



Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club

Newsletter Volume 7, Issue 3
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The 2006 Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray

By Dick Dougall, Foray Co-Chairman

Whether you are a beginning mushroomer or long-time mushroom enthusiast, the Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray is the best way to expand your horizons. This all-day event on September 16 will take place in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, PA. The activities will be centered at Parish Hill in Allegheny County's North Park. (For MapQuest directions to the park and a park map, go to the website: www.county.allegheny.pa.us/parks/npfac.asp.) People registering for the foray will receive a packet of detailed directions and list of events. To obtain a registration form, find the form in the back of this newsletter or go to the club's website: www.wpamushroomclub.org.

This major event of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club gathers about 150 club members and guests in one location at the same time. There are limitations on the number of people that can be handled at the facility. Therefore, it is important to get your registration in promptly. The cost of the event is:

- \$25/person for members pre-registered before September 1, 2006
- \$40/person for non-members pre-registered before September 1, 2006
- \$50/person for members or non-members registering after September 1, 2006

Events

- **Morning & afternoon guided mushroom walks** in the local area (During previous forays, walk leaders and identifiers have discovered a wide variety of productive mushroom habitats.)
- **Informative talks** by nationally recognized mycologists. (Gary Lincoff's talk has always been a highlight of the foray.)
- **Mushroom cooking demonstration** by Tom Chulick, Executive Chef of the Back Door Café in Johnstown, PA.
- **Mushroom tasting** by club cooks who have consistently supplied a wide variety of dishes featuring choice wild edible mushrooms
- **Mushroom identification** by expert and club mycologists. A display of over 100 identified species is typical. Gary Lincoff does a talk walk in which he comments on the various mushrooms that were found.
- **Mushroom propagation** information and techniques. A manned display on several species will contain posters, literature, a video, and fruiting mushrooms in various media. Shiitake mushroom logs will also be available for sale.

Schedule

- **Registration** starts at 7:30 AM.
- **Program** begins promptly at 8:30 AM.
- **Morning walk groups** leave at 8:45 AM
- **Lunch** on your own from noon to 1:00 PM.
- **Various activities** in the afternoon including additional walks
- **Mushroom tasting** starts at 5:30 PM.
- **Table walk** of mushroom collection by mycologist at 6:30 PM.
- **Cleanup** by everybody, 7:00-7:30 PM.

Club Officers

President
Joe Luzanski

Vice President
Jim Strutz

Treasurer
George Yakulis

Secretary
Mary Jane Yakulis

Corresponding Secretary
Valerie Baker

Newsletter Editor
Jim Strutz

From the Editor

By Jim Strutz
strutzj@strutz.com

I love the latter part of summer with blooming meadow wildflowers, rasping cicadas, blinking fireflies, billowing clouds, and the distinctive scent of nature starting to wind down for the season. It's a great time for mushrooms with chanterelles, lactarius, russulas, boletes, amanitas, and other major groups prevailing in the forests and meadows. The transition from summer to fall occurs gradually and we begin seeing fall mushrooms. It's the best of times to be a mushroom hunter. Our mushroom club launches a grand foray every year to celebrate the finale of the mushroom season in the name of Gary Lincoff and dedicated to all of our members. It's a time to forage, learn, and feast – pretty much in that order. It is the **Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray** and it will be held in North Park on September 16th (find the registration form in the back of this newsletter). Don't miss it.

In this issue, John Plischke III writes about some exceptions to the "bolete rule" for edibility. The rule is to not eat any boletes that have reddish pores or that bruise blue. As with all rules that we bend from time to time – be careful.

The article on *Suillus americanus* by Tom Volk is a nice compliment to John's Bolete article. All readers of this newsletter should check out Tom's website <http://tomvolkfungi.net/> on a regular basis. One of the most interesting features is his Fungi of the Month (FOTM). It's great stuff.

Frank Lotrich writes about some of the interesting roles that fungi has played in our understanding of the brain. My sense is that we've only scratched the surface and that many more important medical discoveries will occur in the near future with the help of such recent technological advances as sophisticated computers for modeling drugs and chemicals, mapping of the human genome, and nanotechnology. It's humbling to think that, among all of that, the lowly mushroom contributed so well.

We begin to look for autumn mushrooms around the end of August. I write about some favorite edible mushrooms that may be found then. I also include a couple of preparation ideas. Look for these mushrooms at the fall foray.

Dorothy Fornof passed away on May 18th. For those of you who don't know her she was one of our club's mycologists. In addition to fungi, she knew a lot about plants, animals, and many other things in nature. She was a very generous person who kindly shared her vast knowledge with others. Dorothy's family has requested that anyone wishing to send gestures of sympathy should instead send donations to benefit education. Our treasurer, George Yakulis, is currently accepting donations and will forward them to an appropriate beneficiary in Dorothy's name.

Talk to Ikebana Group at Beechwood



On May 11th, Dick Dougall gave a talk to the Pittsburgh section Ikebana International at Beechwood Farms Nature Center. Dick's talk covered the common mushrooms found in western Pennsylvania. IKEBANA is a creative Japanese art of flower arrangement. It is an art discipline which develops a living arrangement bringing nature and humanity close together. Materials used are living branches, leaves, grasses, and blossoms. Thus, Dick show some polypores which are readily found which might be made part of typical arrangements.

If anyone is interested in learning more about Ikebana, they can contact the group's president via e-mail at brsx3@zbzoom.net. The photo shows Dick giving his talk.

Kim Plischke to join NAMA faculty

Kim Plischke has been asked to participate at NAMA Foray 2006 August 17-20 at Hinton Training Center near Alberta, Canada. She will conduct a craft workshop and help to identify mushrooms brought in by foray participants.

The North American Mycological Association (NAMA) is the "mother" mycological organization for loosely affiliated mushroom clubs across North America, including the Western PA Mushroom Club. NAMA sponsors large forays at different locations every year. Kim conducted a mushroom craft seminar at the 2005 foray which so impressed the NAMA officials that they invited her back again this year in an expanded role. Congratulations to Kim for being honored for her achievements with this special recognition.

Anyone wishing to join Kim and other WPMC members attending the NAMA foray can find information and registration forms at www.namyco.org

John Plischke III featured in Keystone Wild Notes article

John Plischke III was featured in an article in the Spring edition of the Keystone Wild Notes newsletter. Keystone Wild Notes is a cooperative program of the Pa Game Commission, the PA Fish & Boat Commission, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and direct contributors to the Wild Resources Conservation Fund. John is the chairman of the Pennsylvania's Biological Survey (PABS) and has been working to catalog Pennsylvania native fungi. He has also been leading a public awareness initiative through the use of posters featuring his photography and decorative patches.

According to John Plischke (Sr.), "The article on mushrooms and John is 3/4 of the front page and all of pages 8-9 of the newsletter. It features remarks and educational comments from John, as well as 9 of his photographs that are in color. This magazine goes out to tens of thousands of people interested in the out of doors. If you don't normally come to club meetings, you can find it at state parks throughout PA. It is not only distributed throughout PA, but also goes to other states, both to their official state organizations and to environmental leaders throughout the eastern US."

The article should also be accessible on the web at this link: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/wrcf/wildnotes> Following the subsequent "Spring 2006" link, however, brings up the wrong page at the time of this writing. Hopefully they will have it fixed by the time you receive your newsletter. Congratulations to John and to WPMC for being predominately mentioned in the article.



Image of one of the patches that John Plischke III has been working on to promote the importance of fungi in Pennsylvania's woodlands.

Yellowpoplar

Poem and sketch by Dorothy Fornof



Hark! The old Tuliptree
Stark and naked she stands
Holding out her great branches
As though they were hands.
She was here when the Seneca
Walked these rugged hills
Hunting turkey and deer
And bear if you will.
Leaves soon will appear
Giving her a pompadour
For all to adore

Then blossom yellow, orange and green
Like lovely tulips they do seem.
It shades the often flowering spring
Where we stop to refresh ourselves,
We, the animals and birds alike
Enjoy the water sparkling bright.
Grosbeaks, orioles and tanagers too
Grace her branches
In the morning dew.
Deep furrows of bark
With a large burn mark
From a fire that swept through
Many decades ago.
Though her age is hundreds of years
She stands like a monarch
Among her peers
She measures 10-½ feet around
And stand 80 feet from the ground
And we love her

WPMC News Items

2006 Membership Registration!

If you aren't already registered for 2006 then now is the time to renew. Club membership includes walks/forays almost every weekend during the mushroom season, 8 informative meetings, and 5 newsletters. It's also a great way to meet people who are knowledgeable about mushroom identification, cultivation, crafts, and cooking. It's a great value for only \$15 for the year. Please see the membership form included in this newsletter.

