

REVIEWS

**PILZE. CHAMPIGNONS. FUNGI, VOLUME I: STROBILOMYCETACEAE, BOLETACEAE,
PAXILLACEAE, GOMPHIDIACEAE, HYGROPHORACEAE, TRICHOLOMATACEAE**
by Fred Waldvogel, Hans-Peter Neukom & Rudolf Winkler

AT Verlag, Arau, Switzerland. Hardbound, 8,3 x 11 inches, 428 pages with 200 color prints at page format. Text in English, German and French. 2001, ISBN 3-85502-704-8. Price \$US63,50 or 80 Euros

Reviewed by Tjakko Stijve

Upon receipt of this beautiful book I had the odd feeling that it had arrived at long last, after having been lost for years in the mail. However, it had only come out in August 2001, but I am sure that many people must have been eagerly waiting for it, and for good reason: in 1972 the Silva Verlag in Zürich edited the bilingual album *PILZE/CHAMPIGNONS* which distinguished itself from all other contemporary books on mushrooms by the high quality of its illustrations. The color prints were beautiful photographic assemblies showing each mushroom in various states of development with all possible varieties in form and color. This unique form of presentation was the work of Fred Waldvogel who thus achieved a rare perfection. The album, edited in 2 vols (gilled and non-gilled mushrooms) is still a collector's item, and usually priced about \$US50 in antiquarian bookshops. Waldvogel (1922–1997), originally an engineering draughtsman, later studied graphic arts and photography. He also took a keen interest in mushrooms and became a deserving amateur mycologist. He must have been a modest man, otherwise it is not understandable that only now, after his death, the international community of mushroom aficionados is allowed to benefit from his mycological and photographic know-how.

The present book is the first of a three volume edition which will be illustrated with 600 photographs selected from Waldvogel's legacy. The first volume (the 2nd and 3rd will appear in 2002 and 2003 respectively) treats 200 common and a few rare mushrooms from 50 genera. The text was written by Hans-Peter Neukom and Rudolf Winkler, who are well-known in Swiss and German mycological circles. Neukom achieved notoriety by his most readable articles which appeared both in the popular and scientific press. Winkler is the author of the recent mushroom guide *2000 Pilze einfach bestimmen* (Easy determination of 2000 mushrooms). Scientific accuracy of the Waldvogel book was checked by Switzerland's leading mycologist Prof. Egon Horak of the Geobotanical Institute of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich.

The working methods are summarised at p. 18 and the terminology used is explained in a brief glossary. A short but adequate description including information on habitat, distribution and edibility (or toxicity) accompanies each photograph. The American mycologist may not readily recognise all the mushrooms depicted in this book. For example, among the 49 Tricholomas, there are 22 which are not mentioned in Arora's *Mushrooms Demystified*. Of course, this may, at least partly, be explained by a question of nomenclature. In their choice of Latin names, Neukom and Winkler followed the 1996 publication by A. Bollmann, A. Gminder and P. Reil *An illustrated catalogue of Central-European Macromycetes* (2nd edn, Hornberg).

The English text is not flawless, but this is hardly perceptible in the descriptive part, where the authors use the mycological jargon. As already said, the photographs are really superb, although *Megacollybia platyphylla* (p. 372) hardly looks typical, because of its warm brown color. Most European collections of this common species have rather a grayish brown streaked pileus. The English common name Broad-gilled oyster is a misnomer. In the course of time, this mushroom has seen many genera, but not *Pleurotus*. Let's call it simply Broad-gill.

Information about the toxicity of the depicted species is generally correct. However, the occasionally reported hallucinogenic action of *Mycena rosea* (p. 406) is erroneously attributed to the presence of muscarine. The poisoning symptoms associated with this compound do not have a psychotropic character. Concerning edibility, the authors could have been more critical. *Boletus erythropus* is recommended warmly, but experience has taught time and again that red pored boletes are best avoided. *Xerocomus parasiticus*, the tiny bolete growing on *Scleroderma vulgare*, is also presented as edible, which is? considering its size and relative rarity? just ridiculous. By the description of *Lepista flaccida*, only the French text gives a warning against confusion with *Clitocybe amoenolens*, a rare mushroom that has recently been recognised as the culprit in several cases of mysterious poisonings that have occurred in France. Apparently, German- and English-speaking people are considered immune against the poison! On p. 232 *Lepista saeva*, the Field Blewit, is presented as an endangered species, in spite of the fact that this common cold-weather mushroom is every November sold in quantities on the markets in Vevey and Lausanne. *Hygrophorus marzuolus* (p. 160) is described as a mountain species

