Hartmut Michel Encyclopedia Article

Hartmut Michel

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Hartmut Michel

1948-

German biochemist who received the 1988 Nobel Prize for Chemistry, which he shared with Johann Deisenhofer and Robert Huber. Together, they determined the structure of certain proteins necessary for photosynthesis (the process by which plants convert sunlight into energy). From 1978-82 Michel documented the three-dimensional structure of a four-protein complex, called a photosynthetic reaction center, necessary for photosynthesis in certain bacteria. Michel was able to crystallize the membrane-bound protein complex into a pure crystalline form, making it possible to determine the protein structure atom-by-atom by means of x-ray diffraction.