

Research Article

Taxonomic Studies of Wood Inhabiting Mushrooms (Polyporales) of North Kashmir, India

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Abstract

The increasing importance of mushrooms from their pivotal role as significant sources of both food and medicinal compounds. However, the diversity of these organisms is facing a rapid decline due to the compounding effects of climate change, deforestation, and habitat degradation, exacerbated by unregulated mushroom harvesting and urbanization. Recognizing the urgency of addressing this critical issue, a comprehensive investigation into wild mushrooms was undertaken across diverse areas within the Northern Kashmir spanning the period from March 2021 to December 2023 and encompassing various seasons to explore and document the macro-fungal flora residing in the uncharted forests of Northern Kashmir. The outcomes of this study involve the meticulous collection and characterization of 16 distinct species representing 13 genera and 4 families belonging to order Polyporales. Additionally, the edibility status of these mushrooms was rigorously evaluated. The findings not only contribute to the scientific documentation of regional mushroom diversity but also illuminate their potential utility and edibility. These insights are particularly crucial in the face of mounting environmental challenges and uncontrolled human activities, providing a foundation for informed conservation and sustainable management practices. This present study delves into the systematic position and taxonomic identification, offering detailed insights into newly discovered species of mushrooms.

Key words: Edibility, mushrooms, polyporales, taxonomy

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