WPMC Mushroom Items

Our club sells several mushroom items to raise money to fund club activities. We have club T-shirts available for \$15, club cookbooks for \$5. Loupes and boxes of wax bags are also available. Our resident artist, Joyce Gross, also crafts very fine handmade mushroom themed jewelry and birdhouses. Please contact Joyce at 724-339-8547 or jagart@verizon.net for more information about any of these items.

Monthly Meetings

Our meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month between March and November. They begin at 7:00pm at Beechwood Nature Reserve in Dorseyville. Please see their website (www.awsp.org) for directions and other information.

July 18th: **"Creating Artistic Designs with Mushrooms"** by *Joyce Gross, member of the Craft Committee.* Summary: Mushrooms are something that an artist can use to make a number of interesting craft projects. Following last year's creation of a mushroom Christmas tree ornament, Joyce will show us how to use mushrooms as a replacement for a rubber stamp. This will allow attendees to use them to make colorful and unique designs, just another way to amaze your non-mycological friends.

August 15th: **"What If You Eat a Bad Mushroom?"** by *Gavin Farkas, Club Member.* Summary: We all know there are edible mushrooms, poisonous mushrooms, and lots that are impossible to eat because of toughness, taste, or minute size. The speaker will discuss some of the basics of toxic mushrooms. These include the various types of toxins and how they affect the human body. Because mushrooms are food, they are also susceptible to spoilage and misuse. The speaker will give suggestions on avoiding these difficulties so that their best qualities show up in your recipes.

September 19th: **"Mushrooms-Edible to Interesting"** by *John Plischke III, Club Mycologist.* Summary: We all know that morels, chanterelles, and a few other species of mushrooms are great edibles. John Plischke will expand to a wider variety of edible mushrooms found in western Pennsylvania. This will be a basic guide to beginners as well as experienced mushroomers. He will

also talk about some other mushrooms which have interesting characteristics or are beautiful when found. Since John is an award winning photographer, we can expect to see some outstanding pictures of the mushrooms being discussed.

October 17th: **Election of Officers & Open Forum.** Officers for next year will be elected. Club members will be encouraged to share mushroom stories, experiences and slides. Results of the club's photography contest will also be presented.

November 21st: **Mushroom Year in Review Summary:** A panel of expert mushroom hunters in the WPMC will give a critique of the 2006 mushroom hunting season. Was it a good year for morels? How good were the summer and fall mushroom seasons? What techniques or approaches worked for finding the most desirable mushrooms. How could beginners find their favorite mushrooms more easily? These are just a few of the questions that will be discussed.

Committee Changes

Dr. John Stuart will be the new Membership Committee Chair. Gavin Farkas will also serve the Membership Committee by entering meeting attendance information into a computer.

Joyce Gross has agreed to move from her position as the Sales Chair to Club Historian. We now need to fill the Sales Chair position. Please contact Joe Luzanski (see "Officers" on the front page) if you are interested.

Harriet Yarroll has joined Mary Ellen Dougall in the Welcoming Committee.

JoAnna Jenkins and Shirley Caseman have joined the Hospitality Committee.

Thanks to all of you who have volunteered your time and resources. Our mushroom club could not be what it is without you.

WPMC Yahoo Groups

Yahoo Groups is a great resource for our club members and other mushroom enthusiasts from across the country. There are always interesting discussions in the 'Message' section on all kinds of subjects involving wild mushrooms. Find out what mushrooms are up, where people are finding them, recipes, weather, latest announcements, and everything else. Also find award winning photos in the 'Photo' section, and articles, lists, and other files in the 'Files' section. For more information, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpamushroomclub/>

Continued on page 9, see WPMC News Items

Boletes

Article and photographs by John Plischke III

When talking about eating Boletes, one of the first things I always mention is the Rule. According to the Audubon field guide "The rule of thumb is to avoid any bolete with orange to red pores, especially any that bruise blue."

By following the rule you will be missing out on a number of good edible boletes but will also be eliminating the known poisonous boletes from your pot.

Let's take a look at a few of these mushrooms that have orange to red pores or that bruise blue.

Two Colored Bolete



They grow under oak and bruise blue very slowly.

(*Boletus bicolor*)

Other Common Names: Red & Yellow Bolete

Family: Boletaceae

Description: All parts bruise blue slowly. This bolete has 3 varieties (var. *bicolor*), (var. *borealis*), and (var. *subreticulatus*).

Flesh: Thick, its pale yellow flesh often bruises blue slowly, becoming somewhat brown over time.

Cap: 1-½ to 6 inches wide, ½ to 1 inch thick; convex, becoming almost flat as it ages, then upturns and starts to rot as it passes its prime; surface is dry to the touch; color is red, then pink, then yellowing at the margins. The cap sometimes fades to a light brown or tan with hints of yellow. The cap sometimes becomes cracked with its yellow flesh showing through as it ages, particularly in sunny areas.

Pores: Bright yellow, becoming pale yellow with hints of brown or olive with age; sometimes reddens with age. They are angular and become sunken around the stalk with age. They slowly bruise blue. I have also seen the blue

stains turn a brown-red after a short period of time. The tubes can be 1/32 to 5/8 inch long.

Spore Print: Olive-brown.

Stalk: 2 to 4 inches long, 3/8 to 1-5/16 inch wide. The lower 2/3 or more of the stalk is red, tending towards pink with age. The upper 1/3 is yellow. The red parts often have lighter colored areas showing through. The stalk usually bulges towards the base.

Odor: Not distinctive.

Taste: Pleasant.

Range: Northeastern United States. Eastern Canada.

Where To Look: On soil in oak woods that are semi-open. I have seen them growing in grassy areas. Cemeteries are a good place to look, as are parks where they mow under large oak trees.

How Often They're Found: Common.

How They're Grouped: Singly to several, but are usually scattered in good numbers. I can often pick 50 or more at a decent spot.

Social Plants: Grass, sour grass, clover, plantain, ground ivy, and dandelion can be present.

When To Look: The end of June - October.

Look-alikes: The poisonous Brick Cap Bolete (*Boletus sensibilis*) has brick colored cap which stains blue immediately.

Edibility: Edible and Choice.

Cooking Instructions: It is excellent fried in butter. It rates right up there in taste to the king Bolete. It dries very well in a food dehydrator, also freezes well.

Microscopic Features: The spores do not react with iodine.

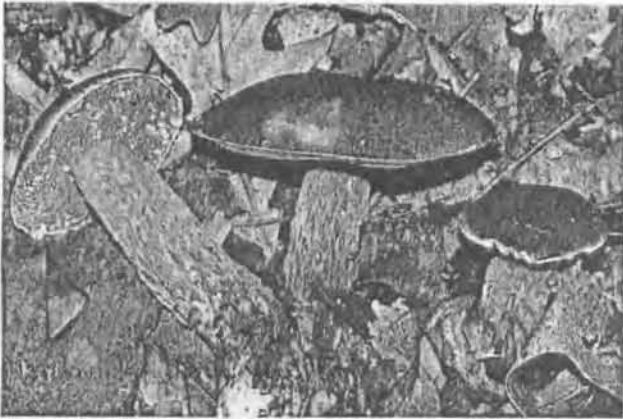
The Two Colored Bolete is one of the top edible boletes. In the past it was on the top of my list but there are a number of similar looking un-described species. I have known many of people who pick it and occasionally make a mistake and get a nasty belly ache. It is enough to make me think twice when picking Boletus bicolor.

Brick Cap Bolete (*Boletus sensibilis*)



Boletus sensibilis has a similar red colored cap that may be brick red colored. Its pores are also yellow and its stalk can have a larger sized yellow area. But it bruises blue very quickly.

Frost's Bolete



Yellow-green water drops occasionally are present under the cap. The stalk is entirely and very deeply reticulated. Several may be found, often under oak trees.

