

The evidence for α , β , and γ chitin structures is described and related to microscopic observations of the fibers, which often have a helicoidal architecture. This section also has information about physical characteristics, solvents, viscosity, and membrane formation. Methods for preparing chitin, its deacetylation to chitosan, its oxidation, the formation of its industrial derivatives, its metal chelation properties, and its analysis are all reviewed. Chitinases and related enzymes are adequately treated. The extensive bibliography, which begins with classical papers of the last century and continues through 1976, makes the book an essential reference.

This is not a massive compendium; the work has yet to be done. Nor does it report highly imaginative and advanced work; the field does not yet allow it. Nevertheless, it is a beginning in a field that can only grow. Together with the First International Conference on Chitin and Chitosan held in April 1977 and chaired by Muzzarelli, it may even be a landmark, showing that chitin studies have come of age.

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