Spices and condiments are the dried parts of various plants, cultivated for their aromatic, pungent or otherwise desirable substances. These consist of rhizomes, bulbs, bark, flower buds, stigmas, fruits, seeds and leaves. India is the largest producer and consumer of spices in the world. It earns a foreign exchange of around Rs 3000 million through export of spices and value-added spice products. The publication 'Spices and Condiments', the first and only handbook available in India presenting a very comprehensive information on various spices in the world assumes importance here. The release of the fourth edition within a span of 16 years is a proof of its growing popularity. The purpose of this compendium according to the author is 'to compile, collate, categorise and condense the available information found scattered in different foreign and Indian journals, books, reports and standard reference works which are not easily available to the educated layman'. It is also intended to highlight the economic importance of spices and the tremendous role they play in human health about which the layman may not be fully aware of. To that extent, this book fulfils its objectives exceedingly well in providing authentic, useful and detailed technical information of each spice very comprehensively. The author is an international author-
Book review

Our view is that it will be a very useful and essential book for those who deal with spices in one way or other throughout the world. We also strongly recommend this book as a source of information on spices for students of agriculture/horticulture at the undergraduate level and to students of botany. We also feel that it will serve well for those in extension and research as a ready source of information on a wide range of spice crops. Besides, this book would be a treasure in every household for the simple reason that the consumer is to be aware of quality standards of various spices, he/she uses in the kitchen.

The efforts of the publisher M/s. National Book Trust, India in keeping the cost of this book at a very modest level to reach the hands of all interested in spices and condiments are really commendable.


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