(*Boletus frostii*)

Other Common Names: Apple Bolete

Family: Boletaceae

Description: This is one of the prettiest looking boletes.

Flesh: Its flesh is yellow and bruises blue.

Cap: 1-½ to 6 inches wide, ½ to 1 inch thick; convex, becoming flat with age; margin is incurved when young and can be a lighter color than the rest of the cap; color is bright red, apple red, or blood colored and can develop a few orange tones when faded by the sun; usually shiny and sticky to the touch when wet; is smooth and bruises blue.

Pores: Red, bruising blue; round; often sunken in the

area around the stalk. There are sometimes beautiful yellow-green water droplets under the caps of young specimens.

Spore Print: Olive-brown.

Stalk: 1-½ to 4-¾ inches long, ¾ to 1 inch thick; strongly and entirely reticulated, netted, or webbed with the webbing typically larger going down towards the base; color is red, lighter in color than the cap with some orange tones; sometimes tends towards yellow at the base right at, or below, the dirt level; bruises blue slowly; has a constant diameter, sometimes bulging towards the base.

Odor: Not distinctive.

Taste: Not distinctive.

Range: Eastern Canada and North Eastern United States.

Where To Look: On the soil in oak woods. I have also seen it under beech growing through leaf litter, also in mixed woods.

How Often They're Found: Somewhat common.

How They're Grouped: Singly, in small groups, or scattered.

Social Plants: I often find it growing up through moss. I also have seen tea berry growing beside it.

When To Look: June - October.

Edibility: Edible, but best avoided.

Macrochemical Reactions: Ammonia and Ammonium Hydroxide makes the cap yellow-tan with a hint of green, but only discolors the flesh and stalk. KOH and Sodium Hydroxide makes the flesh faintly yellow-orange, makes the cap flash blue then turn creamy-tan, makes the ridges on the stalk blue then tan, only darkens the pores.

Bolete Bread



Boletes can be dried and then powdered. The powder can then be used to flavor home made breads.

Red Mouth Bolete



It has hairs at the very base of the stalk, has orange to red colored pores, bruises easily with handling, and is often found under oak.

(Boletus subvelutipes)

Family: Boletaceae

Description: All parts bruise very deep dark blue to blue-black very quick.

Flesh: Its flesh is yellow and bruises very quickly.

Cap: 2 to 5 inch wide; convex, becoming almost flat with age; color is red, red-orange, or orange and can have some yellow in it; bruises blue-black.

Pores: Attached; color is orange-red but occasionally yellow near the cap margin; bruises blue-black.

Spore Print: Olive-brown.

Stalk: 1-3/8 to 4 inches tall, 3/8 to 3/4 inches wide; is red but often has some yellow near the pores (the colors are streaked); bruises blue-black; typically has red hairs at the base (use a magnifying glass); and does not have any reticulation.

Odor: mild.

Range: North Eastern United States.

Where To Look: On the soil under oak, beech, hemlock, etc.

How Often They're Found: Somewhat common.

How They're Grouped: singly, scattered, or in small groups.

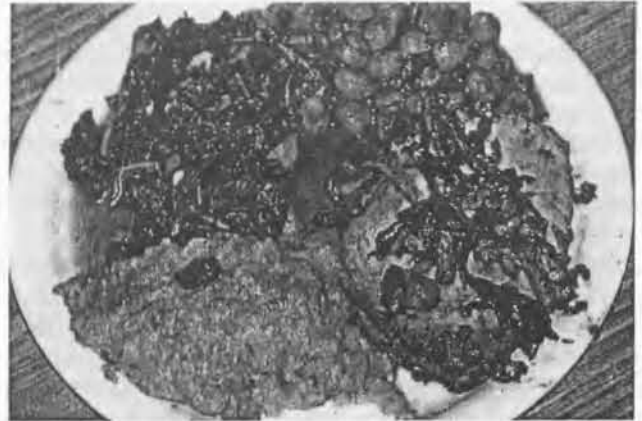
Social Plants: Grass, narrow leaf plantain and wild carrot can be present.

When To Look: July to October.

Edibility: Poisonous.

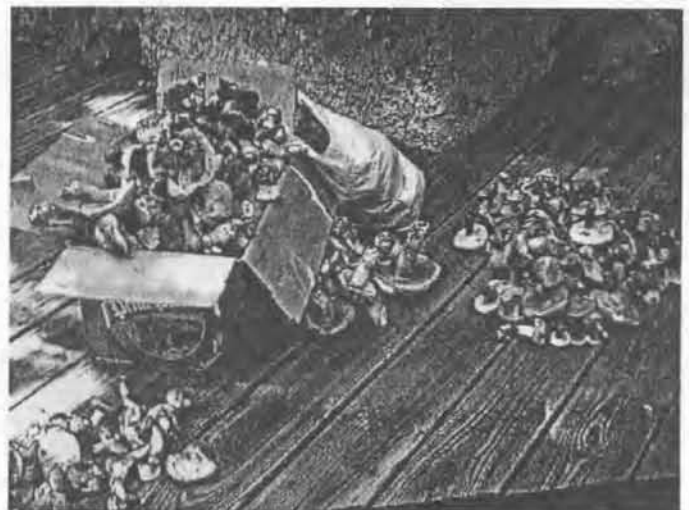
Macro-chemical Reactions: Melzer's discolors the stalk but turns the tubes, pores, and flesh green; turns the cap olive-green, becoming dark green in a minute or so.

Pork Smothered With Boletes



This delicious meal with boletes was served at the SOMA mushroom camp. Yum.

[editorial addition: The photo below was taken of a particularly good haul of boletes a friend and I found late in the summer of 2002. It was one of those extraordinarily hot and dry summers when the entire region had been through weeks of drought. Nobody was finding anything. We happened across a stand of mixed deciduous and evergreen trees with what seemed like hundreds of these bi-color and king boletes scattered about. We filled our shirts after we had filled all of our bags. Most of the mushrooms were not infested with worms because it was so hot and dry. It was one of those freaky experiences that I'll never forget. Right time, right place...]



Photograph by Jim Strutz

Tom Volk's Fungus of the Month for July 2004: *Suillus americanus*, the chicken-fat mushroom

Reproduced with permission from TomVolkFungi.net

This month's fungus, *Suillus americanus*, is called the chicken-fat mushroom because of its yellow color (more yellow than the picture at the left [ed. below]) and soft consistency and slippery texture. It's edible, but not considered to be choice by anyone I know. The flavor is ok, but it's really very slimy, as you might guess from all the pine needles stuck to the mushrooms in this picture. Maybe you can pretend it's escargot! It's actually very similar, depending on how you cook it. I've sautéed it in a stir-fry with lots of garlic and managed to get it to be delicious, but your mileage may vary. Interestingly, although it is edible for most people, there are a significant number of people who develop a contact dermatitis (rash) from touching this fresh mushroom. I am not one of those people, but I have noticed that my fingers become very slippery after I have picked several of these mushrooms; it feels as if my fingerprints have rubbed off! Thus, this is one of those mushrooms where you have to worry about such idiosyncratic reactions. Whatever the chemical responsible, it seems to be degraded upon cooking, since even those who get a rash from touching it seem to be able to eat the cooked mushrooms.



Suillus americanus also has an interesting ecological niche, being found in nature growing in association with only one kind of tree, namely eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*). So, if I'm walking through the woods with my head to the ground looking for mushrooms and find *S. americanus*, I know that there is a white pine nearby. For some people, like me, it's the easiest way to identify white pine! For most people, white pine is easier to identify by counting the needles in a bundle: in white pine there are five. This is easy to remember because W-H-I-T-E has five letters. In any case, although white pine can be host to many different fungi, *Suillus americanus* forms mycorrhizae only with eastern white pine-- not even with western white pine or sugar pine, which are closely related. However, despite their intimate association with

certain tree species, *S. americanus* and other *Suillus* species do not seem to be as ecologically dependent on the tree for their nutrition as other genera of boletes, since they can be more easily cultured in the lab. Unfortunately for potential cultivators, they do not seem to be as delicious as their bolete relatives either.

