Herbert Charles Brown Encyclopedia Article

Herbert Charles Brown

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Herbert Charles Brown

1912-

English-American chemist who won the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1979 for his work with the compounds of boron. He discovered a way to produce alcohols from compounds containing carbon-carbon double bonds. (Alcohols are a class of carbon-containing compounds important in science and industry.) Brown used diborane (B_2H_6) to catalyze, or speed up, the process, which is now called hydroboration-oxidation. Brown also discovered that sodium borohydride ($NaBH_4$) could be used to catalyze other types of reactions that produce alcohols.