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Moths and How to Rear Them. Paul Villiard. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1969. xiv, 242 pp. \$10.00.

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## REVIEWS OF RECENT LITERATURE

MOTHS AND HOW TO REAR THEM. Paul Villiard. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1969. xiv, 242 pp. \$10.00.

W.J.B. Crotch's *A Silkmoth Rearer's Handbook* (1956) and *Wild Silk Moths of the United States* by Michael Collins and Robert West (1961) have been standard rearers' manuals for some time, but both are limited to one group of large moths, and there has been a decided need for a low - priced guide covering rearing procedures for a much wider range of Lepidoptera. For a number of reasons, Villiard's book falls short of this goal.

This book contains much useful information, but unfortunately only the experienced entomologist will be able to sift it from the chaff. Villiard opens with a preface attacking the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "those unenlightened guardians of our forests," whose work puts "such a dampener on the activity [rearing] in this country that the dissemination of knowledge, distribution of breeding stocks, and the accumulation of important biological and ecological data become most difficult." The reader will sense the reason behind Villiard's remarkable attack, for there is an unfortunate emphasis in the book upon procuring live material from dealers. The author's discussion of each species includes a line or paragraph on "availability," which concentrates upon purchase of material rather than collection in the field or exchange with other entomologists. One would never know from Villiard's work that there was another method of obtaining insects than buying them. Even within this dubious framework, he fails to provide a list of dealers with live material and equipment.

Villiard's chapter on general rearing procedures is excellent as far as it goes. His empirical discoveries are useful, but consultation of the immense literature on rearing would have informed the author about such important areas as artificial food media. An artificial "aid" is mentioned on p. 16, Smith's "elixir" (consistently misspelled). This is however brushed upon leaves, and not one of the recent and significant proliferation of artificial substitutes is mentioned. A converse criticism is that no sources are given for any of the breeding methods that Villiard does discuss. There is no 'literature cited' or bibliography section at all.

The treatment of "photographic and mounting equipment" tells almost nothing about insect photography, and some mounting procedures are dubious. The method of placing glass strips across the wings of Lepidoptera is a poor one: it leads to the sort of scale damage seen on p.192, top figure. Most of the species Villiard discusses are large moths, and his advice that specimens be allowed to dry on the board for "several days" should be multiplied by ten or twenty. Regarding a certain illustration of Sphingidae, we are told that "in this arrangement they look like bomber planes." Villiard's book is written in a 'pop' style for amateurs, but this sort of irrelevancy is hardly admissible.

The illustrations, which occupy at least a third of the book, are frequently very poor. Many photographs of immature stages are good, but those of the imago are generally not, and some are remarkably not, such as that of the grease - soaked *Hemileuca maia* on p. 118 , and the many which have such poor contrast that we wonder why a publisher allowed them to be printed. Some specimens are out of focus, some are very worn, and some are misdetermined. The illustration claiming to be of an adult tent caterpillar, *Malacosoma americana* (p. 206), is actually a female gypsy moth, *Porthetria dispar*. Villiard's photograph labelled as an adult *Hemerocampa leucostigma*, a liparid (p. 216) is actually *Apamea americana*, a noctuid (determination by J. H. Newman).

Despite much good advice offered to rearers, it is a pity that such a well - known publisher allowed this book to escape uncorrected. These criticisms would not occupy so much space, were the book not destined to fill such an important role through default.

R.S.W. and J.P.D.