Molecular Microbial Ecology Manual

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For a long time, microbial ecology has been developed as a distant field within ecology. In spite of the important role of microorganisms in the environment, this group of 'invisible' organisms remained unaccessible to other ecologists. Detection and identification of microorganisms are largely dependent on isolation techniques and characterization of pure cultures. We now realize that only a minor fraction of the microbial community can be cultivated. As a result of the introduction of molecular methods, microbes can now be detected and identified at the DNA/RNA level in their natural environment. This has opened a new field in ecology: molecular microbial ecology. The present manual provides to the microbial ecologist a selected number of current molecular techniques that are relevant in microbial ecology. The first edition of the manual contains 33 chapters. During the next year some 30 further chapters will be published. Since the field of molecular ecology is progressing continuously, the manual will be regularly extended and updated. It is hoped that this manual finds its place where it is born: at the lab bench.

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