



Splendid Dermocybe, *Dermocybe splendida*

Colours and Textures

I have always thought of fungi in terms of white, grey, brown, yellow, and maybe orange or magenta; lovely, but muted, subtle colours that blended in with the forest floor. As Patricia discovered more and more species, and added them to her paintings, it became clear what an incredible array of colours there actually are. The Rhubarb Bolete, *Boletellus obscurecoccineus* (Plate B11 and p.19), the Egg-yolk Fungus, *Bolbitius vitellinus* (Plate B12), and the Apricot Coral Fungus, *Ramaria ochraceo-salmonicolor* (Plate B5) – just three on one page whose names say it all. What about the Curry Punk Fungus, *Piptoporus australiensis* (Plate D5), the Orange Club Fungus, *Ramariopsis depokensis* (Plate E10), and the Rainbow Bracket, *Trametes versicolor* (Plate E17)? But there are bright reds, purples, greens and blues also, especially amongst the *Russula*, *Cortinarius* and *Dermocybe* genera. The extracts from some of these colourful fungi have also been found to make excellent fabric dyes.

To add to the fun, some of the boletes, when cut, stain to an amazing cobalt blue (Plate F8 and G6), and small yellow puffballs reveal a solid core of deep purple spores (eg. Plate A6); ink caps dissolve by the strange phenomenon of auto-digestion to inky black liquid as they get old eg. Lawyers Wig, *Coprinus comatus* (Plate B1 and p.13).

Colours are enhanced by textures, as in the shiny waxcap, *Hygrocybe polychroma* (Plate B10), and the velvety sheen on the Hairy Stereum, *Stereum hirsutum* (Plate E3) and the Black Phellodon, *Phellodon* aff. *niger* (Plate C5). *Cortinarius sinapicolor* (Plate F2 & H8), is a really slimy species, and the Jelly Fungus, *Tremella mesenterica* (Plate D2), looks and feels as it sounds. The Ridge-Stemmed Bolete, *Austroboletus occidentalis* (Plate C6 and p.18), has a most interesting stalk, which is quite slimy and will leave a very bitter taste on your fingers if you handle it.

The diminutive Pagoda Fungus, *Podoserpula pusio* (Plate L7 and p.53) is one of the strangest-shaped species illustrated here. Other, even more peculiar fungi such as the Lattice Fungi, and those in the Stinkhorn group, we have yet to find. There are still surprises in store for us!

Jane

Mushrooms, Toadstools, Fungi?

When is a fungus a mushroom; or a toadstool? What should we call them? As with so many common names given to plants, animals and other organisms, the same name may mean different things to different people in different places, and confusion sometimes reigns. There are no hard and fast rules with common names, which have simply developed with our various languages over time and place. The term 'mushroom' is often used to refer to the edible ones, while 'toadstools' are the poisonous variety, or those of unknown edibility. 'Fungi' is generally used as a more holistic term, with 'macrofungi' referring to those that have relatively large fruiting bodies that we can see and are familiar with. The Fungi Kingdom also encompasses a host of other groups including yeasts, moulds, rusts and all sorts of other plant and animal diseases, such as thrush, tinea and ringworm. Many antibiotics have been sourced from fungal moulds, the most famous, penicillin, being one of the most important medical discoveries ever made. Lichens are fungi and algae that grow together in a symbiotic partnership.

Jane



Archer's Cortinarius, *Cortinarius archeri*