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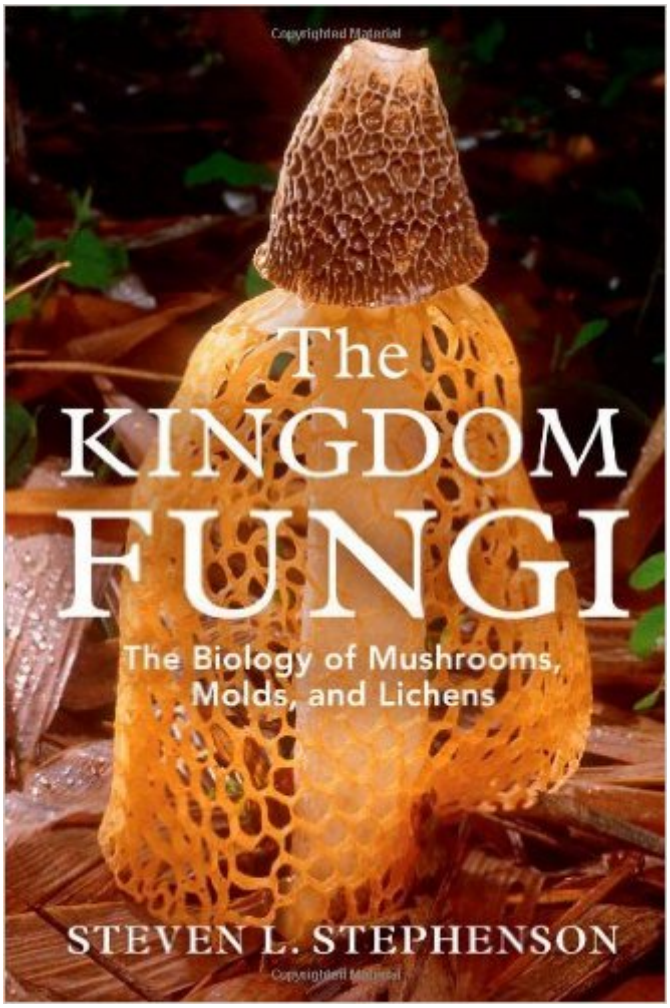
The Kingdom Fungi: The Biology Of Mushrooms, Molds, And Lichens



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Synopsis

The ubiquitous fungi are little known and vastly underappreciated. Yet, without them we wouldnâ ™t have bread, alcohol, cheese, tofu, or the unique flavors of mushrooms, morels, and truffles. We canâ ™t survive without fungi. The Kingdom Fungi provides a comprehensive look at the biology, structure, and morphological diversity of these necessary organisms. It sheds light on their ecologically important roles in nature, their fascinating relationships with people, plants, and animals, and their practical applications in the manufacture of food, beverages, and pharmaceuticals. The book includes information about â œtrueâ • fungi, fungus-like creatures (slime molds and water molds), and a group of â œcompositeâ • organisms (lichens) that are more than just fungi. Particular attention is given to examples of fungi that might be found in the home and encountered in nature. The Kingdom Fungi is a useful introductory text for naturalists, mycologists, and anyone who wants to become more familiar with, and more appreciative of, the fascinating world of fungi.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Most comprehensive work on the subject, that I have read. Allows for easy identification, yet is very thorough and a work of art. From post graduate to the layperson it has everything you needed for any application on the subject. I think all of his work is amazing, but this is my favorite, in that it shows his work in a way that anyone would think they are in one of his seminars or classes. Wonderful!

