

BOOK REVIEW

ALAN E. BESSETTE, WILLIAM C. ROODY, AND ARLEEN R. BESSETTE. 2010 (first edition paperback of an earlier hard-back 2000 edition). **North American Boletes: A Color Guide to the Fleshy Pored Mushrooms**. ISBN 978 0-8156-3244-3, hbk., alk paper). Syracuse University Press, 621 Skytop Road, Suite 110, Syracuse, New York 13244-5290, U.S.A. (Orders: 800-365-8929, supress@syr.edu). \$45.00, 400 pp., 2 b/w, 454 color illustrations, 8" x 10".

This book mirrors the beauty and morphological features of the bolete mushrooms with color images and descriptive narrative that will entice the more technical professional and casual user alike. There are approximately 300 species illustrated with color images and morphological descriptions using both macroscopic (heavily emphasized) and microscopic characteristics. New information highlighting macrochemical tests and color changes enhance the value of the species descriptions based on the bolete biota of North America north of Mexico. Species descriptions include pileus, pore surface, stipe, spore print color, fruiting (habit, seasonal occurrence, and geographic distribution), comments, and edibility. Under the heading of comments are miscellaneous notes dealing with synonymy, similar species, interesting facts, and field impressions.

A brief historical review is given that includes both past and present students of boletes beginning with Lewis David von Schweinitz, and then Walter H. Snell and Esther A. Dick, Alexander H. Smith, and more recently Ernst F. Both among others. The fleshy pore fungi are a varied group with highly prized edibles such as *Boletus edulis* and in addition many species that form an ectomycorrhizal symbiotic relationship sharing nutrients with the roots of trees as well as food for wildlife. The typical bolete fruiting body has a spore-bearing layer comprised of vertical tubes forming a thick, sponge-like fleshy area described in detail in the introductory sections. This information will prepare users to better understand species descriptions.

Boletes are some of the larger fleshy fungi found in nature so that they are frequently collected by amateurs but are often difficult to identify. Field keys are dichotomous, based on macroscopic characters and separated into species found in eastern and western regions with the dividing line the Rocky Mountains. The beginner will find the keys for the most part user friendly even though some bolete species have distribution patterns not fully known.

The color images were scanned from 35mm color slide form and arranged $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$ inches usually five or six per page. The high quality of the color images along with excellent close up composition showing cap, pore and stipe surfaces enable the collector to match characteristics in species descriptions with key characters used in identification. The paper is heavy 86 pound stock that is best for four-color separation and allows for minimal show-through from one side of the page to the other. The color images are grouped as a block in one section and not interleaved with the black and white species description pages. This book is oversized for use in the field, however, the spine is saddle-stitched at the binding edge in 16-page sections then perforated to receive glue that holds all of the pages into the paper cover. Rough handling should not result in splitting the spine and loose pages.

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BOOK REVIEW (CONTINUED)

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Six pages of terms found in the glossary and used mostly in conjunction with species descriptions help the reader to understand terminology usage. There are references of recommended reading and specific works cited that offer background sources of additional information on the bolete literature. I found features of the Indexes to be especially helpful in finding specific information such as the Index to Common Names along with the color illustrations denoted in italics. This helps to find a given color image since it is not conveniently placed next to the species descriptions. The Index to Genera and Species arranged alphabetically by genus and then species also is a quick way to find a given species.

There are many mushroom books available for purchase but this one should be at the top of the list for anyone interested in learning more about fungi in natural habitats. Individual members of the North American Mycological Society and the more than 80 clubs in Canada, Mexico, and the United States of America should have this book on their bookshelf. College, university, and public libraries will want to have this affordable book available to the general public to enjoy the biodiversity of fungi. State, national parks, and conservation agencies will also be interested in this book as a reference. There are few books that span the broad readership spectrum of amateur to professional mycologists as well as naturalists but this one touches all of the bases. —Harold W. Keller, *Research Associate, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 1700 University Drive, Fort Worth, Texas 76107-3400, U.S.A.*