BOOK REVIEW


The author states that this book was written for advanced undergraduates and graduate students in medical and veterinary parasitology and entomology. It is unique among books on this subject in that it is organized by topics rather than by taxa.

The first two chapters discuss the importance of blood-sucking insects and trace the hypothesized evolutionary history of the blood-sucking habit. The third chapter discusses factors affecting feeding preference (host choice) and its significance for vectorial capacity using examples from the malaria literature. There is a logical progression of topics in the next three chapters: Chapter 4. Location of the host (appetitive searching, activation and orientation, attraction and movement between hosts), Chapter 5. Ingestion of the blood meal (vertebrate hemostasis, insect anti-hemostatic factors, probing stimulants, phagostimulators, mouthparts and blood intake), and Chapter 6. Managing the blood meal (midgut anatomy, the blood meal, gonotrophic concordance, nutrition, host hormones in the blood meal, partitioning of resources from the blood meal and autogeny).

Chapter seven discusses host-insect interactions and a brief but reasonably lucid review of host immune responses to insect salivary secretions. Some previous exposure to immunology would be helpful to students reading this section. This chapter also contains a nice review of host behavioral defenses. Chapter 8 contains a six page table of diseases transmitted by blood-sucking insects and an overview of vector-parasite interactions (transmission routes, vector-parasite specificity, parasite strategies for contacting vector and vertebrate hosts, vector pathology caused by parasites and insect defense mechanisms). The last chapter presents a brief synopsis of biology and disease transmission by blood-sucking insects.

Blood-sucking Insects is exceptionally well-written and holds the reader's interest. With approximately 600 references, it will be extremely useful to graduate students and others entering the field of medical and veterinary entomology. Its usefulness would have been enhanced by inclusion of material on ticks. Properly supplemented, Blood-sucking Insects could serve as a text for medical and veterinary entomology courses.

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Imagine a 300-page National Geographic special on the topography, flora and fauna (including the people) of South America's major rain forests, coupled with 100 pages of travel information, for $22.00. True that the format is slightly smaller (22.2 X 15 cm) than National Geographic's (25.3 X 17.5 cm), but the quality of the colored pictures