No organism on Earth can exist in isolation, each must play it’s part in a complex web of interacting life called the Biosphere. Plants and animals were long thought to be the main driving force behind our thriving ecosystem. But there are other players out there; bacteria, viruses and protist microorganisms in numbers beyond counting. For most people, however, it’s the multicellular organisms that are the most apparent and noticeable. In "The Kingdom Fungi" biologist Steven L Stephenson introduces us to a third group, without which the plants and animals that we are all so familiar with would probably not exist at all; the Fungi. Nobody knows for sure how many different species of fungus there are, science has documented over a 100,000 but some specialist think the total count my be much higher, anywhere from 1.5 to 5 million, with new species being discovered on a regular basis. For sheer diversity of form and function the fungi can match, or even surpass, anything in the plant or animal kingdoms. When we ask ourselves what the largest organisms are, most people would think of the blue whale or the giant sequoia but fungi may hold the record with individuals that cover acres of land and weigh in at many tons. Most of them, however, are of a more manageable size with many in the microscopic realm. Keep in mind that the mushrooms you see on your lawn are only "the tip of the iceberg" with the bulk of the organism being below ground in the form of root-like Hyphae. While accessible to the layperson this book can be very technical in some parts, with the use of scientific names for each species, their various body parts and different stages of life. Of course, some fungi do have "common names", but those can be confusing because of regional differences. The same name, used in the USA, can refer to a different species in Canada or Europe, so Dr Stephenson always indicates the scientific name along with the common name. After giving you a breakdown of the various groups of fungi by family and species the author goes into their different modes of reproduction and how they go about acquiring energy from other organisms and the environment. And It’s the interaction between the 3 main kingdoms that I found to be the most fascinating: as parasite, symbiont, predator or prey the fungi play their role to perfection. A good example are the Lichens, a kind of partnership between fungi and algae. With thousands of species that exist all over the world Lichens play a major role in our environment. Also, the relationship between fungi and the higher plants can be very complex, even beyond imaging; the Spotted Coralroot Orchid and the Indian Pipe (Monotropa) will give you a glimps of just how far this relationship can go. There’s even a fungi "predator" that prays on microscopic Nematode worms by ensnaring them in a ring of hyphae and digesting them from the inside out. Also covered are the Slime Molds and their kin, considered by some to be in a separate Kingdom of their own. As you can tell, I really liked this book, it gave me a fresh look at the natural world and its

most unusual resident. I found Dr Stephenson writing to be informative and easy to follow, even in the technical sections. I did notice, however, that no mention was made of the many kinds of fungi that cause human disease. But, for me, this was not an important issue, Medical Mycology, while vital and interesting, might be somewhat beyond the scope of this particular book and would be better served under another cover. I had no technical or formatting problems with this Kindle edition.Last Ranger

An admirable introduction to a vast area of life and evolution most of which is hidden in plain sight or is woven under, over, around & through other forms of life; certainly the argot of the discipline is heterodox & confusing but the author deals with as well as may reasonably be expected.

This is a very readable book as an intoduction to the world of the fungi. It covers the currently recognized organisms that fit the definition of Fungus: the Chytrids, Zygomycetes, Ascomycetes, Basidiomycetes and the vast number of asexual fungi (mildews, molds and yeasts). It then covers fungal associations with plants both as symbionts and as pathogens. There are chapters on lichens (a fungal and algal or cyanobacter symbiosis), fungal, insect associations and animals specialized in eating fungi. Then there are chapters on non-fungal organisms no longer considered to be fungi but look or act like them. These include Slime Molds (protozoans or protists), water molds including the agent of the Irish Potato Famine again a protist not a fungus. These latter chapters take up a lot of space, yet there is not one mention of fungi as agents of human disease. This is a very serious aspect of fungal importance but there is no word about it. Some 30 million people in the central and mid-west United States have or have had Histoplasmosis and about 10 million people in the dry Western parts of the U.S. have or have had Valley Fever (Coccidiodomycosis), let alone the constant trek of youngsters with ring worm (Dermatophytes) and adults with athletes foot and the women with vaginal yeast infections. Presently we are seeing an upserge in opportunistic fungal infections and death in immunocompromised hospital patients. These certainly deserve mention in an introductory fungal book. (I am a Medical Mycologist as well as a general Mycologist). I therefor cannot give a top rating to this book even though it is well written but it has left out a large and significant part of the Fungus story.

I bought this book for my slime mold and fungus class. It came in great condition and was SO much cheaper than my campus bookstore. I have no complaints whatsoever about this. It arrived well before the estimated arrival which is great for the time restraints of college.Be careful! This book is

susceptible to dogs that like to chew and shred.

This is not about content of the book it is actually very good, but design of ebook, it is poor. References to the plates, or I would say links are absent!! Why? Looks like people who designed it came straight from the traditional print shop, common! its 2013, Kindle being around six years. Reader be aware!!

This in depth description of the cellular biology and ecology of fungi is livened up with interesting descriptions of fungi-human interactions, history, and evolution.

Not a rigorous review, but an informative, broad survey with many interesting details.

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