



From *Wild About Mushrooms*, by Louise Freedman

Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

February/March, 2001, vol 51:3

My Top 20 Mushrooms, Edible or Not

By Debbie Viess

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1. **Gyromitra esculenta.** NOT! I don't care how tasty these are; I love my liver better.

2. **Boletus edulis.** Don't let them kid you, bigger is better, and our West Coast boletes are the biggest in the world. Would you rather have a more flavorful version the size of your thumb, or a mushroom that at its largest is euphemistically referred to as a "barstool"? It is awesome to find one of these giants rising majestically out of the pine duff. Their flavor intensifies when you dry them, but the fresh texture is incomparable. They have all the texture of flesh without the guilt, and a wonderful earthy flavor. Try thick porcini slices in any chicken parmigiana recipe (check out the new Joy of Cooking), in substitution for the chicken. With the frying and all the cheese, it's not health food, but porcini Parmesan is to die for (and thanks to Jeanne Campbell for the recipe idea).

3. **Amanita velosa.** These mushrooms thrill me. They're the first mushroom that I ever tracked down by smell alone. They have a strong, but not unpleasant odor of fish, which captured my attention downwind of an inland cluster of oaks, and led me by the nose to their source. They are distinctive and delicious Amanitas that are well worth the trouble of learning how to identify. Once safely ID'ed, try them in a simple butter sauce with fresh asparagus over pasta, the very essence of Spring.

4. **Sparassis crispa.** The large size, intoxicating fragrance and delightfully chewy texture makes the cauliflower fungus one of my favorite edibles.

5. **Craterellus cornucopioides.** Herein lies a dark tale of longing about an unseemly lust for black chanterelles, and how it fruited most foully in the form of a clandestine mushroom deal at the Santa Cruz Fungus Fair. A few years back, ignorant of the ways of the wild Craterellus, but longing for them nonetheless, I hoped to obtain some at the Santa Cruz Fair. But alas, there were no vendors selling wild mushrooms. Then I spied within the halls of the Loudon Nelson Center, a man holding an enormous zip lock bag of Craterellus, and a woman exclaiming loudly over their virtues. I discovered that the man in question had a trunkful of Craterellus and was very interested in selling them. I begged him for half the amount he had sold to the first woman, and I waited impatiently while he moved about the hall, attracting both praise and criticism ("That's not a full pound, and they're not completely dried," remarked the then-current FFSC president). But I didn't care. I wanted those mushrooms! Finally, after an interminable amount of time, he went to his car, and split a bag for me. Triumphant, I carried off my prize. But, like a drug deal gone bad, my huge bag of "cheap" Craterellus turned out to be spoiled (they weren't dried properly), and I had to throw them all out. A graphic enactment of the old adage, "Be careful what you wish for, because you might get it!" Happily, I can now find my own Craterellus, and love them for their

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Presidential Preamble

By Terri Beausejour

Hello Friends:

I have several exciting announcements for March and the coming year. First and foremost, I'd like to announce that we have set a firm date for the Fungus Fair volunteer appreciation party. This party is to thank and honor all those who have made the 2000 Fungus fair a success. If you volunteered at the fungus fair, we hope you will join us for some festivities, goodies and surprises, and to get to know your fellow volunteers better in a relaxing setting with no responsibilities!. Here are the details:

Fungus Fair Volunteer Appreciation Party

Randall Museum
Saturday, March 17th,
2pm – 5pm.

On a related note, we have confirmed a Location for the 2001 Fungus Fair. It will be held at the Oakland Museum this year. This is an excellent location, in which we held the fair several years ago and had somewhere close to 10,000 participants! The museum will co-advertise with us, which helps with the publicity, and we also have the benefit of walk-in museum traffic. It is an excellent facility with good speaker accommodations and breakout rooms for workshops and other projects. Please look for more info from our fair co-chairs, David Rust and Tom Chester, and special thanks to David, Tom and Monique Carment for attending the meetings and negotiating this excellent venue for 2001.

In March, we will again participate extensively in the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show, with both an MSSF membership and educational booth and a Mushrooms in the Garden Display. This is a spectacular event, which attracts around 60,000 attendees - a great opportunity to share the wonders of the fungal kingdom with the uninitiated. Ken Litchfield is coordinating the displays, and Lorrie Gallagher is coordinating the volunteers. There are rewards for volunteering, so if you'd like to attend the show anyway, why not devote a few hours to our cause and get into the \$18.00 per day event free? Please contact Ken or Lorrie if interested, and refer to their articles elsewhere in this newsletter and on the newsgroup for further details.

