

## BOOK REVIEWS

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which Goethe himself would have deeply admired. Among these, botanists of the tropical and the subtropical regions would certainly enjoy the photographs of *Tiliaamericana* (image 67), *Ruscusaculeatus* (the phyllode bearing oval reddish fruits; image 68) and *Ulmusglabra* (image 77) to cite a few examples.

Botanists admit that Goethe was the first to propound the concept of the flower. But what exactly did Goethe write about his interpretation of flower was not easily available to me earlier. It is found in paragraph 115 of this book (p. 100): 'Whether the plant grows vegetatively, or flowers and bears fruit, the same

organs fulfill the nature's laws throughout, although with different functions and often under different guises. The organ that expanded on the stem as leaf, assuming a variety of forms is the same organ that now contracts in the calyx, expands again in the petal, contracts in the reproductive apparatus, only to finally expand as the fruit.' The knowledge of floral anatomy and comparative floral morphology served taxonomy and evolutionary botany in the 19th and 20th centuries. Even the ABC model of flower development proposed recently (based on the model plant *Arabidopsis thaliana* and its various mutants) can be explained

using the German poet's concept of the flower.

Miller has remarkably succeeded in comprehending Goethe's quest for explaining the enormous diversity in plant form. The book is profusely illustrated, includes helpful notes, an appendix on the genetic method, and is a treasure to be acquired and studied.

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## PERSONAL NEWS

### Premamoy Ghosh (1936–2011)

Premamoy Ghosh, one of the doyens of Polymer Science in India, passed away on 27 April 2011. Even though he was suffering from lung cancer for quite sometime, he remained active and mentally alert all along. He was born in Dhaka in pre-partition India. He did his graduation from Presidency College, Calcutta in 1955 and post-graduation with specialization in polymer science and technology in 1958 from Calcutta University and obtained the University Medal. He received Fulbright fellowship in 1965 for post-doctoral research. He carried the legacy of schools of research of Shanti Ranjan Palit of Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science on the one hand, and Billmeyer of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York and O'Driscoll of Villanova University, USA on the other. Ghosh was an internationally acclaimed polymer scientist of his era in the area of polymerization kinetics. He was also an inspirational personality brimming with energy, simple life style, wit and sense of humour. The other facet of his personality lies in his active interest to socialize, his agility and seriousness about work ethics and caring nature to students and scholars. Characteristically he was very quick in taking decision and action to augment the causes of

research and education together. He was a teacher par excellence and an outstanding orator and researcher in the field of applied chemistry as well as polymer science and technology. He was known for his lucid class room lecture and for his eloquence. In his communication, he had the skill to include loads of anecdotes and analogies to make the subject interesting and enjoyable. His presentation always had power even if there were no 'power-points' in the lecture floor unlike today's practice. One of the high points of his principles was to give equal importance to teaching and research which he practised ardently all along. In fact, such spirit of teaching intertwined with research is rare, when such balanced practices of teaching and research are fast disappearing these days in most of our universities and institutes. Besides more than 300 publications in journals including in *Nature*, he has written quite a few good books on various subjects of polymer science and technology, particularly the book entitled *Polymer Science and Technologies of Plastics and Rubbers* (published by Tata-McGraw Hill) has many editions and has created great interest among students and professionals alike. In addition to his contribution as author of books on the

subject of polymer science and technology, he has also written quite a number of books on different topics of interest for general readers. He had very cordial relation with many industrial professionals and held honorary positions in many scholarly institutes, social bodies and editorial board of journals. He was Fellow of Institution of Engineers, India; Plastics and Rubber Institute, London, and Institution of Materials, London. He was recipient of the Vijaya Shree Award, India International Society, New Delhi; also received honour and citations for life time contribution as a teacher, researcher and professional person in the area of polymer science and technology from Indian Plastics Institute, and from Society of Polymer Science and Materials Science Centre, IIT Kharagpur. Ghosh was always fascinated by the magic of polymers. His research contribution and ideal approach to life have left indelible impression in the minds of his students, scholars and admirers.

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