

## BOOK REVIEW

HELYER N., BROWN K. & CATTILIN N.D. 2004: A COLOUR HANDBOOK OF BIOLOGICAL CONTROL IN PLANT PROTECTION. Manson, London, 2nd ed., 126 pp. ISBN 1-874545-28-6 (hardback). Price GBP 24.95.

The Royal Horticultural Society published the second edition of this book on the 200th anniversary of its foundation. This and similar books of the Society are targeted at professional, academic and lay gardeners, and their consultants, to inform and advice them on progressive methods in gardening and farming.

This particular book is designed to be used to identify basic groups of pests of horticulture and their natural enemies with the extensive help of colour photographs. The first section of this book very briefly but sufficiently describes the management of arable crops, fruit production (orchards) and protected crop systems (glasshouses). Monitoring of pests (sampling methods), pesticide use and integrated pest management are briefly described.

In the second section, there is a simple, practical identification guide based on plant damage symptoms. The probable pests causing the symptoms are described and pictured, together with their specific natural enemies. The following sixteen pages are devoted to the characteristics of selected invertebrate pests arranged taxonomically, with emphasis on groups occurring in English gardens.

The longest, third, section is devoted to the profiles of beneficial arthropods, both naturally occurring in gardens and introduced species or those that can be acquired from specialist companies. Many colour photographs show the predators and parasitoids in action, attacking their prey and hosts – the pests. The pictures also help one identify particular species. The role of natural enemies is not overemphasized, it is correctly

declared that some of them cannot effectively reduce pest populations, only decrease population growth or accelerate natural declines.

The last, short section describes entomopathogens: nematodes (called “parasitic”, although their life strategy is something between predation and detritophagy), bacteria, fungi, and viruses.

In this electronic age, when a large amount of information is available on Internet pages (www), including presentations on beneficial insects of agriculture (horticulture) illustrated by digital photographs, it might seem an ancient way of publishing to print a handbook with colour photographs in hard back. Such an act is justified as the information on many web pages is not reviewed and may be incorrect. Also the quality of the small thumbnail digital photographs on the web is not sufficient for accurate identification. Of course, there is also the problem raised by copyright and the need to earn money from selling the book in order to cover the costs. That is why one expects this book to contain high quality photographs and accurate information.

Both these conditions are fulfilled, as the photographs are good, and there are few errors. The imported and invasive Multicoloured Asian Ladybird (known also as Harlequin Ladybird), *Harmonia axyridis*, whose various colour morphs are illustrated by three photographs, is confused with the native *Oenopia conglobata* (used synonym *Synharmonia conglobata*, in this book called *Harmonia conglobata*), which is described in the text.

This book is not only an effective practical guide for gardeners and a textbook for students studying applied entomology, but will also be appreciated by naturalists.

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