During the February Council Meeting, we decided to form a new committee to address the important issue of conservation and preservation of, and access to mycological habitats. The committee has not been officially named yet, but the temporary working name is "Mycological Habitats Conservation Committee". I have already heard from several members who are interested in participating in this committee. What the committee really needs, though, is a dedicated chairperson who is passionate about this very important cause. If this person is you, please call or email me directly of your interest and we can schedule a time to talk. If you are interested in participating in this committee, please email me and I will inform you of scheduled meetings and other activities.

It is my great honor and privilege to announce that our Speaker for the March General Meeting will be Dr. Nancy S. Weber.

Dr. Weber received her Ph.D. in Botany in 1971 from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Since 1989, Dr. Weber served as Professor in the Department of Forest Science, College of Forestry, Oregon State University, Corvallis Oregon. She specializes in teaching, research, and outreach with a specialization in mycology. Of particular interest is her extensive expertise in the study of morels, truffles and allied cup fungi of western North America. She has also provided subject matter for the Oregon Coalition of Interdisciplinary Databases, Northwest Alliance for Computational Science and Engineering, Department of Computer Sciences, Oregon State University.

Dr. Weber has published numerous journal articles on ascomycetes in respected publications such as *Mycotaxon*, *Mycologia*, *McIlvainea*, et al, and has published the following five books:

- Smith, A.H., H.V. Smith and N.S. Weber. 1979. *How to Know the Gilled Mushrooms*. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Co., Publishers. vii + 334 pp.
- Smith, A.H., and N.S. Weber. 1980. *The Mushroom Hunter's Field Guide, all color and enlarged*. The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor. 316 pp.
- Smith, A.H., , H.V. Smith and N.S. Weber. 1981. *How to Know the Non-Gilled Mushrooms*. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Co., Publishers. vii + 324 pp.
- Weber, N.S., and A.H. Smith with photographs by Dan Guravich. 1985. *A Field Guide to Southern Mushrooms*. The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor. 280 pp.
- Weber, N.S., 1988. *A Morel Hunter's Companion*. TwoPeninsula Press, Lansing, MI. 209 pp. (Reprint by Thunder Bay Press, 1995).

Other activities include membership in the Toxicology Committee of the Oregon Mycological Society, consultant to Oregon Poisoning Center on mushroom poisoning, serving as Member of the Editorial Board of Oregon State University Press, and Editor for the Editorial Board on the Representative Search Committee for Acquisitions. She has also consulted extensively with the USDA Forest Service.

The upcoming presentation for our March general meeting is entitled: "Mushrooms around the House: Mycological tales from a Corvallis (OR) yard." Dr. Weber describes her talk as follows:

My mycological explorations of a suburban yard in Corvallis, OR started in 1988 and picked up speed in 1997. The targeted groups were Lichenized and non-lichenized fungi and slime molds large enough to see with nothing fancier than a hand lens. Growth rates of individual specimens and their longevity turned up some unexpected surprises as did tracking the distribution of selected species over time and around the yard. By late January, 2001 about 260 possible species (many in need of names) in 157 genera, 89 families and 46 orders have made the official list. Possible themes we will explore include introduced mushrooms, look-alikes, west-coast natives, substrate specialization, thoughts on rarity, cup-fungi, fruiting patterns, how mushrooms rot, what eats mushrooms, and fungi of special interest."

If you can possibly get to the city of San Francisco on the third Tuesday of March, don't miss this opportunity to hear from and meet this eminent mycologist, who has graciously agreed to travel here from Oregon especially to share her knowledge and insights with us that evening.

As the winter season in the Bay area and coastal points north begins

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Presidential Preamble

February 2001

By Terri Beausejour

Hi Friends:

Your council has been working on a busy agenda of upcoming events and improvements to our organization and member services. Here is an update on our plans and progress.

Treasury

Our treasurer has formed an ad hoc committee to determine how to better manage the budget dollars that are currently held in our Vanguard account. This money is primarily used to cover the up-front costs of the annual Fungus Fair, the Mendocino Foray, and San Jose camp. Since we usually come close to breaking even on these events, this money is held in reserve to pay for the venue/accommodations, city licenses, A/V equipment, supplies, catering, etc. If we can better understand when and how the money is used, we may be able to earn a higher interest rate while it is in our accounts. The committee will make recommendations to the council for a decision in the next few months.

