

# The Changing Scientific Names of Edible and Medicinal Mushrooms

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Scientific names in use for edible and medicinal mushrooms can change as a result of new research on relationships and species limits, issues relating to the international rules controlling the publication of scientific names, or even incorrect identifications. Sadly, not all mycologists explore or utilize all the options now available under the internationally agreed rules (*The International Code of Botanical Nomenclature*) to avoid making name changes before publishing them. Progress in the development of the rules to these ends is considered in the light of actions and discussions at the International Botanical Congress in Vienna in July 2005. Issues of changing names are a problem across the whole of biology, and various ways of limiting changes have been proposed and debated—for example, by establishing protected lists of names and requiring the registration of newly published names. Mycologists have

also recently launched MycoBank, a freely available database containing descriptions and illustrations and assigning each species of fungus a unique reference number (to be allocated before hard-copy). Initiatives are being taken by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), a body established by the Convention on Biological Diversity, to develop and support schemes to improve, harmonize, and simplify approaches to scientific names across all groups of organisms. The International Society for Mushroom Science (ISMS) and the International Commission on the Taxonomy of Fungi (ICTF), as well as regional and national mycological societies, should be involved in and contribute to the important debates and actions now underway or being planned. Nevertheless, much will always depend on the integrity, responsibility, and actions of individual mycologists.