



ECTOTROPHIC FORESTS IN BRAZIL: A BRIEF STUDY AT THE PARQUE DAS DUNAS DO NATAL, RN

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ABSTRACT

Studies about ectomycorrhizal fungi (ECM) that grow in Brazil are rare. Although ECM are known to occur in tropical ecosystems, few researchers have investigated the occurrence of these fungi in Brazil. Singer was one of the few mycologists to cite ECM from Brazil, which he collected in the Amazon during the 1980s; however, very little is known about the ecology and hosts of these species. Here we provide a list of the genera of fungi from Brazil that are assumed to be ectomycorrhizal. Data was gathered from the literature, herbaria, and field observations. The genera were georeferenced and distribution maps were created. As an example field study, basidiome collections from Parque das Dunas de Natal, a forest growing on white sand dunes, were correlated with the trees growing in the park. The collections were made in 2008 during the rainy season. The trees were identified and the roots were analyzed for the presence of mantle and Hartig net. The preliminary results indicate the presence of genera of ECM in Brazil. In order to better understand these putative relationships, ectotrophic forests in Brazil, such as Parque das Dunas de Natal, need to be studied in more detail. Further, the occurrence of cryptic ECM species from different regions of Brazil reinforces the need to perform phylogenetic, molecular studies and ecological data that include Brazilian fungi.