



1st Fungal Culture Bank of Pakistan (FCBP)

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Pakistan.

Microorganisms are an essential component of biological diversity, without which there can be no sustainable ecosystems. Until few years ago in Pakistan a few research groups (NIBGE and CEMB) were holding small collections. Most of the research was based on foreign microbial cultures. Mycologist and plant pathologists have been culturing microorganisms specially fungi for a long time but there has been no maintenance of microbial cultures in Pakistan with the result that whenever cultures were needed by researchers, teachers and students, they were not available anywhere in Pakistan. The department of Mycology and Plant Pathology, University of the Punjab took the initiative and started Fungus Culture Bank of Pakistan (FCBP) in 2003 with seed money provides by the worthy Vice Chancellor. Originally, it was housed in two small rooms (11' x 7' and 11' x 11') on the ground floor of the Biology Building at the Quaid-e-Azam campus. Dr J.H Mirza, a retired professor from University of Agriculture, Faisalabad and a mycologist of repute was appointed in charge of FCBP along with two research associates and a laboratory attendant. The FCBP was inaugurated on June 18, 2003 and work was started on collection, isolation in pure culture, identification and preservation of national mycota. The FCBP has accumulated over 1300 accessions of fungi by now. These cultures are available to researchers and teachers throughout Pakistan at nominal cost. FCBP has also been receiving requests for bacterial cultures along with requests for fungal cultures. Hence, it also started work on bacterial cultures in late 2005 and has accumulated an inventory of more than 500 bacterial cultures. Originally, FCBP is also playing vital in the academic activities of the DPP in addition to its basic duties. A number of students are benefiting from the services of FCBP.FCBP offering internship for students specially for plant pathology. The beneficiaries are mostly Research students of Ph.D. , M.S. (Hons.) and B.S (Hons.) classes.

The staff of FCBP comprises an In-charge, one Assistant Professor, one Research officer and one Research Scholars.

The main purpose of FCBP is

- Provision of Identified cultures of Pakistani strains of fungi and bacteria for research and teaching purpose.
- FCBP is also providing sample processing and identification service.
- Provision of Accession number to the identified culture (Having NCBI/genbank number).