Boletes are a group of mostly mycorrhizal, mushroom shaped fungi, distinguished by their pores. Like gills, these pores are lined with basidia that produce basidiospores, serving to increase the surface area. Some of the most delicious and sought after edible mushrooms are boletes, including *Boletus edulis* and its relatives, the much underrated *Boletus subglabripes* and *Boletus bicolor*, *Leccinum* species, and *Gyroporus cyanescens*. In most areas there is a distinctive "bolete season." In the midwestern US they usually prefer warmer weather, beginning to fruit in earnest in mid July and continuing to mid September. In other areas, such as the mountainous west, many boletes begin fruiting in the spring, sometimes just as the morel season is ending.

The genus name *Suillus* roughly translates as "pig mushrooms" probably referring to swine and their soft squishy nature. Members of this genus of boletes are easily characterized macroscopically by the pores, which radiate and elongate out from the stipe to the edge of the pileus. This condition is called "boletinoid" and is shown more dramatically to the left in *Suillus cavipes*. It is in the genus *Suillus* that you can most easily see the evolutionary relationship between gills and pores, since these pores are arranged as if they were gills at one time. In fact, until recently, mycologists included the boletes with the gilled fungi in the Agaricales. However there are significant differences between boletes and gilled fungi, so boletes and relatives are placed in their own order, the Boletales.



In general, *Suillus* species tend to be softer and more "squishy" than their *Boletus* relatives, and there tends to be more ornamentation on the surface of the cap. Many of the other characters of *Suillus* are variable and serve to

identify species. For example some have viscid caps, while others do not. Some have glandular dots on the stipe. Some have a partial veil that forms an annulus. One microscopic character that holds the genus together is the presence of cystidia on the hymenium that turn orange-brown when 3% KOH is added. Even without a microscope, these cystidial clusters can be seen with a hand lens near the mouths of the tubes. No *Suillus* species are known to be poisonous. However, some people have experienced gastrointestinal upset upon consumption of the slime layer. In addition, a small percentage of people develop a contact dermatitis on handling some of the species, as mentioned above, especially *S. americanus* and *S. granulatus*.

As you probably know from reading my other pages, boletes are not the only fungi with pores. The boletes can be distinguished from the other group of pored fungi, the polypores, in several ways, as shown in this table.

| | Boletes | Polypores |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Pore layer | Peels off | Does not peel off |
| Nutrition | Mycorrhizal, i.e. with a mutualistic association with roots of trees | Wood decay |
| Fruiting location | Typically on the ground, fruiting from the roots of trees | Typically directly on wood, although may be on the ground from buried wood. |
| Shape | Typically mushroom shaped | Typically in the form of a shelf or some other shape |

So you can see it's usually easy to distinguish between boletes and polypores, although there are a few that will give you trouble by breaking the rules. For example, members of the genus *Albatrellus* are considered to be polypores because their pores don't peel, even though they are mycorrhizal. *Polyporus radicans* and several related polypores without peeling pores almost always grow on the ground, but if you dig down, you can almost always find the piece of buried wood from which the fungus is fruiting. There are also a few boletes, like *Boletus mirabilis* that climb up on logs to fruit, raising themselves up to get their spores further into the air stream. In fact some mycologists argue that some of these boletes may not be mycorrhizal after all. Fortunately, most boletes and polypores follow the rules.

Editor's note: Tom Volk is a professor of mycology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and a good friend to our mushroom club. He has been plagued with a number of health issues resulting from treatments for Hodgkin's Disease. He is currently recovering from a recent heart transplant. I would like to personally wish him a speedy and complete recovery.

WPMC Website

Yet another great resource to club members is our professionally designed website. There you will find information and links pertaining to our club, including our famed walk/foray species lists and Java data miner. Don't forget to read the President's Blog while you're there. Please see www.wpamushroomclub.org for more information.

Walks and Forays

Walks and forays are held almost every weekend from April through October. They are led by a walk leader and an identifier. Each walk will be at a designated location where participants will forage for wild mushrooms of all species. After the walk the identifier will discuss the mushrooms that were found and answer any questions. Walks usually last 2 or 3 hours and participants are welcome to stay longer if they want. It's a great way to learn about wild mushrooms. Please see our website www.wpamushroomclub.org and our Yahoo Groups message board for update information.

We request that no one hunts a walk or foray location for at least two weeks prior to a walk or foray. It is only through your cooperation that we can have successful walks and forays. All walks and forays will be held rain or shine. All walks start on time.

July 15: 10:00-2:00 at **McConnell's Mill** in Butler County with *Karen Greenwalt*. From the North or South: Take I-79 to the PA 422 exit. Travel west on 422 until you come to a red light with a Sheetz Store on the left. Turn left onto Rt. 388 and travel until you see Center Church on the left. Turn left onto Center Church Road. Continue for about 2 miles making sure you stay to the left of that road when you come to where it makes a V in the road. Turn left onto Shafer Road and then a quick right into the parking lot of Hell's Hellow.

July 22: 10:00-2:00 **Chanterelle Mania** at North Park in Allegheny County with *Randy Danielson*. From I-79; exit at Wexford and travel east on Rt. 910. Travel about 4 miles and turn right onto Pierce Mill Road. Continue to the end of the road and turn right onto Babcock Blvd. From Rt. 8: turn west onto Wildwood Road. Travel about 3 miles and turn left onto Babcock Blvd. Follow the signs to the Swimming Pool parking lot.

July 28-30: **Helen Miknis Memorial Foray** at the Kings Gap Environmental Center in Carlisle with the Eastern Penn Mushroomers. Any question or suggestions call: *Cathy Cholmeley Jones*, Program Coordinator, 717-393-9444, cholmeley@verizon.net or *John Dawson*, President, 717-846-1225, jwd7too@suscom.net

July 29: 10:00-2:00 at **Coopers Rock State Forest** Bruceton Mills, WV with *Joyce and George Gross*. Meet at the parking lot by the gift shop.

August 5: 10:00-12:00 in **Westfield, NY** with *Susan and Peter Baker*. Come to their home to hunt mushrooms in the woods of NY. Directions: Take 79 North to just before Erie. At Erie take 90 East to just over the New York State Line. Take the Westfield Exit #60. Turn left onto North Portage ST (NY 394). Turn right onto West Main ST (US 20). Turn left onto Chestnut St (CR21). Turn left on Mt. Baldy Rd. Drive past the water treatment plant on the left and just at the top of the next hill. Begin looking for orange cones on the left at the driveway. This entire trip is 2 hours from Butler. My cell phone number is 724-822-0631. Rough camping: tents, campers would be fine. No hookups. Water will be available. This location is a few miles from Lake Erie and about 15 minutes from Lake Chautauqua for those wanting to make a "weekend".

August 12: 10:00-12:00 at **Hartwood Acres**, Allegheny County, with *Glenn Carr and LaMonte Yarroll*. Meet in the parking lot in front of the Mansion (on the opposite side of the park from the Performance Center). From PA Turnpike: Take Allegheny Valley (Exit 5). Stay right on the exit ramp. Turn right onto Route 910 West. Go 4 1/2 miles and turn left onto Saxonburg Blvd. at the red blinking light. Follow Saxonburg Blvd. about 2-1/2 miles, entrance will be on your right. This is about a mile and a half from Beechwood Farms.

August 19: 10:00-12:00 in **Charleroi**, Westmoreland County, with *Gavin Farkas and LaMonte Yarroll*. From I-70 take the Charleroi Exit. Turn right on 88 S. Go 5-6 miles past the Allenport Steel Mill. After you pass the Speedy Mart, take the 2nd right on Walnut St. Look for a sign that says Howling Hills, turn right at the "T" in the road. This takes you to the Jackson farm.

August 17-20: **NAMA Foray 2006** will be held at the VentureScape Wilderness Retreat (formerly Blue Lake Centre) located 20 minutes north of Hinton, Alberta, Canada, in the heart of William A. Switzer Provincial Park. See www.namyco.org for information and registration form.

August 26: 11:00 am at **Brady's Run Park**, Beaver County with *John Plischke and John Plischke III* for a program and walk. Travel on the Parkway West out of Pittsburgh toward the Airport/Route 60. Pass the Airport on Route 60 and continue on to the Chippewa exit. It is the last exit before 60 becomes a toll road. Turn right onto Route 51 south after exiting at the Chippewa. Continue on Route 51 (about 2 miles) until you come to the red light in front of the entrance to Brady's Run Park. Make a right into the park. About 1 mile down the road (near the lake and beach) you will see a turn up the hill to your right and a sign that says "Ed Calland Arboretum". Turn here and follow the road all the way to the top, you will see a parking area and the pavilion.