Council has also been discussing some recent donations to the MSSF in memory of Dr. Harry Thiers. We need to ensure that such donations are segregated from the general budget and that these dollars are used for an appropriate purpose such as the scholarship fund or the Harry D. Thiers herbarium at San Francisco State. We will soon decide how these funds will be allocated based on proposals brought to an upcoming council meeting. If you wish to make a tax deductible donation in honor of the late Dr. Thiers, please be sure to state this purpose on your check and/or in an enclosed letter so that the funds are allocated accordingly.

Library

We are working on some improvements to our extensive mycological library, including publication of a current list of available titles and better access to the collections. An inventory is in progress thanks to Beryl Durnell and John Lennie. There are around 30 books from the previous inventory that are unaccounted for. If you have a library book checked out, please let John or Beryl know that you have it in case we don't have a record that it is checked out. We are also working with the Randall Museum to see if there is a location in the future remodeling plans which would provide better access. However, it may be several months before a decision is reached on the remodeling, so please be patient. Meanwhile, the collections are available downstairs at the Randall and can be perused and checked out during any of our general meetings. Once the inventory is complete, we plan to publish the updated list in the Mycena News.

Fungus Fair

The Hall of Flowers will be unavailable for next year's Fungus Fair. Therefore, we are in the process of locating an alternative venue. If you have any suggestions as to possible venues, please let one of our fair co-chairs know as soon as possible. They are al-

ready exploring several good possibilities, and we hope to settle on a location in the next few months.

We are also still planning the volunteer appreciation party. It will be an afternoon gathering of champagne and hors d'oeuvres. The date and location are still TBD, but we are hoping to schedule it for a Saturday afternoon in March. Please look for an announcement of the details in the March Mycena News.

Committees

We would like to revive a few committees which have been essentially inactive for the past few years. In particular, we have a "collecting policy" committee, which in the past has provided a liaison with parks and other land managers. The committee is currently inactive and without a chairperson, however, a number of individuals have expressed an interest in this area, so I will be scheduling a kick-off meeting sometime in March. The first agenda item will be to find a better name for the committee, such that it better reflects our educational mission instead of emphasizing collecting. One of the primary goals will be to open more lands to educational walks and study. If you are interested in this committee, please look for an announcement of the first meeting in the March Mycena News.

Alliances

Another initiative which we will pursue this year is to form better alliances with other educational and conservation organizations. We will begin by either purchasing institutional memberships, or better yet, where possible, forming reciprocal membership relationships with select organizations. This will help us understand what these organizations are doing in the areas of land conservation and biological education, and how we might assist them and otherwise participate. We may form a committee around this, or we may fold it into the aforementioned collection policy committee.

The subjects of committees and alliances will be discussed at the next council meeting. If you are interested in this subject or would like to propose an organization for consideration, please feel free to attend the next council meeting at the Randall Museum, the 2nd Tuesday of February at 7pm in the Yellow Room.

Terri

March Preamble, continued from preceding page

to wind down, we begin to look forward to Spring in the Sierras, and the infamous MSSF Morel forays. Please keep a lookout in the calendar section of the March, April and May issues for some wonderful spring events where wild flowers meet wild mushrooms. Hoping to see you in the woods!

Terri

Our Foragers' Report

Patrick Hamilton

A club takes all kind of folks to make it happen and our reporters this month happen to be just that. We have past presidents offering scholarly information and first time forayers presenting their show and tell discoveries. Folks with a culinary or scientific mind bent and others with just bent minds rambled about in our Doug-fir, redwood, bay and madrone forests or oak hillsides and sometimes in their conversations too. All in all it'll make a darn fine collection of what's out been there from those who go for those who simply want to know.

Dateline, Bay Area, January 9, from Martin Gibson: "I have been finding decent amounts of *H. Ramosum* recently. . ."

Always a fine find. He asked if anyone had good recipes for this fungus—try broiling it slightly slathered with a mix of butter and good olive oil, French sea salt and fresh ground pepper after slicing the whole mushroom like bread. Or tempura the sliced slabs and treat like sushi with wasabi in soy with a scallion garnish.

