

Edible Fungi of Medicinal Value from the Eastern Himalayan Region

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The Himalayas, with considerable diversity in geology, geography, soil, and climate giving rise to many macro and micro habitats, have always fascinated people from all walks of life. The northeastern region of India constitutes a larger part of the Eastern Himalayas with ranges of colder and comparatively humid climate. Vegetation here changes with altitude, owing to which the forests are rich in floral diversity. The topography and climate of the region provide conditions conducive for the growth of fleshy mushrooms owing to its rainfall, high humidity, and moderate temperature range. In fact, people of the region are very fond of edible mushrooms and by tradition they have developed considerable expertise in collection of edible types. Because of hilly terrains and difficult communication, the vast wealth of edible mushrooms has remained unre-

corded, and therefore unutilized as a potential source of nutrition and medicine. Attempts are therefore being undertaken to identify locally available medicinal fungal flora for their proper exploitation and conservation.

Few medicinal mushrooms from the Eastern Himalayan region, viz. *Agaricus bisporus* (J. Lge) Imbach, *A. campestris* L.: Fr., *Auricularia auricula-judae* (Bull.) Wettst., *Boletus edulis* Bull.: Fr., *Langermannia gigantia* (Pers.) Rostk., *Leucopaxillus giganteus* (Fr.) Sing., *Lycoperdon* sp., *Lentinus edodes* (Berk.) Sing., *Pleurotus ostreatus* (Jacq.: Fr.) Kumm., and *Volvariella volvacea* (Bull.: Fr.) Sing. are described. Distribution, nutritional and medicinal value, and cultivation and conservation strategies for sustainable utilization are discussed.