ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

Majority of the Hydnums grow on wood on the forest floor and bring about its decay, thus adding to the fertility of the soil. Although, wood-rotting Hydnums are not as serious a problem as some members of Polyporaceae and Thelephoraceae are, yet some of them deserve our attention. Thus, Odontia bicolor (Alb. & Schw. ex Fr.) Bres., Q. spathulata (Schrad. ex Fr.) Litsch., Q. arguta (Fr.) Quel., Q. fimbriata (Pers. ex Fr.) Fr. do appreciable loss to the fallen wood in the forest. Odontia bicolor which is a widely distributed species occurs on many coniferous and broad leaved trees. According to Nobles (1953), it causes a butt rot of much importance in a number of coniferous and broad leaved trees. Odontia sacchari Burt and Q. saccharicola Burt are parasitic on sugarcane in Latin America. Radulum casearum (Morg.) Lloyd is commonly found on aspen and other hard wood species in U.S.A. and Canada and is reported to be the major cause of a heart-rot of trembling aspen in Ontario (Basham, 1958).

A good number of Hydnums attack the living forest
trees of commercial value. Thus, *Echinodontium japonicum* Imazeki grows on various species of *Quercus* in the North Western Himalayas in India and is reported to occur on *Q. glauca* and on dead angiosperms branches from Japan (fide Gross, 1964). *Echinodontium tinctorium* (Ell. & Ev.) Ell. & Ev. causes heart-rot of various coniferous trees in U.S.A. *Stecherinum balloui* Banker is reported to be a serious parasite of Swamp Cedar in New Jersey (Stevens, 1925). *S. septentrionale* (Fr.) Banker attacks the living trees of beech, maple, beech etc. and causes soft spongy rot of heart-wood. *Hericium erinaceus* (Bull. ex Fr.) Pers. and *H. coralloides* (Soop. ex Fr.) Gray often grow on living oak trees and cause heart-wood rot. According to Donk (1931) *Hygrocybe setosa* (Pers.) Donk is probably parasitic on apple and pear trees in Europe. Miller & Boyle (1943) state that this species is commonly known as *Hydnum schiedermayeri* Neufh. in United States and is found growing on dead trunks and limbs of *Malvus* and *Crataegus*.

Some of the stipitate Hydnums are among the best edible fungi and are commonly known as 'Hedgehog Mushrooms'. According to Cooke (1875), *Hydnum repandum* L. ex Fr., when cooked, is much relished in North America and Europe. He also states that *Hydnum imbricatum* L. ex Fr., *H. laevigatum* Fr., *Hericium erinaceus*, *H. coralloides*, *H. saput-medusae* Pers. are eaten in various parts of Europe. To my knowledge, *Hericium erinaceus* and
J. coralloides are eaten by the local people in North Western Himalayas in India. According to Kawagoe (1924), Phaeodon aspratus (Berk.) P.Henn., commonly known as 'Kaw-take' (meaning leather mushroom) is one of the common fungi sold in the Japanese groceries. When dry, it emits a strong sweetish fragrance and is a part of dishes in rich dinner.