Dateline, Bear Valley, Pt. Reyes National Seashore, January 20 from Bob Mackler: "Here are the results from the MSSF beginners' foray. The following were identified to species: *Agaricus subrutileus*, *Auriscalpium vulgare*, *Bolbitius vitellinus*, *Cantharellus cibarius*, *Coriolis versicolor*, *Dacrymyces palmatum*, *Daedalia quercina*, *Fomitopsis pinicola*, *Fomitopsis cajanderi*, *Gandoderma applanatum*, *Helvella lacunosa*, *Hygrophorus conicus*, *H. cuspidatus*, *H. flavescens*, *H. puniceus*, *Hypholoma fasciculare*, *Inocybe geophylla* var. *lilacina*, *Lactarius fragilis* var. *rubidus*, *Mycena pura*, *Phaeolus schweinitzii*, *Phylloporus rhodoxanthus*, *Pleurotus ostreatus*, *Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*, *Russula amoenolens*, *R. silvicola*, *Sarcoscypha coccinea*, *Sparassis crispa*, *Stereum hirsutum*, and *Suillus caeruleus*."

Once again I thank Bobby Mack the Mushroom Knife for his continuing contributions to the column.

Dateline, San Geronimo Valley, January 20, Kathy Faircloth reports that she has been giving mushroom talks once a year to the Valley Planning Group and has taken these folks to nearby areas to search for local fungi. It had been dry before her event this year so all that was found were some beautiful candy caps that the people swooned over and some *Russula* sp. Not a whole lot but enough to make these West Marinites more interested in what occupies their world with them.

We have a report that's not about finding mushrooms but of what happened to unguarded wax paper bags containing some.

Dateline, Salt Pt., January 23, from Debbie Viess: "Fellow fungophiles, FYI, the ravens at Salt Pt. will tear open any and all Waxtex bags left lying in the open. The individual that was in my campsite then took an exploratory bite of each mushroom. The pickings are slim in a winter campground, I guess. Luckily these were mostly specimens for ID or drawing. They left the open baskets of edibles alone. So, secure your fungal finds, and avoid the heartbreak of raven abuse.

Thanks *Amanitarita*. Even though no one asked I have a thought about what might have been up with that. Certain species of birds, especially those in the Crow (*Corvidae*) family like Jays, Magpies, and ravens (which are considered the largest of the Crows), etc., are attracted to and often mess with shiny objects (even burying

them sometimes). If the sun was out and the waxpaper glistened that may be why the raven showed interest in those stashed fungal finds rather than in the mushrooms left out.

Dateline, Along Hwy 92, January 23, from Harlen Mallis: "Peggy Ozol and I were lucky to stumble on many nice patches of Candy Caps (*Lactarius rubidus*) while hiking off Hwy 92. We were looking for chanterelles but she spotted these beauties immediately and once I knew what we were looking for we both found lots of them.

"Later, she whipped up a wonderful sauce with some bacon and creme. Oh, and a little rum to deglaze (that was my suggestion, ha ha). The rum helped cut some of the maple. A wonderful wine and some raw garlic and butter on the French bread and you had two happy shroomers.

"The next day I dried the rest of mine—a brimming-full wax baggie. The house has the wonderful aroma of maple as I'm writing this. It was my first real foray and it will always be a memorable one. Thanks Peggy."

And thank you Harlen for the report of your first foray. Now as for the recipe's suggestion of the rum to delicately "cut some of the maple" while you spread raw garlic on bread, hmmm. It takes all kinds to make a club.

Dateline, Just Around Larry Stickney, January 23, from Larry Stickney: "Greetings Patrick, you may find Steve's most recent note of interest" (His friend Steve Bowen is a great mushroom hunter).

"I have another observation on this year's *Cantharellus* fruiting. I don't ever recall seeing as many acorns as I have seen this year. The wild pigs and deer must be loving it.

"Incidentally, the wild pigs have gotten their share of the chanterelles as well. I think they like them more than the deer. One of my indicators that chanterelles are beneath the surface (without seeing a hump) is the rooting left by these mammalian rototillers. I have heard that acorn production from oak trees is quite variable from year to year. Do you think this might parallel fungal fruiting?"

"By the way, I am picking secondary areas almost exclusively. I have heard people are having a difficult time finding them now. My observations indicate that primary areas are shutting down. In the primary areas chanterelles were fairly numerous but much smaller than normal in size. They were almost always found in family groups. The secondaries seem to be larger in size. About half are solitary and half in families.

"My first primary collection this year was on Oct. 31st, the earliest I can recall. This led me to believe a massive fruiting was underway, however the dry December probably stopped it."

Thanks, Larry, for sharing your buddy's secrets. (Portions of the exact text relating to geographic locations have been deleted by government censors).

