What is Trichoglossum?

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About Trichoglossum:

- Trichoglossum is a **genus of fungus** classified within the **family Geoglossaceae** (Ascomycota), commonly **known as “hairy earth tongues” fungus due to** their **numerous filaments resembling mushrooms**.
- They are **black, dark, or brown** in colour.
- They **exhibit saprotrophic behavior** but can **also be found as endophytes in plant roots.**
- **55 Trichoglossum genera** have been **identified globally**. Of these, **21 are recognized** species.
- They are globally distributed in **tropical and temperate forests** at least **five out of seven continents** of the world.
- They play a **critical role in the decomposition** of organic matter.

Key Facts about Fungi:

- Fungi, along with Animalia (animals), Plantae (plants), Protista, Archaea/Archaebacteria, and Bacteria or Eubacteria,**form the six ‘kingdoms’ of biology**.

- They are **eukaryotic organisms**, i.e., their cells contain membrane-bound organelles and clearly defined nuclei.
- **Reproduction:** Fungi usually reproduceboth **sexually and asexually.**
- **Distribution:**

o Fungi are either **terrestrial or aquatic**, the latter living in **freshwater or marine** environments.

o They are found in **all temperate and tropical regions** of the world where there is sufficient moisture to enable them to grow.

o **A few species** of fungi **live in the Arctic and Antarctic** regions, although they are rare and are more often found living in symbiosis with algae in the form of lichens.

- **Importance of fungi:**

o They help in **breaking down dead organic material**; they continue the cycle of nutrients through ecosystems.

o Fungi, **as food**, play a role in human nutrition in **the form of mushrooms.**

o They also act as **agents of fermentation** in the production of bread, cheeses, alcoholic beverages, and numerous other food preparations.

o **Secondary metabolites** of fungi are **used as medicines**, such as **antibiotics** and **anticoagulants**.

Q1: What are saprotrophs?

Saprotrophs, also known as saprophytes, are organisms that obtain their nutrients by decomposing and absorbing organic matter from dead or decaying organisms. These organisms play a vital role in breaking down complex organic compounds into simpler forms, facilitating the recycling of nutrients in ecosystems.

Source:New species of fungus aiding in increasing soil fertility discovered in Kerala