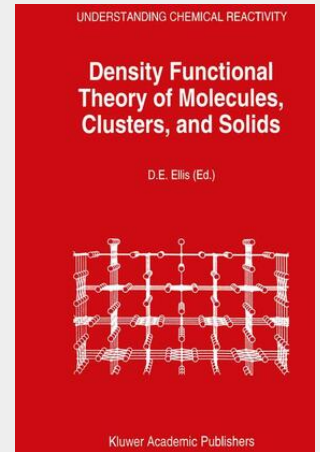


Smith

Aspergillus

The genus *Aspergillus* has a worldwide distribution and is one of the most common of all groups of fungi. They are possibly the greatest contaminants of natural and man-made organic products, and a few species can cause infections in man and animals. The aspergilli are also one of the most important mycotoxin-producing groups of fungi when growing as contaminants of cereals, oil seeds, and other foods. Not all aspergilli are viewed as troublesome contaminants, however, as several species have had their metabolic capabilities harnessed for commercial use. The aspergilli have long been associated in the Far East with the koji stage of several food fermentations, particularly soy sauce and miso, and subsequently as a source of useful enzymes. The ability of these fungi to produce several organic acids, especially citric acid, has created major industrial complexes worldwide. Traditional methods of strain development have been extensively studied with the industrial strains, while more recently, recombinant DNA technology has been applied to the aspergilli with emphasis on heterologous protein production. In compiling this book, I have been fortunate to have the full enthusiastic involvement of the authors, and to them I extend my very grateful thanks for mostly being on time and for producing such readable and authoritative chapters. Collectively, we hope that our efforts will strengthen the scientific understanding of this intriguing group of filamentous fungi and further their use in the field of biotechnology.

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