September 1-4: **NEMF 2005** at Saint Anthony's Hermitage, Lac Bouchette, Canada, about 250 miles north of Montreal. There will be lectures, workshops, and forays all day Saturday and Sunday. No membership is required. See www.nemf.org for information and registration.

September 2: 10:00-12:00 at **Fall Run Park**, Allegheny County, with *Dick Dougall and Dick Duffy*. From Rt. 28 go north on Rt. 8 for .7 miles to Saxonburg Blvd. Continue north to the 2nd red light and turn right on Fall Run Road. Cross Pine Creek and make an immediate left into the parking lot.

September 9: 10:00 -12:00 at **South Park** with LaMonte Yarroll. Take Route 51 South. Turn slight right onto Fairhaven Road/Provost road. Provost Road becomes Brownsville Road. Continue to the Park. Meet at the Nature Center. See their website at: <http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/parks/facility.asp>

September 9: Mushroom **Club of Georgia Fall Foray**, John Plischke III will be the guest mycologist. See their website for more information.

September 16: **Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray** at North Park in Allegheny County. Don't miss one of the largest mushroom forays in the country! We will meet at the **Parish Hill Lodge** for registration. **From I-79 North:** exit at Wexford and turn left onto Rt. 910. Turn right onto Brandt School Road at the first light. Turn left onto Ingomar Road. Continue on Ingomar Road past McKnight Road and into North Park. Turn left onto Kummer Road and then a quick right onto Lake Shore Drive. Make another quick left onto Walter Road and look for Parish Hill Lodge on the left. Park in the lot across from the lodge. **From I-79 South:** exit at Mt. Nebo and turn right onto Mt. Nebo Road. Turn left onto Arndt Road just past the I-279 overpass. Continue on Arndt Road until it ends and then turn left onto Reis Run Road. Continue on Reis Run Road as it changes into Ingomar Heights Road and then Ingomar Road (follow the Yellow Belt). Turn left onto Kummer Road and then a quick right onto Lake Shore Drive. Make another quick left onto Walter Road and look for Parish Hill Lodge on the left. Park in the lot across from the lodge. **From I-279 (Parkway North):** exit at Camp Horne Road and turn right onto Lowries Run Road. Turn left onto Rochester Road. Turn right onto Ingomar Heights Road and continue as it changes into Ingomar Road. Turn left onto Kummer Road and then a quick right onto Lake Shore Drive. Make another quick left onto Walter Road and look for Parrish Hill Lodge on the left. Park in the lot across from the lodge. **From Rt. 8:** Turn east onto Wildwood Road and follow into North Park. Continue straight through the main intersection onto Ingomar Road. Turn right onto Kummer Road and then a quick right onto Lake Shore Drive. Make another quick left onto Walter Road and look for Parish Hill Lodge on the left. Park in the lot across from the lodge.

September 23: 10:00 -12:00 at **Kiski Prep**, Westmoreland County, with *Carol Kelly*. Travel east on Rt. 22 (there may be construction delays as they are widening Rt. 22). Continue to the traffic light at Rt. 981 in New Alexandria; turn left (North) onto 981 until you come to the stop sign at the bridge into Saltsburg (the town is on the right and the Kiski campus is

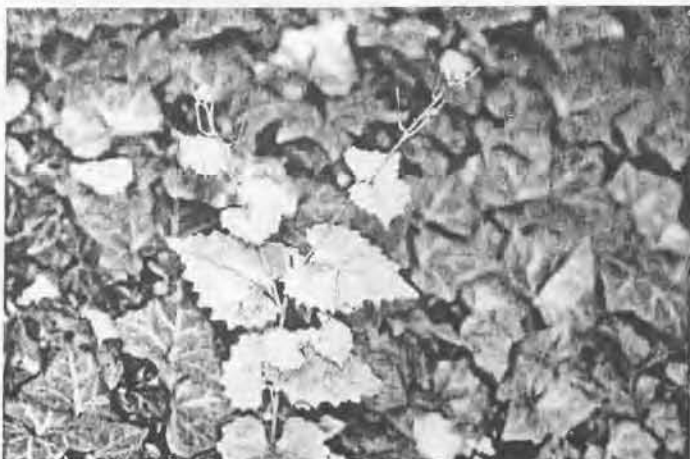
atop the cliff on the left). Proceed ahead after stopping (be advised that traffic coming down the hill toward the bridge, as well as traffic crossing the bridge from your right have the right-of-way. Be careful!) where the road forks just ahead of you. Bear LEFT up and around the curve following the sign for 286 West. (Rt. 981 continues straight ahead toward the Kiski Valley Inn and then to Avonmore; do not take that.) Continue past the curve and crest the hill. The entrance to the school is on the left between the tall brick pillars before you reach the BP/Subway. Meet in the parking area to the right just past the security shed.

September 30: 10:00-2:00 at **Deer Lakes Park**, Allegheny County, Russelton with *Jim Tunney*. From the PA Turnpike, exit at the Allegheny Valley (Exit 5). Turn toward New Kensington and turn left onto Route 28. Follow to Pearl Avenue and turn left. Continue on Pearl Ave as it becomes Russelton Road. In Russelton, turn right at the first intersection, look for a drug store, bank and liquor store and turn right. Go a short distance you will see a Deer Lakes Park sign, turn left into the park. Meet in the parking lot just past the first lake.

For all walks and forays: bring water, lunch, basket, bags (no plastic) to keep mushrooms separated, knife to dig and trim mushrooms, whistle, compass, hand lens, insect repellent, cell phone, books for identification, and a friend or two. Dress for the weather. You are responsible for not getting lost. The Walk Leader will tell you when to return to the meeting place. Mushrooms will be identified and discussed there after the walk. Only club mycologists and identifiers should be used for advice in identifying mushrooms. **Whether you decide to eat a mushroom is ultimately your decision.**

Mushroom Facts

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is an alien plant that has long been known to be invasive. Researchers now tell us it produces a chemical with "antifungal" properties that interferes with mycorrhizal relationships between fungi and trees. Source: *New York Times* article "Garlic Mustard Casts a Pall on the Forest". May 2, 2006.

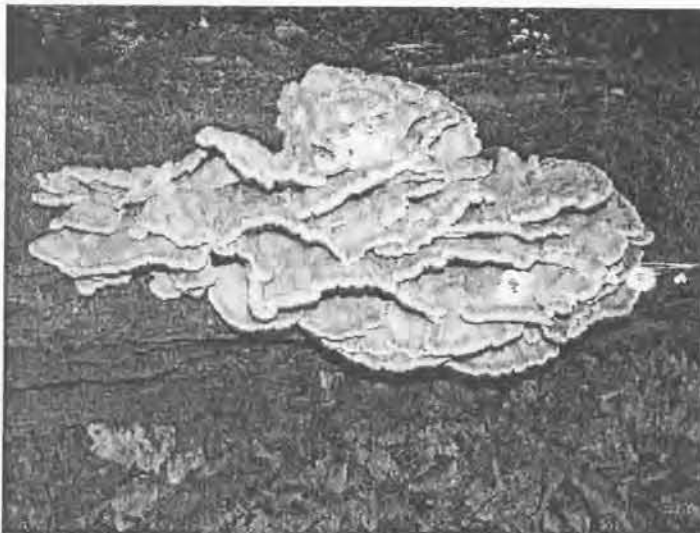


Garlic Mustard growing amid English Ivy. Photo by Jim Strutz

Chicken-of-the-Woods Etoufee

By Jim Strutz

One of the biggest misconceptions about Chicken-of-the-Woods (*Laetiporus sulfureus*) mushrooms is that they taste like chicken. They do not. The common name probably comes from the chicken-like texture of these mushrooms when they are fresh and tender. Chicken flavor can be imparted on the mushrooms by cooking them in chicken stock.



Chicken-of-the-Woods. Photo by Judy Stark for 2005 photo contest

Etoufee is a Cajun term that means "smothered". In this case, the Chicken-of-the-Woods mushrooms are smothered in a roux based sauce and served over rice.

