

Book reviews

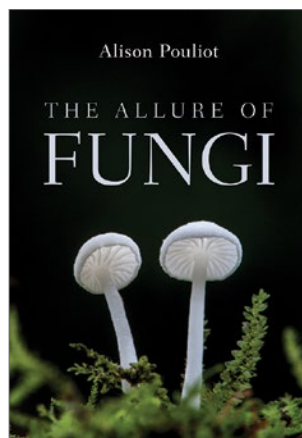
Allure of Fungi

280 pages, 245 x 170 mm, colour photographs, September 2019, CSIRO Publishing. ISBN: 9781486308576. Price AU \$49.99 (Paperback).

Having spent 1000 days in the forest thinking about and photographing fungi, Alison Pouliot has put out a book documenting a range of perspectives on this topic. In a combination of text and photographic essays (separate in definite sections), Alison lures us into the often mysterious world of fungi. She passionately explores fungal complexities and curiosities in a book that is not a reference or coffee table book nor field guide, more an enthusiastic documentation of our knowledge in this field.

The book covers a lot of diverse topics and has thought provoking sections to draw the reader; like 'disco in a cowpat' – who wouldn't want to read this? The organisation of the book takes a bit of time to get your head around and may not be as logical as some would like. For example, the taxonomic organisation of fungi and 'what makes a mushroom?' appears in chapter 6, rather than at the start, but this is just a comment not a criticism.

The human-fungus relationship is explored with stories of farmers, fungal enthusiasts and mycologists that the author visits in person (lamingtons in hand). This personal touch makes this book a great read and adds a nice dimension. Alison highlights the lack of acknowledgement of fungi in Australian environmental



management and conservation. Foraging is linked back to conservation with the section 'On morel grounds', which documents the protection of fungi in the Kooyoorra State Forest after commercial morel hunters began to visit the area.

The book also explores the habitats where fungi grow; from the desert to subterranean areas, to the more typical habitats of moist forests and woodlands. This section discusses some fungal hosts, and therefore their distribution, and how we are improving our knowledge in this area.

The language around fungi was especially interesting, since the words we choose affect the way fungi are seen and understood. Alison explores the origin and use of the word 'mushroom' and the negative associations of fungi in the English language. She points out that the more accurately fungi are written and talked about, the more likely they will increase in importance.

Last, but not least, the macrophotography at the end of each chapter makes the book worth picking up alone. Alison has used a small depth of field to her advantage by highlighting miniscule parts of a fungal fruiting body, mycelia, various fungal surfaces and beautiful lichens.

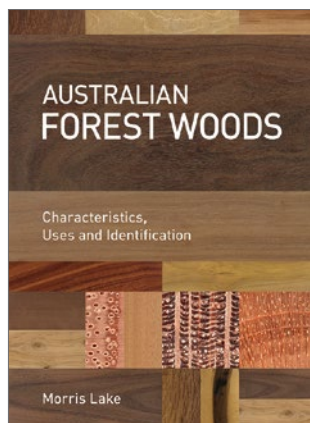
Michele Kohout

Australian Forest Woods. Characteristics, Uses and Identification

Morris Lake, x+218pp., colour illustrations, 2019, CSIRO Publishing. ISBN 978-1-4863-0778-4. Price AU \$69.95 (Hardback).

This beautifully presented book a companion to 'Australian Rainforest Woods, Characteristics, Uses and their Identification', contains ready and interesting information – primarily for people interested in trees, wood enthusiasts in Australia and for international audiences interested in the unique diversity of Australian trees and woods.

By way of introduction, aspects of plant classification are presented for the angiosperms and gymnosperms from



an evolutionary context. The bulk of the book contains well illustrated treatments of 129 Australian forest trees. Species are described one per page at least. Standard information is provided including: the botanical and usually the trade name, synonymy where relevant, origins of the botanical name, botanical family name, other names by which the trees and woods are known, and geographical distribution. A description of the tree's botanical field characteristics with useful