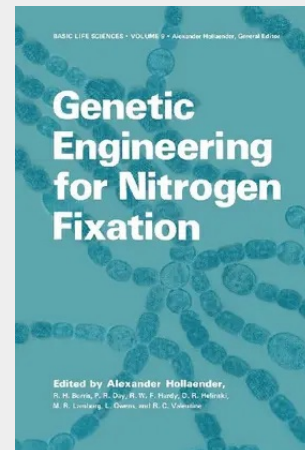


Genetic Engineering for Nitrogen Fixation

There is a time in scientific research when a number of developments coincide making it possible to progress with a tough and complicated problem. It is believed that such a time has come in the area of biological nitrogen fixation. A better understanding of photosynthesis, cell hybridization, plasmid, and gene transfer between cells not necessarily genetically related, have opened new avenues of research. New developments in traditional genetics, cell biology, biochemistry, including enzyme chemistry, and plant physiology have brought about the feeling this is a most appropriate time to pull together the different approaches in a conference where the lines of research could be discussed and thus help to speed up developments in this area. What makes biological nitrogen fixation especially important is the promise that a good understanding of the basic problem would help us to make organisms more amenable to fix nitrogen, not only in symbiosis with legumes, but also with other plant species and develop a wider variety of organisms with the ability to fix N₂. It will also encourage a search for naturally occurring N₂ fixing organisms other than the traditional N₂ fixers. Some success has already been encountered in this area. Success in broadening the field of nitrogen fixing would help to increase food supply, especially in developing countries which cannot afford to purchase synthetic nitrogen sources.

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