

## Project Update: September 2010

The first phase of the ecological diversity studies of macro-fungi (mushrooms) in the Mount Cameroon region has ended successfully. The project began in July 2010 and ended in August 2010. Four sites in the Mount Cameroon region were sampled to assess the mushroom diversity - the windward site (Idenau), leeward site (Ekona), mid-ward site (Buea Town) and behind the mountain (Bafia). Mushroom diversity was assessed by use of a line transect (500x10m) at low, mid and high altitudes. It was observed that mushroom diversity varied with altitude in the four sites with highest diversity in Bafia>Ekona>Buea Town>Idenau, however, Simpson's and Shannon's diversity indices would be used to scientifically assess the differences in mushroom diversity at the four sites. A major threat to mushroom diversity in this region observed in the field is the ongoing disturbance and unstoppable deforestation because of increasing populations in villages located within and around Mount Cameroon and their high dependence on forest resources for subsistence.

Logging for fuel wood, timber and conversion of forested land into farm land for the cultivation of cocoyams, yams, cocoa, coffee, oilpalm, plantains, vegetables amongst others accounts for the high rate of deforestation in this region. It was observed that countless mushroom species are vanishing with deforestation and there is no prospect that the whole mycodiversity will be monitored before a large fraction of it gets lost. Also, estimation of macro-fungi diversity lost is unattainable because of the lack of knowledge on species figure originally present and long term survey is necessary to fully estimate the actual number of macro-fungi present in this region. In this regard the next ecological diversity study is schedule to begin in October 2010 while ethno mycological survey will take place in September 2010.



Left: *Auricularia* sp. growing on dead tree bark. Right: Forested land in the Mountain and part of it deforested for the cultivation of cocoyam (*Xanthosoma* sp.).