1 lb. Chicken-of-the-Woods, cleaned, cut into pieces
 1 medium onion, chopped
 1 green pepper, chopped
 3 stalks celery, chopped
 several cloves garlic, chopped
 butter, for sautéing
 handfull of flour + olive oil, about equal parts
 32 oz carton (No)Chicken broth
 2 bay leaves
 1 cup parsley, chopped
 Cajun seasoning, to taste
 Salt & pepper, to taste
 scallion greens, chopped for garnish (optional)

In a Dutch Oven, saute the onions, pepper, and celery in some butter until the onions are barely translucent. Add the garlic and the Chicken-of-the-Woods and saute for a minute or so longer. Add the olive oil, then the flour and a generous dose of cajun seasoning. Continue to saute for a minute or so, stirring constantly. Stir in chicken stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add the parsley and the bay leaves and adjust the seasoning. Simmer until sauce thickens to desired consistency (1/2 hour or more to meld flavors). Add more stock if the sauce gets too thick. Adjust seasoning before serving. About 30 minutes before serving, make the rice in a separate pot according the directions. Plate the rice, top with etoufee sauce, and garnish with chopped scallions.

The Impact of Mushrooms on the Science of the Brain

By Frank Lotrich

Many mycophiles love the mushroom because some fungi are quite delectable, many love the mushroom because they come in so many interesting sizes and shapes, and some are delighted by their fascinating physiology, symbiotic relationships, and odd manners of sexual reproduction. However, the next time you walk through the woods (or across your lawn), I propose that you should be enthralled for yet another reason. For believe it or not, our little mycological friends (the mushroom and related fungi) have played important roles in our understanding of how the brain works.

A simple way to think of the brain is to imagine a few trillion tiny skinny cells (neurons), with each neuron making thousands of contacts with the other neurons. Moreover, each neuron carries an electrical charge just like a battery. When irritated in just the right manner, the electrical charge flows down the neuron, causing it to spit chemicals on its neuronal neighbors. These chemicals can either irritate or quiet down these neighboring neurons, continuing the cycles of irritation, electrical current, and chemical release. The patterns of this cycle going on trillions of times per second inside our heads we call thought, imagination, love, memory, fear, calculation, etc. But what are these chemicals being released by neurons and how do they work? Which ones do what things, and how?

One of the very first of these chemicals to be identified was acetylcholine, but the next question was "so what?" What does acetylcholine do and how does it do it? Well, in the latter half of the 19th century, a chemical had already been isolated for *Amanita muscaria* that was called "muscarine." On hindsight, it turns out that many mushrooms, particularly *Inocybes* and *Clitocybes*, have lots of muscarine (about 10,000 times more than the *Amanita*). But the chemical was named after *A. muscaria*. Oh well. As scientists attempted to discern how acetylcholine worked, they discovered that acetylcholine was able to mimic some of muscarine's effects. In fact, muscarine chemically bound to an important protein on the neuron that transmitted the effect of acetylcholine. In honor of this, these proteins (there are five now identified), are all called muscarinic receptors. This elucidation of acetylcholine transmission resulted in the 1936 Nobel Prize. Thus, some of the first neurotransmitter receptors identified are named after a pretty mushroom. (For a really nifty read if you can find it, see HH Dale, "The Action of Certain Esters and Ethers of Choline and their Relation to Muscarine". *Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics*, 6: 147-190, 1914.)

Thanks to this pivotal discovery, we now know a lot more about what acetylcholine does in the brain. Drugs for Alzheimer's disease are now used that specifically target acetylcholine transmission. And there are muscarinic abnormalities in diseases like depression, guiding current research into this psychiatric disease. Interestingly, many medication side effects are the results of activity at muscarinic receptors.

But it's also important to note that muscarine can be toxic. Your brain connects with your heart, your digestive tract, your eyes, and other organs. Muscarinic receptors and acetylcholine play a very important role in these connections. If you eat poisonous *Inocybe* or other mushroom with lots of muscarine, the common symptoms that you can expect can be remembered by thinking of the word "SLUDGE." S = salivation and sweating (yes, this poison will make you drool). L = lacrimation (the means tears, even if you aren't sad yet). U = urination (your bladder may uncomfortably start contracting). DG = diarrhea and gastrointestinal distress (have you ever had really bad stomach cramps and nausea?). E = everything else. There are antidotes for muscarine poisoning, but it is better if you just avoid eating it in the first place. There are some mushrooms that should be looked at and not consumed. The SLUDGE syndrome is not pleasant.

But the story doesn't end there. There are some other chemicals in *A. muscaria* that have played additional important roles in studies of the brain. One example is muscimol. Another example is ibotenic acid, discovered by some Japanese scientists (Ibo Tengu Take, their common name for *A. muscaria*, means wart-nosed mushroom). However, the exciting story that begins with these two compounds will have to await the next installment.

In the meantime, remember that many *Clitocybe* species, many *Inocybe* species, a few *Omphalotus* species, some *Entelomas*, and a few *Boletus* mushrooms all have toxic quantities of muscarine. Enjoy looking at them. When you see them, remember the cool way that the chemical inside them has helped neuroscience progress. I think that it is truly fascinating. I hope you all will agree. But, please remember, don't eat them. Know what mushroom you have before you eat it. Muscarine poisoning is not fun at all.



Amanita muscaria mushrooms, photograph used with permission from Pamela's Mushrooms website (www.pamelasmushrooms.com). Photograph by Pamela Kaminski.

Turning the Corner into Fall Mushroom Season

By Jim Strutz

Prevailing thoughts are that morels begin to fruit when the ground temperature rises to a certain temperature. Some mushrooms have mycorrhizal associations with certain types of trees and plants. Most mushrooms fruit following a good rain. Mushrooms usually stop fruiting after a hard frost. Such fruiting characteristics of mushrooms are somewhat predictable notwithstanding the blessings or curses of the Mushroom Gods. They help us know when and where to find mushrooms. What remains a mystery to me is why, all of a sudden, fall mushrooms begin fruiting around the middle of August. There are no perceptible changes in anything that I can detect: no significant change in temperature or precipitation, the tree leaves haven't yet begun to lose their green color (which is said to be a function of diminishing daylight). Things in nature are programmed when and where to do their thing and we don't always understand why.

The transition from summer to fall happens gradually. In fact, change is always occurring in nature. It's just that we humans prefer to delineate things like seasonal change by dividing and classifying things as we do. In our minds there is summer mushroom season and there is fall mushroom season but there is no single defining attribute that actually divides them. Noticing that first fall mushroom of the year, however, probably helps to reinforce our perception of acute seasonal change.

Among the first fall mushrooms that I see are Meadow Mushrooms (*Agaricus campestris*). I notice them in lawns and other grassy areas as I drive from place to place. They are small, have sort of pasty white smooth caps, and have pink gills as they emerge from the ground. The spores are chocolate brown and will color the gills gray and then brown as they are released. Meadow Mushrooms can be easily confused with the deadly Death Angel (*Amanita virosa*). The Death Angel is one of the handful of mushrooms that will kill you. Its toxin is said to be just one molecule different from rocket fuel, but is actually a simple protein that accumulates in and attacks the liver. The liver, kidneys, and nervous system are ultimately affected thus leading to death. The Meadow Mushroom and Death Angel



Meadow Mushrooms, photograph by John Plischke III

can grow side by side in the grass, so you have to look at every mushroom and make sure what you have. The Death Angel has white gills and a white spore print. **Make a spore print** to be certain of its identity.

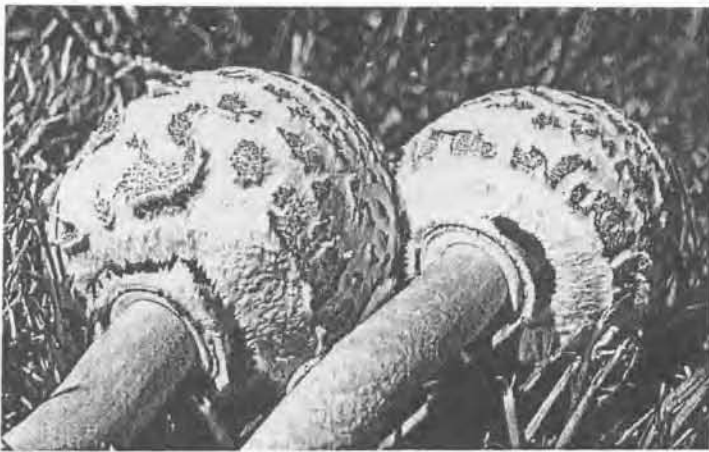
I love the earthy flavor of Meadow Mushrooms. They are so much more flavorful than the white button mushroom found in grocery stores, to which they are related. I love to make creamy mushroom soup with Meadow Mushrooms. They're also great grilled with vegetables. They are best preserved as duxelles (finely chopped and sautéed) and stored in the freezer.

