume is a revision of *Selenium—Its Geological Occurrence and its Biological Effects in Relation to Botany, Chemistry, Agriculture, Nutrition and Medicine* by Sam F. Trelease and Orville A. Beath (1949).

Selenium occurs in many organic and inorganic compounds in rocks, soils, plants, and animals. It is employed in certain industrial processes. Selenium has far greater importance to man, however, in its biological relationships. The public health significance of selenium in the diet and of the distribution of selenium from one part of the country to another in food materials is enormous. The gradual realization in the early 1930s that selenium is responsible for certain long recognized livestock diseases and that cereal grains grown on apparently fertile soil can become toxic caused much concern and generated intensive investigation. Sam F. Trelease, plant physiologist at Columbia, and Orville A. Beath, chemist at the University of Wyoming, were among those principally involved. Irene Rosenfeld, a pathologist who became associated in the work at Wyoming somewhat before the first edition of *Selenium* was published, contributed to its sections on disease.

The discovery in 1957 of a dietary requirement of selenium in livestock and fowl, and by extension putatively in man, renewed intense interest in naturally occurring selenium and its total biological effects. Unfortunately, the first edition of *Selenium*, which was the only monograph on the subject and which was published and distributed privately, had nearly gone out of print at the time of Trelease's death (1958) and was not to be found in many libraries; consequently it was in great demand. This new book not only updates and enlarges the subject but also meets the pent-up demand that has recently existed. Academic Press is to be complimented on making *Selenium* available, although at 3½ cents per page the book is not inexpensive. Printing and binding are of high quality, and the text is well edited.