

Book Review

Ricek, E.W. 1989: Die Pilzflora des Attergau, Hausruck- und Kobernausserwaldes. — Abhandlungen der Zoologisch-Botanischen Gesellschaft in Österreich. Band 23. 439 pp., 10 figs, 20 tables. Selbstverlag der Zoologisch-Botanischen Gesellschaft in Österreich. Wien.

Erich W. Ricek was eight years old when the family of school rector L.G. Ricek moved to Attergau in the Upper Austria, SE of Salzburg. There the boy would perform his life's work as a school rector in St. Georgen, W of the lake Attersee. In addition to this vocation he was an enthusiastic botanist and became an excellent expert of phanerogams, bryophytes, lichens and also fungi of his home district. In many publications he reported on the local flora and vegetation.

Of all plant and fungus groups, and also of the landscape, he painted masterful pictures, which were to be seen in many exhibitions in the Biological Museum at Vienna. All mycologists know his aquarelles in the last edition of Michael, Hennig & Kreisel: Handbuch für Pilzfreunde.

The work upon which this flora is based began 50 years ago. The area of the flora is relatively small, and therefore most of the many thousands of field trips were made on foot or by bicycle; the author used a car only in the last eight years. Thus a very intensive and long-term study has been possible, a very important thing in mycofloristic works.

The book begins with a short introduction to the topography and geology of the area from the Northern Limestone Alps to the Northern Alpine foreland on silicate rocks (6 pp.). Then the main biotopes of the area are briefly described (31 pp.). The habitats of different tree species from the *Abies* forests to the moist *Populus* forests and *Alnus* and *Salix* thickets are briefly characterized and their most important fungi listed. Also forest edges, mires, meadows, and sites more or less created by man are discussed.

The chapter dealing with the changing of the mycoflora in the area over the last 50 years is particularly interesting. Owing to the very long follow-up in the same area, the author has had an exceptionally good opportunity to note whatever changes. Positive and negative changes are listed, and the factors causing them are briefly discussed and some examples given. Sorry to say, negative changes dominate. More intensive and harsher methods in agriculture and forestry, draining, fertilization and

reforestation of meadows, etc. have decreased the diversity of nature and made it more monotonous. Recently air pollution and even collections have also had a negative impact on the fungus flora.

The mycoflora of the area has become poorer, and especially rare species have become threatened. Seventy-eight species are listed as threatened, in addition, 59 species are listed as strongly decreased. From the Finnish point of view, it seems somewhat surprising that prohibition of gathering is recommended for protection in 37 cases, whereas over-collecting is considered to be responsible for the decrease of only seven species.

The main portion of the book is the large floristic part (337 pp.). In all, more than 1 700 species of Ascomycetes and Basidiomycetes are listed in a systematical order, which makes the book easy to use (related species are near each other). For each species, the ecology is thoroughly discussed (biotopes, mycorrhizal, saprophytic or parasitic hosts, substrates, requirements of nutrients and pH, etc.), and abundance and growth habit, fructification period, and frequency in the whole area and/or in partial areas are given. At the end there is a complete list of localities.

The localities are listed according to the so-called "MTB square system", commonly used in floristic and mycological mapping in Central Europe. The "Grundfeld" of ca. 13 x 12 km is here further divided into four quadrats. Possible changes in frequency or abundance are specifically noted. Owing to Ricek's broad knowledge of different plant groups, his ecological notes appear to be very informative and reliable. Some species seem to have ecological requirements distinctly different from those in Fennoscandia.

The floristic part is followed by 20 beautiful colour paintings by the author, depicting 37 species.

Taxonomical notes are fairly few in the book, and as a rule, there exist no data upon which the identification is based. Exsiccate material has apparently not been collected, because I could not find any mention of specimens. Those facts cause some difficulties, since many of the species are not well-known to Nordic mycologists and the interpretation of the names may also be different in some cases.

Because of its detailed presentation of the ecology of the species and the changes in their frequency and abundance over many years, the book will be useful and important also to Nordic mycologists.

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