

Book Review

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Illustrated genera of Ascomycetes. Volume II.

APS Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1998, 258 pages.

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Spiral-bound price USD 35.00.

The first volume of this book, published in 1990 by the same author, has been very successful, having three printings up to this time. The second volume presents another hundred genera in the same lay-out. A very broad spectrum of ascomycetous fungi is presented, including yeasts, plant parasitic fungi (*Protomyces*, *Taphrina*, *Cystotheca*, *Cryptomycina*, *Cocconiella* etc.), insect parasitic or insect associated genera (*Ascospaera*, *Coccidiascus*, *Herpomyces* or *Peyritschiella*), soil and coprophilous fungi, common saprotrophs on plant material and two examples of lichenised fungi (*Cladonia* and *Usnea*). The items are arranged completely artificially, based on Saccardo's system of spore types and resulting type of ascoma. A dichotomous key is provided for the identification of genera of this volume, without considering the genera presented in the previous volume.

The core of the book consists of generic descriptions and corresponding illustrations. Descriptions are followed by the names of associated anamorphs, habitat, representative species, comments on distinguishing related genera and selected references. The illustration of each genus is based on a drawing of a representative (not the type) teleomorph species. Anamorphs are not illustrated. The drawings are stylised and simplified to a certain measure, but depict clearly the essence of the fungus. Habitus on the host, ascoma, asci, ascospores and other diagnostic features are drawn by C. G. Hahn and some genera are completed with microphotographs.

The book is intended to teach students how to identify Ascomycetes. The dichotomous key comprises 109 steps, composed of short and clearly formulated distinctive characters. In the introduction some useful information about effective use of the key is given. Not only for beginners, but for all users from practice, some further information on the genera treated would be appreciated, such as systematic position on order level, number of species, distribution and illustration of the anamorph. It may be uneasy to search these details out in special literature. For five genera the illustrated species is not specified; in the case of common fungi such as *Diatrypella* or *Emericelopsis* such a solution seems to be undesirable.

Summing-up: the spiral-bound book (together with the first volume and Keys volume) will be a very useful aid to anyone who is interested in this extensive group of fungi. It can be recommended to students of applied mycology and phytopathology, but it may also stimulate interest of a wide range of biologists, who have the courage to get familiar with this striking group of organisms.

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