

BRITISH MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

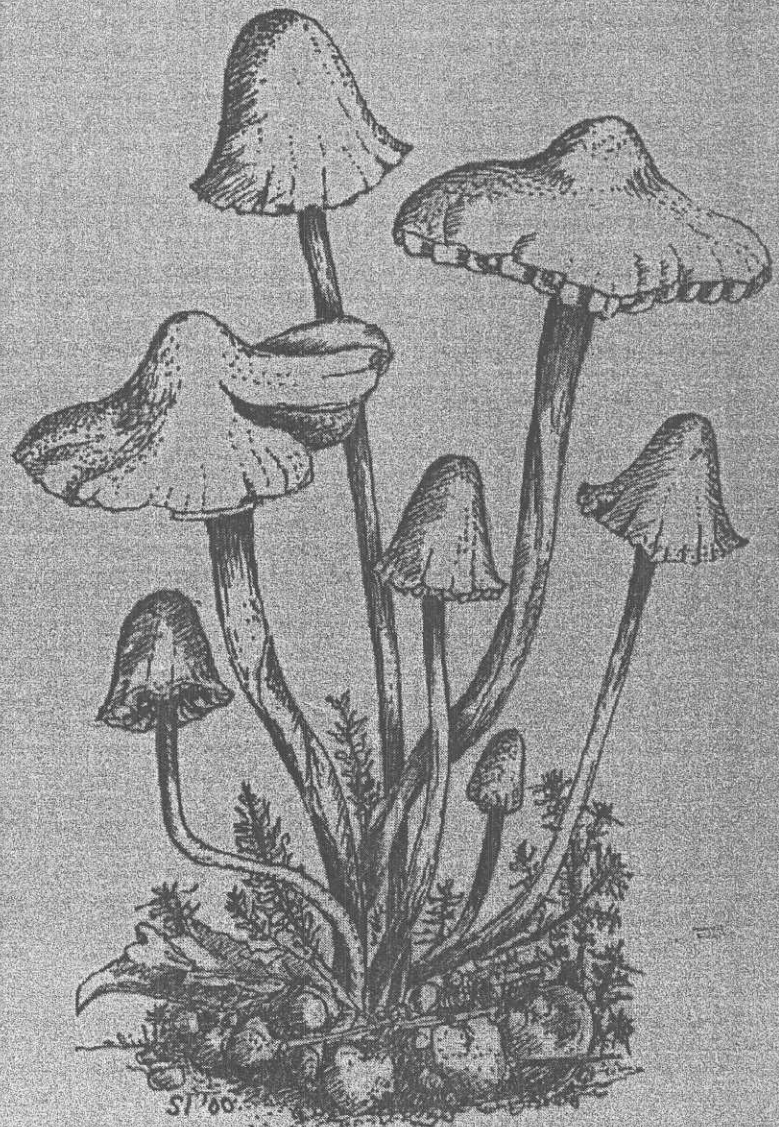
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**TROPICAL MYCOLOGY 2000**

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**ABSTRACTS**



## **CHARACTERISATION OF FUNGAL AND OTHER LECTINS : AN OVERVIEW**

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Lectins are widely distributed in living organisms and occur in animals, bacteria, fungi, plants and viruses. Progress in the purification and characterisation of lectins has shown that they are a very heterogeneous set of proteins, which are grouped together purely on the basis of their ability to bind saccharides specifically and reversibly. Previous research on plant lectins has shown that they may be classified into seven distinct families of structurally and evolutionarily related proteins. Although fungal lectins have been less well studied, thirteen mushroom species have been extensively characterised. The methods of isolating pure lectins, as well as their characterisation using hapten inhibition assays, molecular cloning and 3D structural studies, will be discussed.