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BOOK REVIEW

Luley, CJ. 2022. *Wood decay fungi common to urban living trees in the Northeast & Central United States*. 2nd Ed. Naples (NY, USA): Urban Forest Diagnostics, LLC. 145 p. ISBN-13: 978-0-97671-293-0.

Modern arboriculture challenges us to use our minds as well as our muscles to care for trees. Part of that challenge is to properly evaluate what we see in the landscape, including the association of fungi with the trees in our care. The fungi we can readily see include a wealth of polypores, gilled mushrooms, jel-lies, and slime molds. We know that some of these fungi are signs of tree dis-ease and structural weakness, while most are “along for the ride” and pose no risk to trees or the people who live around them.

There is no shortage of guides to fungal biology and identification. I have a couple of bookshelves filled with them! Most of those are either texts for aca-demic mycologists or guides for foragers of food, medicine, and other applica-tions. Classic forest pathology texts include useful information but are produced out of concerns for silviculture or timber value, not the threat of structural failure of the living tree. With respect to tree care, most guides are overly technical in an attempt to be comprehensive, while others are so general as to be of little value for tree evaluation or report preparation. To our rescue comes Dr. Chris Luley and the 2nd Edition of *Wood Decay Fungi Common to Urban Living Trees in the Northeast & Central United States*.

Dr. Luley is formally trained as a forest pathologist and mycologist. As importantly, he has also worked in practical arbori-culture throughout his career. He has greatly expanded the text, images, and species that were presented in the original edition of this book from 2005. The first section of the book provides the setting for what wood decay fungi are all about. Also included early in the book is the listing of “The Big Five Plus One,” important decay fungi of urban broadleaved and coniferous trees. Leading the pack is the brittle cinder fungus, *Kretzschmaria deusta*, a frequently devastating and somewhat inconspicuous fun-gus common on urban hardwoods, particularly Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*). This is a good example of the limitations of other currently available texts. Traditional forest pathology texts often don't mention brittle cinder or lump it into other “soft rots,” as it has little impact on timber production or wood service. Brittle cinder is also inedible, so is given scant attention in guides focused on culinary or cultural uses.

For each of the 50 species described, scientific names including synonyms are presented. The synonymy is important, as sci-entific names change through time and sometimes depends on where our teachers went to school. Also presented are the com-mon host tree species, type and location of decay, frequency of occurrence, identifying features, mode of action, and notes based on his personal experience. The book is spiral bound, which enables the text to lie flat while looking closely at samples or images.

I am sure that I will use this text frequently, both to help confirm my own identifications and to lead me into a deeper understanding of our fellow travelers with urban trees.

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