



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN



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Handbook of Charcoal Making: The Traditional and Industrial Methods. Walter Emrich. Reidel Publishing Co., % Kluwer Academic Publishers, 190 Old Derby St., Hingham, MA 02043. 1985. 278 pp. \$39.50.

The economic value of charcoal is not often fully recognized. This book, published in a series entitled Solar Energy R. & D. in the European community for the Commission of the European Communities, goes far in correcting that misunderstanding. It further points out the very material worth of this use of wood in the European area. "Comprehensive charcoal literature has not appeared since the late nineteen-forties," the foreword states, and "... some of the literature cited ... exists only in specialized collections. Occasionally, the public has learned about the achievements of companies active in charcoal production . . . , but overall there has been an inadequate flow of information to potential users."

Coverage of this novel topic is indeed complete. The body of the book is divided into 10 chapters: 1) History and Fundamentals of the Charcoal Process; 2) Traditional Methods of the Smallholder Producer; 3) Concepts and Technology for the Industrial Producer; 4) Recovering Commercial Products from Pyrolysis Oil; 5) Raw Materials Supply; 6) End-use Markets for By-Products; 7) Planning a Charcoal Venture; 8) Charcoal Briquettes and Activated Charcoal; 9) Safety Precautions and Environmental Considerations; 10) Charcoal Laboratory Work. Four appendices follow, one of which lists Addresses of Consultants, Institutes, and Equipment Suppliers. Each chapter has a specialized list of references.

While the book by its nature will have a rather limited audience, its completeness and authoritative character will long be admired by those who, in this period of concern about sources of energy, are interested in alternate sources, for as Dr. W. Palz of the R. & D. Programme Biomass of the Commission of the European Communities has written in the preface: "... to-day the biomass option is only little developed: a huge resource is waiting for us."

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