

V. (a) FUNGI

The fungi of the atolls have been little collected, and there are almost no published reports on them of any consequence. The German and Japanese students who gave occasional lists of fungi of the Pacific islands from the early 1800's into the 1940's seem to have devoted most of their attention to high islands. What fungi were reported from atolls seems to have been specimens picked up in passing by collectors seeking vascular plants, and they are all large fleshy or woody species. Except for the Marshall Islands, atoll fungi remain almost unknown. From that group only 16 fungi had been reported up to 1947. The recent book by Taylor, and the lists begun by Rogers, indicate that fungi are considerably more numerous in this group. Together these authors list 43 species; but since of their collections the Ascomycetes, the most abundant groups of Basidiomycetes, and the whole mass of foliicolous forms remain mostly unnamed, it is certain that in this best-studied archipelago the majority of fungi - at least three quarters of the species - remain unknown.

The gaps in present knowledge are such that no recommendation for an area of concentration is possible. Economic fungi - those causing disease of man and of higher plants, and those causing decay of timber and fabric - are almost completely unknown even from the Marshalls; distribution of species among atolls, and the relation of atoll to high-island fungi, are equally unknown.

D. P. Rogers