

## BOOK REVIEW

K. H. Domsch and W. Gams: *Pilze aus Agrarböden*. Gustav Fischer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1970; pp. XI + 222, 140 text figures and photographs, 1600 references to literature; DM.48.

In the introduction the authors state clearly the purpose and the scope of the book; against this background the book should be reviewed.

In the course of their studies on the effect of crop residues in two fields situated near Kiel (West Germany), the authors collected and identified more than 23,500 isolates of fungi, belonging to over 400 species in nearly 100 genera spread over 5 classes. Of each species several isolates were tested in vitro for their production of enzymes and of substances influencing the growth of green plants. The results obtained are published in this book together with data from the literature on geographic distribution, habitat and physiology, to be found widely scattered over the literature. Some of the information provided is of academic interest and may not be useful to someone working on an ecological problem in a given area, but it is a laudable effort to compile it all in one volume. True enough the authors could not verify identifications and statements made in the literature, but nevertheless it is most convenient for the users of the book to be referred to the relevant publications instead of having to search for them.

Although the book is not a work of taxonomy it is very useful for determining the species once a fungus has been placed in the proper genus. For identification to generic level there are fortunately some very good keys available elsewhere, but for identification of the species one usually has to consult the monographs, which are not always easy to get at. It is therefore very convenient to find the common species illustrated and characterized by their differential features all in one book. They are very much to the point and are a great help in distinguishing between related species.

The figures are all original; hence we do not meet any of the traditional pictures which have already been used by several generations of authors. The photographs are generally of high quality, only very few (for instance Fig. 24, *Cladosporium cladosporioides*) convey no information worth-while to the users for whom this book is intended. The line drawings very aptly show the habit of the fungi as they appear when viewed through the microscope. With regard to the drawings one may ask why a smooth strain of *Penicillium granulatatum* is depicted, while in this species the conidiophores are normally coarsely granular.

Printing errors are infrequent. A slip of the pen which escaped attention, is the statement that the central cells of the bulbils of *Papulaspora irregularis* should be larger than those of *P. immersa*, while the reverse is true.

In the course of my work I have used this book intensively and profitably and I do not hesitate to recommend it to every worker on soil fungi.

J. H. van Emden