

Role of citizen scientists and local natural history museums for mycology

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There are numbers of local natural history museums in Japan, but rarely have mycological herbarium. Many of the Japanese local museums have only small numbers of scientists, so rarely have mycologists or experience to treat with fungal collection. Sometimes, citizen scientists who can collect good quality specimens served for local museums as guest scientists, and these amateur mycologists made basis of mycological collections in corporate with voluntary scientists. It is true to the Osaka Museum of Natural History, where had only one botanist, until 1974, then 2 botanists but no mycologist until 1996. During that period, collection was cared by Toshiho UEDA, high school teacher and amateur mycologist and he made the basis of the collection. It is true to many local museums, collections depend on the local amateurs. So, it is important to educate local amateur scientists for gathering local mycological biodiversity information. Local museums have potentials to be a basis to invite young mycologists, empower local amateur, save and utilize lifelong personal mycological collections. Those will be valuable research materials for next centuries.

To promote these activities of local amateurs and museums, strong supports from academic mycologists and academic societies, science education authorities are needed. Such as repeated lectures for amateurs, useful textbooks, technical management supports for curators, and so on. Some of them have already started by Japanese Mycological society and National Museum of Nature and Science, Japan.