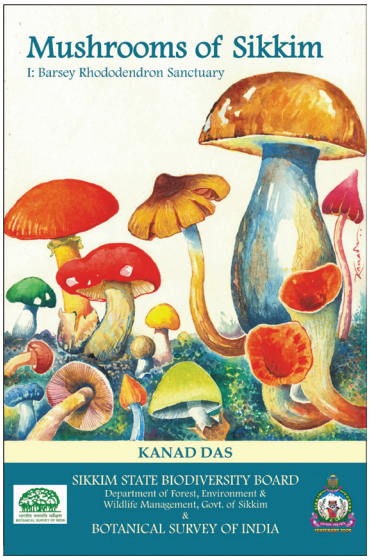
BOOK REVIEW

Mushrooms of Sikkim - I: Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary by Kanad Das, published by Sikkim state Biodiversity Board, Gangtok-737102 & Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata, 2009, 160 pp, all coloured on art paper. Paperback edition ISBN: 978-81-909680-0-3, Price Rs 600/-



Field guide on Mushrooms of Sikkim (Barsey Rhododendron Sanctury) by Dr. Kanad Das is an illustrated authoritative document which gives a glimpse of rich mushroom diversity in that area. As far as my information goes it is first book of its kind, dealing with field characterization of Indian Mushrooms belonging to Phylum Ascomycota and Basidiomycota, by an Indian Scientist.

The comprehensive introductory chapter clearly outlines the major morphological features besides giving details about various aspects including collection of material, taking spore print, seasonal variation in the study area and precautions required to be taken while working on these fungi. A handy workable key for the identification of documented species based purely on field characters has added to the utility of this field guide to the beginners and amateur workers.

The main body of the book contains information about each documented mushroom for which, besides good quality field photographs, information about scientific name, common name, local name, season of occurrence, distribution, habitat, edibility, field characters and basidiospore characters have been given. Availability of all these features at one place makes this field guide more user friendly for easy identification of the mushrooms available in the Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary and other similar habitats of North East and other parts of the country. For the common man and beginners the author has segregated the edible and inedible harmless mushrooms from the poisonous mushrooms by a danger signal next to the species name which will help the user in staying away from such mushrooms while gathering them for consumption or selling in the market.

Towards the end of the book, incorporation of the information about edibility, nutrition, medicinal value, poisoning, threat perception and conservation makes it more informative and complete from field utility point of view. A full page of the field guide has been devoted to mushroom poisoning and mushroom toxins. This portion is a must for any book dealing with mushroom to make people aware of the ensuing danger of mushroom consumption without proper knowhow about the culinary credentials. Overall, it is a commendable attempt, hope Dr. Das with zeal for exploratory work will continue and extend his area of operation to the whole of North East.

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