BOOK REVIEW

An Introduction to Fungi on Wood in Queensland. **By Ian Hood. 2003. Botany, School of Environmental Sciences and Natural Resources Management, University of New England, Armidale, Australia. Pp. 388, figs. 146, colour plates 4. ISBN 1 86389 819 0. Price: AUS$30.00.**

This soft-covered book is a companion volume to Hood (1992). The book has a strong practical emphasis with a focus on the wood inhabiting basidiomycetes, especially polypores, of Queensland, Australia.

The Introduction reviews information on the biology and ecology of wood inhabiting and wood decay fungi, their biogeography, economic significance, edibility for humans, methods of collection, and classification and nomenclature. Then follows a dichotomous key to the taxa discussed in the book with four pages of explanatory figures. The main text is divided into 141 Figures, each treating a taxon or a group of similar or related taxa. Each Figure includes a page of line drawings of fruiting-bodies and microstructures. The text for each Figure is subdivided into name of fungus (including authors but not place of publication), legend to drawings, nomenclatural synonyms, form, texture, colours, comments and references. The classification follows Ryvarden (1991). There is no pretence that taxa can be positively identified without knowledge of the microcharacters.

The line drawings, though not great examples of mycological illustration, convey the essential attributes of the fungus being discussed. All illustrations of microstructures are at the same scale (1 mm = 1 μm *vide* p. 25). Usually spores, cystidia (if present) and hyphae are depicted. However, often only the apices of cystidia or basidia are shown. This is unfortunate as one cannot see from what kind of hypha the structure arose and if there is a clamp connection at the basal septum. The descriptions of form are not formal mycological descriptions but notes for use by a field mycologist or naturalist. Reaction to iodine solution of spores or other structures is noted under Colours. Each Figure includes comprehensive referencing to recent mycological and phytopathological literature. The Bibliography is extensive (35 pages). The Index refers only to names of fungus taxa that are located under Figures not pages. Host information is often quite general *e.g.* in regrowth rainforest. Some pages include drawings of plants with no indication of their relevance to the fungus being discussed *e.g. Alocasia macrorhizas* (p. 279), *Corymbia variegata* (p. 105), *Pandanus tectorius* (p. 265).

The Comment subsection includes a note on the kind of rot caused in the wood. This attribute is a character of generic importance but is often overlooked by naturalists. Often there is discussion of other taxa of similar appearance. The book is based upon first hand experience and critical personal observations of the fungi discussed. There is no indication of whether or not voucher collections were retained and if so where they are kept.

While there have been numerous popular photographic accounts of basidiomycetes published in Australia in the past two decades there has been no popular account of polypores and other wood inhabiting fungi. Hood's book compliments Cunningham's (1965) now seriously out of date account of the polypores and the out of print book by Aberdeen (1979). It is a valuable introduction to the wood inhabiting fungi of Queensland and Australia and an excellent source book for budding forest pathologists and mycologists. The modest price should ensure this book is on the shelves of all mycologists, naturalists and conservationists.

J.A. Simpson

References

Aberdeen, J.E.C. (1979). An Introduction to the Mushrooms, Toadstools and Larger Fungi of Queensland. *Queensland Naturalists' Club Handbook* **1,** 1–120.

Cunningham, G.H. (1965). Polyporaceae of New Zealand. *New Zealand Department of Scientific and Industrial Research Bulletin* **164,** 1–304.

Hood, I.A. (1992). *An Illustrated Guide to Fungi on Wood in New Zealand.* Auckland University Press, Auckland, New Zealand in association with the Forest Research Institute, Rotorua. Pp. 424.

Ryvarden, L. (1991). Genera of polypores. Nomenclature and taxonomy. *Synopsis Fungorum* **5,** 1–363.