

## Book Review

Review by Kathleen A. Head, ND

### ***Foundations of Natural Therapeutics: Biochemical Apologetics of Naturopathic Medicine***

by William A. Mitchell, Jr., ND.

Southwest College Press; ISBN: 1-889705-01-2, 1997

Soft Cover, 173 pages

Dr. Mitchell has produced an excellent workbook for both students and practitioners of nutritional and botanical medicine. The book is written in individual-frame, programmed-learning format, each frame building upon the previous frames, with questions interspersed to assist with comprehension and retention of the information. This book summarizes the biochemistry of nutrients, foods, and botanicals, focusing on the therapeutic application of these substances. By teaching the biochemistry underlying various disease processes, this book enables the practitioner to generalize to other conditions with similar pathogenesises.

Among the many topics covered are the biochemistry of essential fatty acids, carotenes and specific plant constituents. Several bioflavonoid structures are reviewed with an emphasis on how small changes in chemical structure determine their specialized functions in the body. While parts of the book will not be new to serious practitioners of nutritional medicine, it provides an excellent review. In addition, this reviewer picked up many new informative gems — such as the psychotropic effects of scotch broom blossoms. As an added bonus, the reader will also learn how the Native Americans from the plains were able to fell buffalo with a single, carved stone-tipped arrow.

Dr. Mitchell makes it possible to truly “let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food.” Some examples of nutraceutical effects elaborated in this book include: the hemicellulose content of pumpkin, sunflower and honeydew melon and this substance’s ability to produce cross-reactive antibodies to pneumococcal and hemophilus organisms; the libido-enhancing effects of fava beans; the inhibitory effects of wheat lectins on the immune-stimulating action of phytolacca; and the potential of peanut lectins to aid in the treatment of hemophilia and leukemia. The book is full of informative tidbits such as these.

While Dr. Mitchell primarily focuses on the biochemical basis for the use of many natural therapeutic substances, he never loses sight of the big picture. His deep appreciation and understanding of naturopathic philosophy shines brightly throughout the book. It’s probably the only biochemistry book that you will pick up and not want to put down before you’ve finished.