

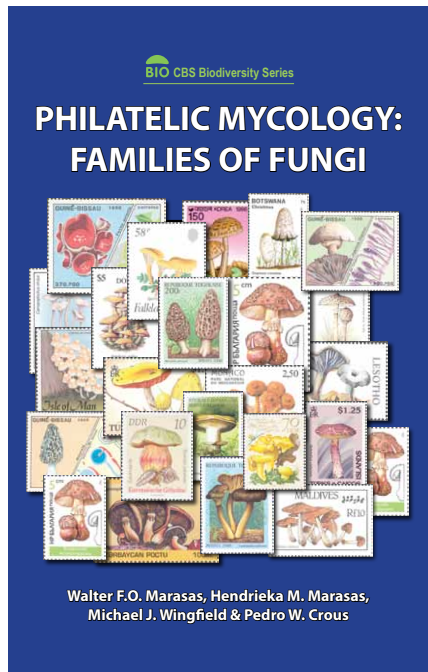
Philatelic Mycology: families of fungi. By Walter F. O. Marasas, Hendrieka M. Marasas, Michael J. Wingfield, and Pedro W. Crous. 2014. Utrecht: CBS-KNAW Fungal Biodiversity Centre. [CBS Biodiversity Series no. 14.] Pp. viii + 107, illustr. ISBN 978-90-70351-99-1. Price: 40 €.

Following his retirement in 2007, leading South African mycotoxicologist and *Fusarium* specialist “Wally” Marasas Wally devoted himself to organizing 1000 of his fungal stamps for publication as a book. Unfortunately he did not live to see this dream realized before he died in 2012 (see Wingfield & Crous, *IMA Fungus* 3(1): 27–28, 2012). Wally left his collections of stamps of fungi, and also, plants to Michael

“Mike” Wingfield, who he had mentored in his student days, along with the associated texts he had been working on for the fungal book. Now, painstaking work by Mike, Pedro Crous (another former student), and also Wally’s widow “Rika” have now made his vision a reality.

The first stamp depicting a fungus was issued by Romania in 1958, and depicted *Macrolepiota procera*. Many other postal

services followed, and by 1990 the number had rocketed to almost 800 in 143 editions -- of which a complete set compiled by German mycologist H. Peter Molitoris was one of the highlights of the exhibitions at IMC4 in Regensburg in 1990; a detailed catalogue was published for the Congress (Molitoris 1990). Peter’s collection exceeded by 150 the 650 listed in a reference catalogue of fungal stamps published the



following year (Greenwich 1991). Swiss mycologist Doris Rast presented the British Mycological Society with her collection in 1991, which amounted to 837 items from 103 countries, including first-day covers so treasured by philatelists and also thematic postcards (Moss 1993). Six years

later, the total had jumped to 1400, with examples from 140 countries showing 575 species (McKenzie 1997). These totals are all of stamps depicting the fungi, excluding ones illustrating diseases they cause, fungal products (e.g. antibiotics, alcohol products), or commemorating individuals. If those latter categories are not excluded, the total is currently estimated at around 5000 by David Moore, who maintains a website on fungal stamps (<http://www.davidmoore.org.uk/Fungi-on-Stamps00.htm>).

Of the huge number of fungal stamps now available, Wally selected just 1000 for this book. These are arranged not by country and editions, as is the case in the other compilations mentioned here, but systematically by phylum, class, order, family, and genus. The selection is necessarily eclectic, and appears to have been based on fungi that interested him, or on which he had fascinating tid-bits to add. Macromycetes predominate, and there are many examples of some species, for example 25 of *Amanita muscaria*, 25 of *Boletus edulis*, and 23 of *Cantharellus cibarius*. The notes comment on classifications, etymology, common names, edibility, toxicity, and characteristic features of the fungi making it

a pleasure to have on a coffee table and dip into. Searching for particular genera would, however, have been facilitated by an index to genera featured.

Most spectacularly, however, all 1000 stamps are illustrated in colour from digitized images arranged on a black full-page background. The layout is a great tribute to the skill and dedication of Rob Samson, Marjan Vermaas and Manon Verweij at CBS and renders the whole most attractive. This “work of love and passion by [a] great mycologist, [and] wonderful man” (p. iv) is sure to be much appreciated by both stamp-collecting mycologists and other philatelists.

Greenwich J-P (1991) *Collect Fungi on Stamps*.

[A Stanley Gibbons Thematic Catalogue.]

London: Stanley Gibbons Publications.

McKenzie EHC (1997) *Collect Fungi on Stamps*. [A Stanley Gibbons Thematic Catalogue.] 2nd edn.

London: Stanley Gibbons Publications.

Molitoris HP (1990) *Fungi on Stamps*. [IMC4 Exhibition EH-4.] Regensburg: University of Regensburg Library.

Moss MO (1993) The Doris Rast fungal stamp collection. *Mycologist* 7: 28.