

January 2003

Book Review: Nitrate and Man: Toxic, Harmless or Beneficial?

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Recommended Citation

Kabogo, Jane; Evans, Jeanette; and Burns, Melanie, "Book Review: Nitrate and Man: Toxic, Harmless or Beneficial?" (2003). *Faculty Research & Creative Activity*. 8.
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EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS IN REVIEW: BOOKS

Nitrate and Man: Toxic, Harmless or Beneficial? L'hirondel J, L'hirondel JL, 2002. From CABI Publishing, 10E 40th St, Ste 3203, New York, NY 10016, (212) 481-7018, hardcover, \$65.00, 168 pp, ISBN 0-85199-566-7.

Nitrate and Man: Toxic, Harmless or Beneficial? provides a brief history of nitrate use in medicine and explains the role of nitrogen in the human body and plants. This technical book explores all aspects of nitrate and how it relates to the population by providing numerous studies throughout history.

Nitrate and Man: Toxic, Harmless or Beneficial? is organized into 8 chapters complete with references for professionals in science-oriented fields. Chapters highlight the history of nitrates in medicine and preservation of meats and nitrate's role through the 20th and 21st centuries. Fundamental introductory information regarding nitrate is described in the first 4 chapters, including topics such as its importance in plants and humans, the nitrogen cycle, and foods that contain an abundance of nitrate. The next 3 chapters discuss the toxic effects, the benefits of nitrate, and the current recommended dietary guidelines. The final chapter summarizes the book and presents further research that needs to be undertaken.

The cover of Nitrate and Man: Toxic, Harmless or Beneficial? depicts the variety of topics discussed. Important points, such as the potential toxicity in infants and nitrate's potential protection against cardiovascular disease, are highlighted through the use of gray text boxes at the top and bottom of pages. The functionality of nitrate is presented in several graphs and diagrams, whereas the clinical aspects and consumption trends of nitrates are described in 6 appendices. Moreover, summaries at the end of each chapter and a total summative chapter help to clarify the material.

Nitrate and Man: Toxic, Harmless or Beneficial? is a good resource for researchers or professionals in science-oriented fields. Scientists, agronomists, policy makers, and research dietitians, rather than laypeople or nutrition educators, would benefit more from this comprehensive text.

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