

## BOOK REVIEW

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SALT D.T. & WHITTAKER J.B.: INSECTS ON DOCK PLANTS. Naturalists' Handbooks 26. The Richmond Publishing, Slough, 1998, 56 pp. ISBN 0-85546-309-0. Price GBP 8.95 (paperback), GBP 15.00 (hardback).

The reviewed booklet is an interestingly written, free-style scientific text dealing mainly with animal predators of dock plants.

The book is introduced by a chapter considering dock plants (genus *Rumex*). First, dock plants are briefly introduced by describing their characteristics. Information covered includes: Presence of species in Great Britain, common names, UK distribution of selected species, range of species habitat, species weed status, and some morphological and autecological characteristics. The following paragraphs consider docks as feeding sites, investigate the effects of insects on dock plants and hypothesize about biological control of dock plants.

The "botanical" part is relatively short but comprehensible. The text contains an up-to-date set of references. Despite the entomological character of the book, the part which considers host plants creates an important context for studying herbivores.

The "entomological" part of the booklet contains three chapters. The first chapter informs readers about the bionomics of

the most important herbivorous insects feeding on dock plants – the spittle bug *Philaenus spumarius*, the leaf beetle *Gastrophysa viridula*, anthomyid flies of the genus *Pegomya*, weevils of the genera *Apion*, *Rhinoncus* and *Hypera*, and two copper butterflies *Lycaena phlaeas* and *L. dispar*. "Further study" and "Some unanswered questions" – the last paragraphs in the botanical and entomological parts, respectively, are very interesting and actual in outlining possible directions of research in host plant-herbivore interactions.

Identification keys of eleven British docks and sorrels and herbivorous species associated with them represent the major part of this book. These user-friendly keys are designed for identification of both adult and immature stages of herbivores. Four colour plates and many nice line drawings of important characters enable effortless identification.

A short chapter dealing with growing plants as well as collecting and rearing dock-feeding insects terminates the booklet.

Thanks to the user-friendly image and constructive ideas highlighting topics for further research, the guide is valuable for amateur naturalists, students with first experience with field research and last but not least for professional field ecologists.

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