

book does not stand up to its dust-jacket statements suggesting that photographs are greatly superior to coloured paintings, as comparison with Kibby's book will soon show.

The Encyclopaedia of Mushrooms, edited by Colin Dickinson and John Lucas (Orbis: London, £9.95), is an interesting mixture of coffee-table style and scientific approach, and contains a mine of information as one might expect from the title. It needs several readings before the full extent of the details, from eating to electron microscopy, and chemistry to ecology, can be appreciated. The text of 280 pages is largely given over to descriptions with an unfortunate mixture of photographs and often appalling coloured illustrations some of which do not even resemble the fungi they are said to depict. The photographs gleaned from various sources are as might be expected of varying quality depending on the photographers and their wide spectrum of techniques. Many of the photographs are of species which have never been seen in a British publication before and so it is refreshing to get away from the same 'old' photographs of fungi, often misidentified, that one sees in the numerous books now available. As in Soothill and Fairhurst the descriptions are short; many are taken from the literature, as again they do not tie-up with the illustrations and therefore the field collections. Over five hundred larger fungi are illustrated with four hundred and thirty by photographs; unfortunately there are some mistakes, for example, *Mycena pura* has become *Laccaria amethystea*, and so on.

The introduction is a good account of the fungi and makes easy reading for the interested student. It is supported by very well chosen illustrations, and the ecological approach of many sections is admirable. Dickinson and Lucas obviously call on their joint teaching experiences, as they have brought together many of those interesting biological phenomena exhibited by fungi with which the layman is unfamiliar. As the dust-cover says, the *Encyclopaedia* is a combination of field guide, natural history encyclopaedia and cookery book. Indeed it is, Dickinson calling on his own culinary interests for the last.

Each book is well bound and on good quality paper; the printing is clear. Some mis-spelling of latin names is unfortunately inevitable and Soothill and Fairhurst's contribution is worst for this — even the dust-cover has one!

Whereas Kibby's contributions could be tucked into a 'poacher's pocket' and taken into the field; Soothill and Fairhurst's book is an awkward size; and Dickinson and Lucas' production was obviously designed for use in the home and library.

Roy Watling

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Illustration taken from *The Tree*, published by Aurum Press (London, 1979; £9.95). The text, by novelist John Fowles, accompanies some beautiful photographs by Frank Horvat. Fowles "explains the impact of nature on his own life, and warns urban 'civilized' man of the deeper and more subtle dangers that attend his traditional rejection of the wild."

Arboreal devastation

After the Elm, edited by B. Clouston and K. Stansfield (Heinemann: London; £7.50) is described as both a requiem for the elm and a guide to the future care and improvement of the countryside. The first chapter, by Brian Clouston, describes the history of the elm in Britain with an emphasis on its role in the landscape. Reference is made to the works of John Evelyn and Gilpin, and there are quotations from Tennyson, Thomas Hood and Herbert Read. My only criticism is that the author persists in describing the wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*) as an introduced species, while as Eddie Kemp makes clear in the next chapter "The Plantsman's Elm", it is unquestionably native. Kemp himself wisely avoids becoming embroiled in controversies over elm taxonomy and presents a straightforward description of the principal types of elm to be found in Britain. Many of the photographs illustrating the trees are, however, disappointingly dull.

Kathy Stansfield's description of "Elm in the Service of Man" overlaps somewhat with the content of the first chapter, but also describes the use of elm wood in the construction of carts, pumps, furniture and boats. Then follow two useful chapters on the biology of Dutch elm disease (D. A. Burdekin) and on the impact that the disease has had on our elm populations (Peter Jones). While appropriate reference is made to methods of disease control, I would have liked to have seen some allusion to the important tree populations which have so far been preserved by control programmes. The Huntingdon elms of Hove park and the magnificent English elm around the Brighton pavilion deserve to be made the object of pilgrimage.

The last third of the book is devoted to a

discussion on tree planting. There are cogent criticisms of some current fashions — for example, that of planting in field corners — and useful comments on the choice of species. Thus the authors point out that the dark cypresses suitable to Italy create in Britain an effect of "gloomy walks and green-slimed stonework". There is some speculation on the extent to which the current enthusiasm for wood-burning stoves could lead to a renewed interest in coppicing as a system of woodland management, and also a welcome emphasis on the necessity for the adequate maintenance of newly planted trees. In summary, although less visually exciting than Gerald Wilkinson's *Epitaph for the Elm* (Hutchinson: London, 1978; Arrow paperback 1979; £4.95; for review, see *Nature*, 276, 641; 1978) this is a more satisfactory book. A proportion of the royalties will go to the Tree Council for the National Tree Fund.

Robert Lamb's *World without Trees* (Wildwood House: London; £4.95) is an anguished response to the devastation caused by Dutch elm disease, and there are sections on the elm, on the infection process, and on possible control measures. Interleaved with these are other chapters dealing with huge topics such as the destruction of the tropical rain forests, and the world-wide consumption of wood and wood products. Mr Lamb's racy style is often exhilarating and he has made a commendable attempt to describe the complex story of the disease cycle and the host's response in non-technical language. Sometimes, however, his intoxication with words carries him away: "fungal livestock, usually in the form of spores, may now become smeared into the notch by the carrier beetles jockeying for mouth-holes on the sap-rich wood".

More seriously, a lack of authority pervades the whole text. To take one tiny example he describes tyloses as "loops"; presumably because he has only thought of