

BOOK REVIEW

Checklist of Fungi of Malaysia. Research Pamphlet No. 132. SS Lee, SA Alias, EBG Jones, N Zainudin & HT Chan. Forest Research Institute Kepong. 2012. Malaysia. 556 pp. ISBN 978 967 5221 82 8. RM95/USD57.

This is the first comprehensive checklist of Malaysian fungi to have been compiled since that of Chipp (1921), though there have been lists of plant pathogens and various special lists. The number of species recorded has swelled from 861 to around 4000 over that time. The new list covers all fungal groups and fungal analogues, including myxomycetes and oomycetes, and fungi with all biologies are embraced, including the lichen-forming fungi. The checklist itself is preceded by a series of eight succinct overviews the exploration and diversity of the various phyla, which also in most cases incorporate a disposition of the accepted species by family, although the asexual fungi were listed separately from sexual ones.

The main body of the work, however is a checklist in which all species are, conveniently, listed alphabetically. For each species the current name is given where that differs from that reported, and there are columns detailing the substrate/host, location, and literature reference. The bibliography comprises 441 publications, and also references to four websites. The authors have clearly been at pains to check the names, with which Paul M Kirk evidently assisted. There is also a CD slipped into the inside back cover Paul prepared which holds a 410-page PDF with information on the 12,000 Malaysian collections held in the living collections of CABI Bioscience and reference specimens of the former International Mycological Institute (IMI; now housed at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew); the collections are arranged systematically with full details of substrate/host, year of collection,

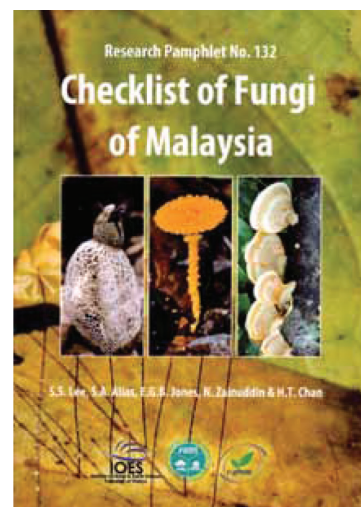
locality, and collector. Many of the IMI collections were made by Anthony P Johnston who served as a plant pathologist in Malaysia from 1946–64, prior to moving to IMI of which he was the Director from 1968–83.

The authors stress that this is only the starting point to an inventory of the fungi of Malaysia; with some 15,000 recorded vascular plants, the real total could be as much as 90,000 so there is much still to be done. Perhaps to tempt future mycologists to undertake work in the region, there are 12 plates, mostly in colour, showing selected species. This fine compilation is an excellent example of what can be achieved by a dedicated team with appropriate resources and merits emulation more widely in tropical countries to provide a spring-board for future exploration and documentation of the mycobiota.

REFERENCE

- CHIPP TF. 1921. A list of fungi of the Malay Peninsula. *Gardens' Bulletin, Straits Settlements* 2: 311–418.

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