

BOOK REVIEW

BRITT A. BUNYARD. 2022. **The Lives of Fungi: A Natural History of our Planet's Decomposers.** (ISBN-13: 978-0-691-22984-3, hbk). Princeton University Press, 41William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540, U.S.A. (**Orders:** press.Princeton.edu). \$29.95 US, 288 pp., 187 color photographs, 42 b/w photographs, 36 illustrations, references, index, 7½" × 9½".

Every so often a book comes along that takes a complex subject like FUNGI and breaks it down into language for a general readership so that everyone can understand. This is a special book written by a gifted author who knows how to describe and illustrate the beauty of fungi with stunning spectacular photographs. These images are the best I have ever seen and the book price is a bargain! It should be on everyone's bookshelf! Even the catchy phrase that begins the book **"Everything depends on everything else"** really portrays fungi in a nutshell. Buy this book and you will enter and enjoy the world of fungi in a way never experienced before!

The topical book sections begin with the INTRODUCTION that gives an overview of the role fungi play in nature and in and on our human bodies. My only concern about this book was the font size of the captions (I had to use a magnifying glass to read the script), and the same goes for the text. I suppose this is, in part, the failing of an aging old man!

Topical titles include: What are fungi?; Spore dispersal; Zoochory (animal dispersal); Mimicry; Phoeniculis Rust; Bamboo Stinkhorn; Artillery Fungus; Aquatic Mushroom (for some this was unbelievable but it is a true story); Scarlet Berry Truffle; Hat Thrower; A strange chemistry (here you will find bioluminescence); Intoxicating fungi; Chemical mind control; Ergot; Tinder Polypore; Caterpillar Fungus; Mycotoxin Producer; Flying Saltshaker Fungus; Our rotten world; Parasites of animals; Parasites of plants; Beech Orange Fungus; Corn Smut; Horn Stalkball; Fairy Ring Mushroom; Lobster Mushroom; Green Stain; World-changing fungi; Fungi through history; Human impact; Caesar's Mushroom; Spore Eater; Downy Mildew of Grape; Emerging Threat; St. George's Mushroom; Slime Mold Eater (Myxomycetes are not fungi), but an interesting example rarely mentioned; Everything depends on everything else (symbiosis); Fungus Mutualism (animal and plant); Mossy Maze Polypore; Beetle Hangers; Titan Mushroom; Horsehair Lichens (lichens are fungi); Conifer Maze Conk; Ash Bolete; A changing planet; Fungi in our homes and gardens; Unwelcome fungi; Dry Rot Fungus; Noble Rot Fungus; Lasso Fungi; European Fly Agaric; Cultivated Mushrooms; Nebrodo Oyster Mushroom; Fungi that heal and feed; Fungi that kill; Magic mushrooms; Extreme fungi; Perigord Truffle; Burn Morels; Death Cap; Magic Mushrooms; Stonemaker Fungus; Bonfire Cups. These tantalizing topical titles should be enough to whet your appetite for this book!

There is a helpful GLOSSARY from pages 278–280; also, USEFUL RESOURCES (book titles); organizations and websites dedicated to the education and conservation of fungi; and an index in pages 284–287 that aids in the location of subject matter.

There have been a number of popular books on fungi but not like this one. I predict this book will capture the imagination of the public and be a best seller! Congratulations to Britt A. Bunyard for giving fungi their proper importance in nature and to humankind.

—Harold W. Keller, PhD., Professor Emeritus, Botanist and Mycologist, Researcher
Fort Worth Botanic Garden | Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, 76107-3400, U.S.A.