Meadow Mushroom Soup

2 lb Meadow Mushrooms, cleaned and chopped
1 onion, chopped
2 large red potatoes (okay to leave peel on or not), sliced
3 stalks celery, sliced
1 large carrot, sliced
thyme, to taste
salt and pepper, to taste
butter, for sautéing
water

Sauté the onions, celery, and carrots in butter for a few minutes. Add mushrooms and continue to sauté until mushrooms begin to release their liquid. Add potatoes and enough water to cover plus a little more, season with salt. Bring to a boil and cook until all vegetables are cooked through. Remove from heat and blend in batches. Return soup to pot and season with salt, pepper, and thyme. Stir in cream (optional) for more richness.

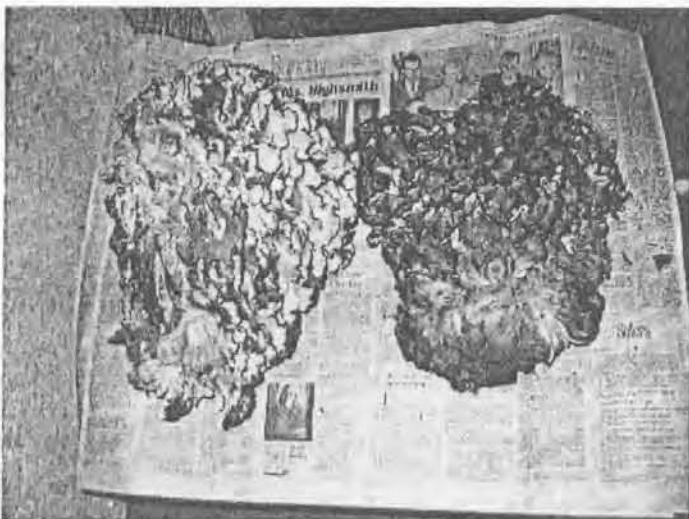
I have been collecting Parasol mushrooms (*Lepiota procera*) for the skillet as I get more confident in my mushroom identification abilities. I've known to recognize them for several years now but eating them is another matter entirely as they can easily be confused with Green Spored Lepiotas (*Chlorophyllum molybdites*), a poisonous mushroom that can make you violently ill. Green Spored Lepiotas can look exactly like Parasols: both have white scaly caps atop long slender stems, both have annulus rings, and both can be found scattered singly on the ground. There are a couple of things to look for to discern them. Green Spored Lepiotas are typically found in grassy areas in more southerly regions while Parasols are typically found in mixed deciduous forests - often among oaks. The most definitive discerning characteristic, however, is the spore color. Green Spored Lepiotas have green spores while Parasols have white spores. **Make a spore print** to be certain of what you have. Once you know you have Parasols be happy, very happy, because they are among the most flavorful mushrooms that you will ever taste. The best way to prepare them, in my opinion, is to simply sauté them in butter and season with salt and pepper. I might add some chopped shallots and garlic to the sauté but to put them with anything else will detract from them. They are



Parasol mushrooms. photograph used with permission from Pamela's Mushrooms website (www.pamelasmushrooms.com). Photograph by Pamela Kaminski.

wonderfully rich tasting and pair well with a dry white wine as an hors d'oeuvre, or as a side with dinner.

Perhaps my favorite fall mushroom is the Hen-of-the-Woods (*Grifola frondosa*, a.k.a. Sheephead or Maitake). The common name, Maitake, means to "dance with delight" in Japanese. I can relate to that because I sometimes feel like dancing with delight when I find them! They can grow to large sizes into the tens of pounds, so one mushroom can make several meals. Hens are most often found at the base of large oak trees. Look in the folds where the roots go into the ground for brown overlapping clusters of flesh. They tend to be formed tightly when they are young and spread out as they get older. Look carefully at the white underside and see the array of minute pores, hence they are known generally as polypores. Magnification may be required. They can be confused with Black Staining Polypores (*Meripilus sumstinei*). Not surprisingly, Black Staining Polypores bruise black when you handle them. It wouldn't be the end of the world if you did confuse them since Black Staining Polypores are also edible, but they get tough if you don't find them early enough. They are often seen earlier in the season and on trees other than oak.



A couple of nice hens, photograph by Jim Strutz

Cleaning Hens-of-the-Woods is straightforward. They may be infested with worms and other crawlies. I release them outside and cut away any holes they may have made. Cut Hens into increasingly smaller pieces until they are bite sized. Wash and dry them and they're ready for cooking or for preservation. Don't touch your eyes while handling hens because there is a chemical in them that causes a mild sting. It's especially uncomfortable if you wear contact lenses. Hens-of-the-Woods can be dried or frozen. My preferred method of freezing is to "flash freeze" them – lay them out on a wax paper covered tray in your freezer until they are frozen. Then fold the wax paper into a scoop and dump the hens into marked freezer bags. Seal the bags and place them back into the freezer. I have found that Hens flash frozen in this way don't clump into one solid mass. You can use as many or as few as you like. And they retain their flavor and texture very well.



Processed hens ready for the freezer. photograph by Jim Strutz

Hens are one of the most versatile mushrooms to cook with. I use them in everything from soups and sauces, to salads. I'm on the run a lot and find that leftovers convenient for my lifestyle. This pasta salad travels well and keeps well.

Pasta Salad with Hen-of-the-Woods Mushrooms

- 2 cups Hens-of-the-Woods, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 bag/box spiral pasta, cooked al dente
- 1 cup sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
- 1 bunch parsley, chopped
- 1 bunch scallions, chopped
- 1 can artichoke bottoms, chopped
- 2 large carrots, grated
- 1 cup green olives, halved
- Oil & vinegar salad dressing
- Olive oil for sautéing
- Salt & pepper, to taste

Sauté the mushrooms in olive oil until lightly browned. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and toss with the salad dressing. Season to taste.

Dorothy M. Fornof: 1/17/22 - 5/18/06

By Valerie Baker

The plaque on the Fornof dining room wall reads: "11/18/03 Special Service Award to Dorothy Fornof for her dedication as a Club mycologist, Mushroom Display Chairperson, her expertise in mushroom identification, and willingness to share her vast knowledge with all Club members."

She was dedicated. I have seen her stand for hours diligently identifying mushrooms for the Gary Lincoff forays and felt badly for her when she told me that after eight hours of standing she was tired and had to go home to rest. I've observed her at the Mushroom Display table, patiently answering questions and studying the mushrooms, and she spoke with a confident smile to the interested people around her. She had vast knowledge which she patiently shared with everyone who asked questions of her. My first walk with Dorothy was at Deer Lakes years about 6 ago and she impressed me as a woman with a profound knowledge of not only the fungi we discovered on that foray but also identified the birds on sightings and by their songs and practically every plant. Her keen interest in all nature was truly impressive. I asked her how she could remember all the names and she told me it took many years of hard work of learning and remembering.

Twenty years ago she and her two friends, Roger Hummel and Ginny Cronenberger, studied mushroom books for hundreds of hours. They learned the Latin names first and then the common names. The three of them went with the North Park Walkers every Thursday morning and when botanists Emily Johnson (a deceased WPMC member) and Esther Allen (a former WPMC member) would identify the fungi found on those walks, Dorothy announced to her two friends that the three of them had to learn mushrooms. They would take copious notes on the various species they found. Dorothy, Roger and Ginny would try to attend as many of the Ohio Mushroom Society's forays and meetings as they could (the only existing Club in the area for many years), learning from Walter Sturgeon of that group, a mycologist who has assisted with identification at our own Club's forays. They began studying fungi with small paper guides and then graduated to mushroom books. Dorothy told me she had her nose stuck in a mushroom book for hours at a time.