appearing in early Spring when the snow has just disappeared. The authors call it a tasty mushroom which was formerly sold in large quantities. However, in Western Switzerland people still pay the equivalent of about \$5 for 100 grams of these mushrooms, which are now even imported from France.

The photographs of the Parrot waxcaps (*Hygrophorus psittacinus*) are breath-taking, but the text mentions that the green pigment is water-soluble, and that older specimens may therefore have a yellow appearance. This is hardly true. Just as other photographers of fungi, Waldvogel must have known that the greenish coloration rapidly fades in direct light, and that one must work rapidly to take the picture.

Clearly, the book is worth buying because of its competition-defying photographs. The amateur mycologist will use it mainly at home to check his preliminary identifications performed in the field. The book also has photographs of rare mushrooms which are not easily found elsewhere. Just to give an example, this reviewer could, simply by leafing through the book, readily recognise two recent findings done among alder shrubs in a swamp. A bizarre Roll-rim proved to be *Faxillus rubicundulus*, whereas a less current bluing bolete with a bent stipe, growing in sheet-like clusters, was readily identified as *Gyrodon lividus*.

Purchase of this book is warmly recommended.

A TALE OF TWO CDS

Reviewed by H. Lepp

Fungimap. (2001). *Compendium of Fungimap Target Species*, CD-ROM, Version 1.0. Fungimap, Melbourne, Australia.

'Requires PC/Windows and screen resolution at least 800×600 and high colour'. \$15 + \$3 postage (within Australia). Enquiries to: fungimap@rbg.vic.gov.au or Fungimap, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra 3141, Australia.

Young, A.M. (2001). *101 Forest Fungi of Eastern Australia*, CD-ROM, Version 1.0. Knowledge Books & Software, Brighton, Qld and ABRIS, Canberra.

Requirements: 'Windows 3.X, Windows 95-98, Windows ME, NT 4.0/ Web browser IE or Netscape/ 486SX or Pentium/CD ROM double spin or better, 4mb RAM, VGA card, Mouse'. \$95 + \$5 postage (within Australia). Enquiries to: rob@kbs.com.au or Knowledge Books and Software, 40 Seaview Street, Brighton, Queensland 4017.

While these CD-ROMs have some common content and are targeted at non-mycologists, they have quite different aims. The first aims to let those involved in the Fungimap project (explained below) answer the Basic Question: Is the fungus I found today one of the target species? The other CD-ROM aims to provide some general information about fungi as well as an easy key to 101 (mostly common) fungi found in the forests of eastern Australia.

Fungimap

Fungimap aims to allow non-mycologists help map the Australian distributions of 100 target species, each recognizable by macroscopic features. Few people will see all 100 species but, no matter where you live, you should see some target species locally. Most of the Fungimap CD-ROM is devoted to those 100 species. There is also an explanation of Fungimap (and how to get involved), copies of all the Fungimap newsletters up to issue 12 (August 2000), and if you have an Internet connection you can get to the Fungimap website simply by pressing a button. Fungimap is based on reports of visual sightings not on submitted specimens so access to good photographic images of the target species is essential and that's the prime aim of this CD-ROM.

When you load the CD-ROM, the first screen gives you the option of going to the target species, to Fungimap details, information about the CD-ROM or some basic fungal background information. The 'How to use this CD-ROM' section explains the workings of the CD-ROM and gives admirably clear explanations of features and their uses. A couple of screen headings in that section have overprinted headings. That glitch does not hinder the user in any way. The basic background section gives some very limited mycological detail, references, a glossary of technical terms without illustrations, and brief hints on how to photograph fungi. All of this information is fairly basic, as acknowledged by the creators, and the plan is to greatly expand these areas in Version 2.