Book Reviews

MAN AND HIS EARTH. By George D. Scarseth. Iowa State University Press, 199 pp. 1962. $4.50.

Those that ever heard one of George Scarseth's speeches know him as an agronomist, an ecologist, a philosopher and an entertainer. His unique understanding of nature and of mankind helped many of his listeners to a better appreciation of what makes crops grow. It is fortunate that just before his untimely death he brought together many of his thoughts about plants, soil, and man in a book entitled MAN AND HIS EARTH. It is not meant to be a textbook, but it is full of useful and interesting information and stimulating ideas. To his friends it is more: a literary last will and testament.

The author travelled and worked in the tropics, in the temperate zone and in the arctic with his eyes and his mind open. He relates his observations and experiences in the down-to-earth fashion that always fascinated his audiences. He discusses the actions of the main plant-growth elements and the effects of climate on crops. He devotes several chapters to the relations between man and his earth. The book is as entertaining as it is philosophical and informative. It is an appeal for wise land use. Both layman and soil specialist will enjoy this book.—HELMUT KOHNKE, Purdue University.


This is a comprehensive treatment of the subject and a valuable reference for anyone concerned with turfgrass culture. Dr. Couch has admirably completed a formidable task in assembling in one volume much of the scattered information relating to diseases of turfgrasses. An exceptionally useful feature of the book is the appendix where diseases of turfgrasses are variously arranged according to grass species affected and according to common name of the disease.

A first volume of this magnitude inevitably has some errors, omissions, and shortcomings. In the introduction too much emphasis was placed on historical aspects of general plant pathology and not enough on historical aspects of turfgrass disease research. Many people would question the statements that earthworms and birds damage turfgrasses, except possibly on golf greens. Information regarding prevalence, distribution, and comparative importance of diseases is given for only a few of the many diseases discussed. It would be helpful if the diseases considered were grouped or otherwise identified according to relative importance. For example, diseases like tar spot, blast, scald, and some of the rusts and smuts rarely if ever occur on grasses used for turf yet they are treated like dollar spot, brown patch, and other prevalent and destructive diseases.

There are remarkably few typographical errors and the print is clear and on good quality paper. By preparing this volume, Dr. Couch has rendered a real service to everyone interested in turfgrass culture.—K. W. KREITLOW, USDA Research Pathologist, Beltsville, Md.


This book is a revision and elaboration of earlier reviews on this topic which appeared in the Journal of Dairy Science in 1943 and in the Agronomy Journal in 1952. The book is developed in six parts. Part I considers experimental pastures and their management; Part II, experimental animals and their management; Part III, determining herbage quality; Part IV, determining herbage production and yield; Part V, study of pasture flora; and Part VI, complementary factors. Subtopics covered in Part I include selection of experimental area and field aspects of experimental design, size and number of pastures, number of animals and length of grazing period, physical facilities, and grazing management. In Part II, selection of experimental animals, allotment of animals to experimental treatment, weighing of animals, animal behavior, supplemental feeding, and animal parasites are discussed. In Part III, techniques, chemical composition of herbage, and palatability of animal performance, indicator methods, in vitro rumen-fermentation herbage are discussed in relation to herbage-quality determination. Subtopics in Part IV include measuring yield by animal performance, measuring energy value of forage, and herbage sampling for yield in tame pastures, and on natural pastures and range. Part V is discussed under the subtopics of botanical analysis and sampling of tame pastures and of natural pastures and range. Part VI includes discussions on small-plot experiments, climatic data, pasture irrigation, root studies, soil studies, plant diseases, pasture insect pests, rangeland insect and rodent pests, weeds and brush on grazing land experiments, economic evaluation, and photography.

The 30 distinguished authors cite a total of 456 references. An index would have enhanced the usefulness of this book which, nevertheless, will serve as a much needed ready reference for all forage crop research workers and students, particularly those interested in grazing research. Grassland researchers who become familiar with the contents of this publication will become increasingly aware of the need for considering, at the research planning stage, interacting variables that involve extremely diverse subject matter areas.—HOWARD L. CARNAHAN, Research Agronomist, Crops Research Division, ARS, USDA, Reno, Nevada.