At her funeral service, I discovered that Dorothy was a woman of many talents. She had been an insurance underwriter at Horne's. She played the organ at the Harmerville United Presbyterian Church where she was an Elder and Treasurer. She had also learned to play the violin years ago. Dorothy was a member of the Audubon Society, Botanical Society, Wissahickon Nature Club, and the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club. She was a person of faith and found God's creativity in all nature. She taught nature programs at the Rachel Carson Society. Always the teacher, she inspired people to study those subjects in which they were interested.

Her ancestors were Scotch-Irish who came to Pennsylvania in 1836 where they farmed the land in Cheswick. Dorothy told me that her father gave her bird cards when she was a child, much like the baseball cards of today, and she studied them until she could identify the pictured birds on sight. She and Jim Fornof married in 1946 and they have been married for 60 years. The Fornof's had three sons, one deceased and two now living in the Fornof home with their father. She was the grandmother of three, and the great grandmother of four.

Dorothy, in addition to all she knew and did in her lifetime, was an extremely nice and sweet person with a wonderful sense of humor. As a naturalist, she followed in the footsteps of Rachel Carson and, because of what she taught us, several of us will be following in her footsteps. Dorothy will be greatly missed by those who knew and loved her.

A Great Loss

By John Plischke (excerpted from Yahoo Groups message board)

Club Mycologist and Distinguished Service Award winner, Dorothy Fornof has passed away. Dorothy was a very special kind and gentle woman. She was willing to share her very large knowledge of mushrooms with anyone who had a question.

At meetings she could always be found at the display table putting names on mushrooms and explaining mushrooms to anyone who asked. She loved club walks and identified on many of those walks. She also enjoyed identifying mushrooms at the Gary Lincoff Mid Atlantic Mushroom Foray.

Her husband and son would often accompany her on club outings. She was from the old school. Before the club was founded she was often out hunting with her family and Roger Hummell. Searching and researching, trying to put names on the mushrooms they found.

Before the WPMC was formed, they belonged to the Ohio Mushroom Society and would travel great distances to learn mushrooms with the Ohio Group. The club reserves the title of Club Mycologist for those who are very knowledgeable in mushrooming. The designation has only been given to six people. Dorothy was one of our first Club Mycologists.

Dorothy's knowledge of the out of doors was not limited to mushrooms. I remember one time at Pine Ridge Park, she and I were walking together not finding many mushrooms. The conversation turned to plants that we were encountering. She knew plants and most of the creatures that God gave us to enjoy.

The club will surely miss her and the knowledge she imparted. We will miss her friendship and her very pleasant gentle ways.

A young mushroom hunter at the fall foray last year finds something interesting. Photo by Kim Plischke



Really cool mushroom shaped pathlights at Winterthur. Photo by Jim Strutz.



This photo collage is dedicated to Dorothy Fornof and is symbolic of some of the things that were important to her: fungi, nature, education, and friends. She was a friend and an important part of our mushroom club. She will be forever missed....

Lecture attendees at last year's Mushroom Mania. Photo by Becky Plischke.



A morel, photo by Jim Strutz



Dorothy Fornof
1922-2006



Ganodermas. 1st place digital category winner of 2005 WPMC photo contest. Photo by Bill Greenawalt.



LaMonte Yarroll points out microscopic features of fungi at the May 16th club meeting. Photo by Jim Strutz.



A smiling George Yakulis shows off his basket of morels that he found at Morel Madness at Mingo Park on April 29-30. Photo presumably by Mary Jane Yakulis.



Group of volunteers who represented our mushroom club on Earth Day at St. Vincent's College in Latrobe on April 22nd. Photo by a bystander with Dick's camera.

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club
129 Grant Street
Greensburg, PA 15601

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Club Officers

President: Joe Luzanski, president@wpamushroomclub.org
27 Ted Road, West Newton, PA 15089, 724-872-7867
Vice President: Jim Strutz, strutzj@strutz.com
82 Pilgrim Road, Carnegie, PA 15106, 412-276-7471
Treasurer: George Yakulis, yakg@connecttime.net
4879 Christopher Drive, Allison Park, PA 15101, 724-444-6628
Secretary: Mary Jane Yakulis (see above)
Corresponding Secretary: Valerie Baker, ybbaker8@hotmail.com
1413 Parkmont Road, Allison Park, PA 15101, 412-367-7696

Committees

Cultivation Chairman: Mark Spear, mspear@penn.com
RR4, Box 237E, Kittanning, PA 16201, 724-297-3377
Education Chairman: Jim Tunney, aminitam@hotmail.com
6041 Stanton Avenue, Apt#1, Pittsburgh, PA 15206, 412-441-3958
LaMonte Yarroll
Festival Chairman: George Yakulis, (see Treasurer)
Historian: Joyce Gross, jagart@verizon.net
58 Seventh St Ext., New Kensington, PA 15068, 724-339-8547
Hospitality Co-Chairs: JoAnna Jenkins, Shirley Caseman
201 Culbertson Ave, Greensburg, PA 15601, 724-832-0271
Elaine Hruby, Eugene Kadar, Charlotte Tunney
Membership Chair: Dr. John Stuart
Mushroom Display: LaMonte Yarroll, see Club Mycologists
Mid Atlantic Foray Chairmen: Dick Dougall, rsdme@imap.pitt.edu
202 Wadsworth Drive, Glenshaw, PA 15116, 412-486-7504
Glenn Carr, browncarrs@verizon.net
1848 Fairhill Road, Allison Park, PA 15101, 412-369-0495
Mycological Recorder: Bob Lucas, mlucas@microspell.com
5840 Northumberland St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217, 412-422-8976
Newsletter Editor: Jim Strutz (see Vice-President)
Photography Chair: Robert Boice, bigym@aol.com
152 Beeno Road, Irwin, PA 15642, 724-446-0524
Publicity Chair: Susan Baker, smidwife@zoominternet.net
329 First Street, Butler, PA 16001, 724-283-9123
Sales Chairman:
Speakers Bureau: Dick Dougall (see Mid-Atlantic Foray Chairman)
Joe Luzanski, Mike Lloyd, John Plischke III
Toxicology Chairman: Frank Lotrich, lotrichfe@msx.upmc.edu
7219 Witherspoon St. Pittsburgh, PA 15206, 412-661-0950
Walk & Foray Chair: John Plischke III, fungi01@aol.com
201 Culbertson Ave, Greensburg, PA 15601, 724-832-0271

Web Master: Elizabeth Barrow, ebarrow@verizon.net
5840 Northumberland St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217 3412-521-9337
Welcoming Chairman: Mary Ellen Dougall, maried@verizon.net
202 Wadsworth Drive, Glenshaw, PA 15116, 412-486-7504
Harriet Yarroll (see LaMonte Yarroll, education committee)
Workshop Chair: Joyce Gross (see Sales Chairman)
Robin Durr, Dick Duffy
Yahoo Groups Moderator: Jim Strutz (see Vice-President)
NAMA/NEMF Trustee: John Plischke III (see Walk & Foray Chair)

Club Mycologists

Robert Boice (See Photography Chairman)
John Plischke III (See Walk & Foray Chairman)
Kim Plischke (see Hospitality Chairman)
Dr. Fred Schrock 610 South 7th St, Indiana Pa
La Monte Yarroll, pigov@bagaai.chi.il.us
5770 Clark Ave, Bethel Park, PA 15102, 412-854-5684

Identifiers

Jack Baker ybbaker8@hotmail.com, 412-367-7696
John Bumbarger shrumall@yahoo.com
Doug Dickman jarshalfass@yahoo.com, 724-626-1542
Bob Lucas (See Mycological Recorder)
Ed McConnell ournuthouse2@peoplepc.com
Jim Strutz (see Vice-President)
Jim Tunney (see Education Chairman)

Walk Leaders

Valerie Baker (See Corresponding Secretary)
Glenn Carr browncarrs@verizon.net
Dick Dougall (see Mid-Atlantic Foray Chairman)
Dick Duffy 412-486-3913 2841
Robert Fornof 412-767-9925
John Plischke (see Past President)
Mary Lou Riegel mriegel@federatedinv.com
Don Stone dastonearch@yahoo.com
Charlotte Tunney aminitam@hotmail.com

Legal Council: Mike Lloyd
Past President: Mary Woehrel marigold4343@yahoo.com
Past President: John Plischke morelbp@aol.com
Past President: Dick Dougall rsdme@imap.pitt.edu