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Why Not Eat Insects? Vincent M. Holt. Hanworth, Middlesex: reprinted by E. W. Classey, 1967. 99 pp. $2.10.

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of capture, precise locality, and ***present location*** of specimen in case a question of determination arises. 'Early' and 'late' records are useful, as is information about habitat, foodplants and biology. Above all, adherence to scrupulous standards of recording data is necessary in all communications. And, no matter how common an insect may be locally, information about its appearance may be of value. (In the most recent list of Michigan butterflies, ***Pieris rapae*** L. was recorded from only 49 counties, not including Jackson, St. Joseph, Allegan, Ottawa, Lapeer and others. The example is homely but obvious.)

Observing, studying and collecting insects may be an eminently satisfying pastime, but drawers of dried specimens contribute little to the advance of knowledge unless individual insects are properly identified, furnished with complete and accurate data, and made known to specialists who can compile necessary statistics from individual records. The task is an enormous one, but only through sustained, collective and ***immediate*** effort will the recording of America's insect population be accomplished before it is too late.

R. S. W.

REVIEWS OF RECENT LITERATURE

WHY NOT EAT INSECTS? Vincent M. Holt. Hanworth, Middlesex: reprinted by E. W. Classey, 1967. 99 pp. $2.10.

According to the British Museum Catalogue, this curious and interesting little work was first printed in 1885. F. S. Bodenheimer devotes several pages to it in his ***Insects as Human Food,*** and notes that the "booklet has now[1951] almost disappeared. In London it was apparently only available at the British Museum, where it was destroyed by bombing. The only copy to be found by the author was in the University Library at Oxford . . . "I have located no copies in the United States except the one at the USDA Library. Due to its extreme rarity, and its timeliness now that our population explosion and dwindling resources have given us a rather unpalatable source of 'food for thought', ***Why Not Eat Insects?*** is well worth reprinting, and E. W. Classey has performed the service.

Holt's argument for insects as human food is partially directed at our common habit of praising one animal product as a delicacy, while expressing revulsion at the thought of eating another. We enjoy snails, eels, raw oysters and birds' nest soup; why not insect larvae, most of which feed on wholesome substances, and are quite delicious when properly cooked? Indeed, why not 'turn the tables' on the larvae by eating them before they eat our crops?

Of course many primitive peoples eat insects, but Holt points out that earlier 'civilized' cultures have done so, and our own prejudice against this wholesome food is based largely upon irrationality. Not only would insects furnish a supply of food to vary the diet of the poor, but the author presents a series of examples to show how insect dishes can be introduced into more elaborate menus.

Now that we are facing conditions outlined so well by Georg Borgstrom in ***The Hungry Planet,*** we may have to face up to Holt's logic before long. Of course, as Bodenheimer points out, Holt was by no means the first to advocate

such measures, yet his argument is presented in such a clever and entertaining way that this reprint will appeal to a wide public. It is attractively printed in facsimile, with blue wrappers reproducing Holt's cover design. All of our readers will find *Why Not Eat Insects?* thought-provoking and well worth its modest price.

R. S. W.

INSECT COLONIZATION AND MASS PRODUCTION. Edited by Carroll N. Smith. New York and London: Academic Press, 1966. xxii, 618 pp. $27.00.

The mass production of insects appears to have started with the requirements of the rod-and-line fisherman for bait. For many years, using crude but effective methods, an individual could earn a living rearing millions of blowflies a week to meet this demand. The recent rise of the insecticide industry–and now, biological control--has meant an ever-increasing demand for many insect species. Not only does the testing of insecticides demand very large numbers of standard insects, but their release, either as parasites to control an economic pest, or as sterile males to 'use up' wild females, involves the laboratory production of millions of specimens per week.

The demand for these multitudes of insects has been met, and this book ably describes the scientific methods now employed. For convenience the book has been divided into five sections. The first deals with Animal Parasites--the blood sucking group--Lice, Fleas, Mosquitoes. These are the species which can carry and transmit disease to man and the more important species are dealt with in a concise manner. The second section describes the methods used for Domestic and Stored Produce pests; the third, and longest section, Phytophagous insects; the fourth, Parasites, Predators and Pathogens, and the fifth, Insects by the Million, contains concise and detailed accounts of the rearing of Screw-worms and Tephritid flies for eradication programmes.

It is the third section that is the most informative. In a sense this section overlaps those on each side of it, for artificial diets are used for stored product pests and part four also involves phytophagous species and artificial diets. Although headed 'Phytophagous Insects' which is true of the species described when in the wild, in the laboratory it is no longer always so, since many of them are now reared on artificial diets. The use of such diets for stored product pests is well established; the rearing of cockroaches on dog biscuits is one such example. The use of biscuits for phytophagous insects on the scale here described is something comparatively new, and represents a real breakthrough.

A great drawback of so many insects for any research project has been that their availability is often limited to their normal seasonal appearance. It has long been known that diapause can be prevented, but only recently has it been possible to take full advantage of this, since lack of winter food has prevented year-round rearing.

This can now be done by the use of artificial or synthetic foods. The various methods and diets employed for different species are quite clearly set out, and one of the great advantages of the book is that it brings together in one source much scattered information on the subject, enabling diets to be compared at a glance. In the majority of cases they are set out in a way that can be