

Book Review

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The identification of fungi. An illustrated introduction with keys, glossary, and guide to literature.

The American Phytopathological Society, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA, 2006, vi + 176 p.
ISBN 0-98054-336-4. Price \$ 65.

The title of this book raises great expectations. However, as the author himself states in the preface, no single book can encompass thousands of described species of fungi. This manual should therefore be considered as an entry to the identification of fungi.

The main part of the book are characteristics of all groups of fungi and fungal organisms, i.e. „lower fungi“, Zygomycota, Ascomycota, Basidiomycota and Deuteromycetes. The classification reflects traditional groups (e.g. plectomycetes, discomycetes and hyphomycetes), however references to current phylogenetic studies are also given where appropriate. For every division and class, the main features are given, followed by a simplified key to families. Each family is shortly characterised in one or two lines and completed with a line drawing of one species as an example.

The manual is supplemented with nine drawings of fungal life cycles, literature on hosts, substrata and environments (e.g. alkaline-tolerant fungi, fungi on nematodes, food, plastics and rubber), an illustrated glossary of fungal structures, an index of names and terms, and a list of references.

The drawings of the fungal cycles are however not well elaborated; the design of arrows is not too good. Much more successful is the illustrated glossary, which will be useful to students. However the most valuable are the numerous references to literature on special groups of fungi (35 pages, nearly 900 references), which involve classical papers, often also secondary useful sources, together with recent literature until 2004 and partly 2005. Some important references are however missing (e.g. Samson et Frisvad: *Penicillium* subgenus *Penicillium*, Stud. Mycol. 49, 2004). Searching some references is difficult (e.g. Boerema et al.: *Phoma* Identification Manual, 2004, is not cited in *Sphaeropsidales*).

The text contains unfortunately numerous orthographical errors (often in Latin names). I have found over thirty errors, e.g. “maritimum” (p. 16), “Gigospora” (p. 18), “Eyrsiphe” (p. 33) or “peridoles” (p. 129).

Summarising, the book covers the entire fungal kingdom and fungus-like organisms and provides basic information on fungal groups at the family level. The extent of the book does not enable species identification; to this aim special literature is recommended. The book can thus serve as a good manual and gateway for non-specialists and students interested in mycology and fungus identification, but also for mycology teachers and every mycologist who would like to find quickly basic information on a fungal group which is not his domain.

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