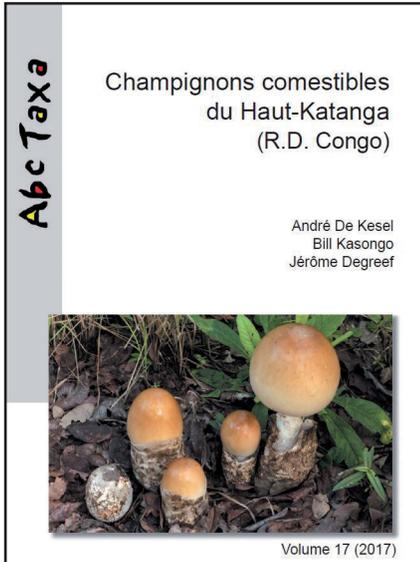


Book review

De Kesel A., Kasongo B. & Degreef J., “Champignons comestibles du Haut-Katanga (R.D. Congo).” *ABC Taxa*, Vol 17: 1-289. 2017



The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences recently published volume 17 in their *Abc Taxa* collection, a series of manuals dedicated to capacity building in taxonomy and collection management. Building on the Botanic Garden's (Meise, Belgium) long-standing tradition in the study of the African mycoflora and particularly in the taxonomy of edible fungi, this latest volume completes a survey of edible mushrooms in Central Africa, for which the first part was published as Vol. 10 in the same series.

As for the first part, that presented the edible mushrooms of the equatorial rain forest, this volume is again a must-have for any person interested in tropical African fungi and the focus is now on the edible mushrooms of the Zambezi miombo woodlands, in particular those of the 'Haut-

Katanga' (R.D. Congo). The book starts with an introductory part on the different types of vegetation of the Haut-Katanga and on various general aspects of edible mushrooms, including their valorisation and scientific study. The largest part of the book is of course devoted to the presentation of the individual genera and species. For each of the 78 species that are here presented in detail, the authors provide a detailed description with notes on phenology, habitat and ecology, on edibility and consumption, as well as some considerations on taxonomy or possible confusions with other, eventually toxic mushrooms.

Compared to the previous volume on edible mushrooms from the rain forest biome, this book reflects a much more impressive collecting effort of the various edible miombo mushrooms during many years. Indeed, collecting data allow for a first appreciation of productivity and seasonality of the various edible mushrooms of the miombo woodlands and made it also possible to illustrate the totality of the presented taxa with high quality field photographs.

A key to all the fungal genera in tropical Africa that account for one or more edible species allows the reader to orient him- or herself toward the correct genus when trying to identify an edible mushroom and this key should work pretty well for the identification of any edible mushroom that is on sale on markets or road stalls (as in the field it is a priori not possible to know whether or not an unknown species is edible). Although solely based on macroscopic features, the use of this key nevertheless expects the user to master the elementary notions in descriptive mycology, but that is where the glossary at the end comes in handy.

Individual genera and species are then presented in alphabetical order and some genera stand out because of the important number of edible species that are treated in detail in this book: 16 *Cantharellus*, 14 milk caps (3 *Lactarius* and 11 *Lactifluus*) and 8 *Termitomyces* !

One of the very attractive aspects of this Abc Taxa series is the fact that all volumes are freely downloadable as pdf files on www.abctaxa.be/volumes. Some of these volumes are in English, but both volumes on edible mushrooms in Africa are still only available in French. An English translation would render this valuable information on the indigenous edible fungi also accessible to the many countries where people do not understand French, particularly in the miombo area.

Print copies can be ordered via the Sales Publications Service of the Institute of Natural Sciences in Belgium ([abctaxa_orders\[naturalsciences.be](mailto:abctaxa_orders[naturalsciences.be)) and cost 13.34 euro/copy plus shipping costs for orders from non-developing countries, but are again freely available to researchers and organizations from developing countries.

For the latest information on the edible fungi of tropical Africa, see also the Edible Fungi of Tropical Africa webpages at <https://www.efta-online.org/>

Bart Buyck
Editor in chief