

Preface

This *Dictionary*, now in its 52nd year, aims to provide all those who work with fungi a way into our accumulated knowledge on them. We regard fungi as all organisms studied by mycologists, including lichens, mushrooms, slime moulds, water moulds and yeasts. The inclusion of names of lichens (more correctly lichen-forming fungi) in the sixth edition occasioned some surprise; we trust that in the 1990s it can be assumed that wherever we use 'fungi', we are automatically including those that form lichens.

In preparing and revising entries for this eighth edition we are fortunate in not only being able to build on the pioneering compilation of G.C. Ainsworth and G.R. Bisby (q.v.), but also to have had the benefit of a wide range of contributors (p. viii) and other help from numerous mycologists. At the same time, we have personally revised many of the entries, so that all errors found are our responsibility.

This edition is the first to accept that fungi have to be dispersed through three kingdoms of eukaryotes: *Chromista*, *Fungi*, and *Protozoa*. It also abandons the deuteromycetes as a formal systematic category and endeavours to incorporate them in the system of ascomycetes and basidiomycetes; this is the only defensible treatment as these fungi can be assigned to the different phyla on ultrastructural, molecular and biochemical grounds. Our decision to use 'mitosporic fungi' has been extensively debated at international workshops (Portland, Oregon 1993; Paris 1994). The system adopted for the ascomycetes here is that developed in collaboration with O.E. Eriksson (University of Umeå), with whom D.L.H. has been privileged to cooperate in this endeavour since 1985. The system of higher categories of chromistan fungi used is deliberately more conservative than proposed by M.W. Dick (*Mycol. Pap.*, in press) as we feel that classifications are hypotheses that need a period of testing before they can be commended for general use.

We also wish to record our particular gratitude to D.N. Pegler (Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew) for joining us to take primary responsibility for the system of and updating entries on *Basidiomycetes*, and further for compiling the key to accepted families in that group.

This eighth edition also has several other new features: (a) the inclusion of a key to the accepted families for the first time since the fifth edition in 1961; (b) a synopsis of the genera referred to particular orders and families (also the first time since the fifth edition); (c) notes on major mycological collections and cross references to their acronyms; (d) the revision of most general entries by specialists; (e) the separate listing of many prefixed terms; (f) the inclusion of entries for all accepted families and some frequently used synonyms; (g) the inclusion of illustrations adjacent to the appropriate entries; and (h) a larger page size to help its stay-open factor.

The updates for this edition were greatly aided by the computerization of the previous edition arranged in 1982 by J. Gilmore (Director-General of CAB INTERNATIONAL from 1994) using BASIS software. The database was then adapted to run under SMARTWARE II on the personal computer network at IMI so that we could update entries on screen. The database is now one of the suite of major systematic mycological databases available in IMI.

Having been intimately involved in the compilation and proof-stage revisions, we are acutely aware of imperfections and improvements that we would have liked to have made. As remarked recently of another major compilatory work, our aspiration is that it will at least prove to be 'a marvellously imperfect work needed by all'.

Do send us your corrections and comment so that the ninth edition will be less imperfect and of even more value to mycologists of all disciplines world-wide.

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IMI, Egham

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