from within, suggesting to some that mitosis in plants serves less to generate cellular building blocks than to subdivide space within an expanding organism. Unique to its kingdom is the dividing plant cell's habit of anticipating, and no doubt determining, the orientation of the new wall by positioning a "pre-prophase band" of microtubules that disappears before metaphase. How this structure forms, disappears, and determines the site where the new wall meets the old are unresolved problems. Finally, plant cells lack discrete centrosomes, centrioles, and asters, raising vexing questions about the locus and mechanism of mitotic spindle microtubule nucleation.

The 1992 symposium on which Molecular and Cell Biology of the Plant Cell Cycle is based, coming on the heels of the grand synthesis in mitosis research that capped the previous decade, provided a forum in which to assess the state of plant cell cycle studies. Thus from this volume one might hope to learn whether plants fall within or outside the continuum of variations in mitotic regulatory detail that is now known to separate yeast and animal cells. Alas, what we learn is that, although plant cells do indeed have cdc2 and cyclin genes, the leading players on the eukaryotic mitotic stage, the identities of the supporting cast members are largely unknown. Described in the book is much interesting work in progress such as that aimed at identifying plant homologues of cdc25, suc1, and cdc7, genes that link upstream elements to the central regulators. But the curious reader may be left unfulfilled owing to the dearth of substantive analyses of cause-and-effect relationships linking plant hormone reception to cell division, the withdrawal of differentiating plant cells from the proliferative state, or the roles of the conserved regulators with respect to the aforementioned structural idiosyncrasies in plant mitosis.

Yet one cannot help being inspired by the bounty of phenomenology under investigation here. Experimental systems representing no fewer than 23 species are discussed by a dozen research groups. (Perhaps a consolidation of effort by somewhat more than 0.5 laboratories per species might promote more rapid vertical progress in the future.) Tobacco, alfalfa, and Catharanthus cell cultures all appear to grow vigorously and respond well to mitotic synchronization protocols. A treasure trove of mutants in maize meiosis is described, revealing a largely untapped resource for cloners and cell biologists. The Zea mays root tip is presented as an exquisite developmental system in which quiescent, mitotic, and differentiating cell populations are distributed in predictable, dynamic patterns and can be cleanly isolated from one another for biochemical and molecular analyses. Naturally synchronous mitotic systems such as

regenerating tobacco leaf protoplasts, in vitro cultured Jerusalem artichoke tubers, and shoot apical meristems undergoing the floral transition invite potentially rewarding inquiries as to their underlying biochemical controls.

This timely volume will interest all cell biologists in search of fertile ground for a foray into plant development and cell division regulation. Given the ease of manipulation of plants, the accessibility of diverse genetic stocks, the absence of constraints imposed by "plant rights" activists (so far!), and the importance of this kingdom for the survival of our own, the book should serve to catalyze the migration of experimental biologists over to the green side of life.

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