BOOK REVIEW

LEATHER S.R. & BLAND K.P.: INSECTS ON CHERRY TREES. Naturalists' Handbooks 27. The Richmond Publishing, Slough, 1999, 82 pp. ISBN 0-85546-311-2 (paperback), price GBP 8.95. ISBN 0-85546-312-0 (hardback), price GBP 15.00.

The insect community on cherry trees is abundant and therefore interesting to man. Although the first interest was probably practical, the diverse range of insect species on cherry trees provide countless observation opportunity for the naturalist or experimental biologist. As in any other kind of human activity, the study and observation of cherry tree insects need an initiation. The tiny book of Simon R. Leather and Keith P. Bland is a nice introduction to the entomological problems associated with insects of these trees, accessible not only to entomologists but also to interested nonspecialists.

The book has five chapters supplemented with a check list of insect species, a list of references and a subject index. The first chapter provides botanical characteristics of British *Prunus* (sensu lato) species, both native and introduced, which is followed by a table of insect species occurring on the five most abundant cherry species. General chapters 2 and 3 make for stimulating reading on some ecological problems which may be addressed when studying cherry tree fauna. The chapters com-

bine facts and ideas from several areas of theoretical knowledge into a popular and readable informative text.

Chapter 4 contains identification keys of cherry tree species and of their insects. The keys are based on well observable characters and supplemented by instructive line drawings. Each description is accompanied by biological characteristics of the species. Anyone using this key may start the study of cherry tree insect communities on British Islands. Of course, as one proceeds further and further from this core area, the number of species not identifiable with this key increases. However, this chapter is useful also in central Europe. Chapter 5 is a brief introduction to methods of collecting insect material and making elementary laboratory studies, certainly useful for beginners. Advanced studies, of course, would need more theoretical and methodological background than could be described on just a few available pages.

The book is more than a technical introduction for students just starting the research of cherry tree communities. It puts emphasis on drawing attention to general, not yet solved biological questions, and introduces the reader to the main questions of current ecology. In this way it may stimulate biological thinking and become interesting also to teachers that communicate the principles of biological research to further generations.

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