in the future which we are currently unaware of.

The last three chapters of the book switch to yet another level and focus on the application of insect ecology in a setting dominated by anthropogenic influences. Chapter 10 deals with insect conservation and should be read in conjunction with Chapter 9 on biodiversity and how this provides ecosystem services. Strong sections here are threats to insects, conservation and habitat restoration. Threats include human-driven land-use change, habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, climate change, agricultural practices and biological invasions. Chapter 11 addresses insects and diseases and points out that during the process of feeding insects often transmit diseases to man, other animals and plants. It is rightfully mentioned that human activities favour the population increase of insect vectors for diseases, and within this context some basic principles of modern vector control are discussed. The arguments brought across in this chapter are well-supported by case studies in both the animal and plant world by referring to river blindness, chagas disease, malaria, bubonic plague, Dutch elm disease, barley yellow dwarf virus and pine wilt. The final chapter on insect pest management has an anthropogenic basis, since ‘pests’ do not exist in nature and the term was coined by humans when insects started competing for their resources and had a negative influence on their lifestyle. The authors successfully bring this point across and provide sections that elaborate on resistance breeding, ecological management, biological control and chemical control, as well as the necessity of regular monitoring and understanding economic thresholds. The chapter concludes with a section on examples of IPM in practice.

A user-friendly improvement of this edition of the book is a list of contents which includes the primary headings of the different chapters. The book also has a comprehensive 82-page list of references to insect ecology literature. This is followed by a taxonomic index and a subject index.

As in any textbook of this magnitude, there will be errors and I picked up two that merit mention. The legend to Figure 1.9 on page 15 has an error in line 3 where it refers to three families, but only mentions Aphodiidae. Figure 5.36 on page 174 has all the arrows pointing in the wrong direction – when a predator feeds on prey the arrow should point from the predator to the prey, etc. However, the value of the book as an authoritative text on the wide-ranging topic of insect ecology outweighs these minor glitches by far. It is an essential reference source for university lecturers in the biological sciences, researchers in ecology and students in Entomology alike.

REFERENCES

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Until recently the two standard reference works that included information on the insect pests of vegetables in South Africa were Annecke & Moran’s Insects and Mites of Cultivated Plants in South Africa, published some 30 years ago, and Crop Pests in Southern Africa, a series of five booklets that appeared between 1986 and 1990. Both of these have been out of print for many years and Diedrich Visser’s new, up-to-date guide could thus not have been produced at a more opportune time. A Complete Guide to Vegetable Pests in South Africa is a follow-up on his highly popular Guide to Potato Pests and their Natural Enemies in South Africa, published in 2005. The author set himself the onerous task of providing detailed information and high-quality macro-photographs of all vegetable pests in South Africa, in addition to an up-to-date list of all species likely to be encountered on vegetables in the country. To this end he has produced a truly comprehensive guide, which