At the end of January mutant forms began to show up in my email box. Not surprising considering what it takes to make a club. This time it was variations of black chanterelles that were yellow or white or salmon colored or deviations thereof. Our editor Beth Sampson found a yellow variant at Salt Pt and Mark Lockaby validated that discovery with words of the same find, in the same area. Your reporter mentioned finding the same type of apparent aberration just north of Woodside Campground in Salt Pt. for the past several years and of seeing many in baskets of commercial pickers in Brookings, Oregon.

"Mutancy is the mind of the believer," says seldom heard from reporter Bodie Patrick Rama Lama Ding Dong. Ah, thanks Bodie. And thanks to all the others who have made yet another column possible.

Top 20, continued from page 1

dark, earthy notes in a variety of dishes. Lynn Morton does a lovely *Craterellus* appetizer using smoked salmon, black chanterelles, and cream cheese on a cracker, topped with lemon zest. Just another one of our fine female MSSF food magicians.

6. *Morchella* sp.. These are so much fun to find. They're the only mushroom that I feel as though I have to outwit, they mimic so many objects within their habitats. My favorite preparation is to drench them in butter and grill them over a campfire, a sweet and smoky reward for a successful day of hunting.

7. *Agaricus albolutescens*. This is a handsome, almond-scented Sierran snowmelt *Agaricus*. It has a delicately sweet flavor, which I much prefer to the overwhelmingly almond-scented *A. augustus*.

8-10. The lemon-flavored *Boletus*: *B. mirabilis*, *B. zelleri*, and *B. truncatus*. They all have nice texture and a slightly lemony flavor. *B. zelleri* and *B. truncatus* are quite similar, but *zelleri* has a darker cap and slower bluing of the pores. We discovered the edibility of *B. truncatus* by mistaking it for a *zelleri* – a fortunately delicious “oops”. Slice them thickly, brush with tamari accented olive oil, and broil or grill for a real taste treat.

11. *Lactarius rubidus*. I prefer candy caps in savory dishes rather than in desserts, where they are commonly used. Check out John Pisto's cookbook, *Cooking with Mushrooms*, for a delicious pasta recipe utilizing candy caps. The best dessert recipe that I've tried was a candy cap cheesecake that I had at last year's Santa Cruz Fungus Fair.

12. *Amanita muscaria*. Yep! They're toxic and hallucinogenic. Parboiling them first removes the toxins but destroys the flavor and makes them slimy. But, if you eat just a little tiny bit of non-parboiled cap, sauteed briefly in a hot pan, they have the best flavor and the best color of all the edible *Amanitas*. Just don't pile them on your pasta.

13. *Clitocybe nuda*. A purple mushroom that smells like orange juice? Who could resist it? My first bite of blewit was wonderfully perfume-y and Lord! what a beautiful color in a cream sauce. I have not recaptured that initial experience, but I keep trying. Sometimes blewits taste metallic and nasty. Try to eat young ones found under oak; blewits growing under pine may concentrate resins.

14. *Russula xerampelina*. The shrimp russula is actually a complex of similar russulas, all with a mild taste and the odor of shrimp, often with red-staining on the stipe, and a red to purplish cap. Despite only having tried this one recently, I always knew that I'd like it!. Not only does it have a pleasantly crunchy texture and an interesting taste, but the purple cap “bled off” in ribbons of dark rose as it was stirred into a bechamel sauce by another of our fine MSSF cooks, Jeanne Campbell. What a sensuous treat! This sauce was served over a barbecued tri-tip by candlelight, courtesy of a local PG&E blackout (coming soon to a neighborhood near you).

15. *Hydnum umbilicatum*. Bellybutton hedgehogs are one of the cutest of the edibles. Great texture, nice flavor, I love them over pasta with a simple butter sauce. Pick them clean or pay the price: long and tedious toil bent over tiny teeth.

16. *Cantharellus cibarius*. Once again, California wins the prize for the world's largest mushroom of its class. Connie Green was the first to describe our California species of monster chanterelle; look for a name change soon, perhaps to *Cantharellus californicus*. I used to hate to eat chanterelles, but always loved to find them, glowing up at me from the gloom of the forest floor. Their firm texture and fruity fragrance, not to mention their blessed absence of maggots, makes them a favorite in many dishes. I eat lots of them now mostly fresh, never dried. You can freeze the inevitable excess if you first saute them briefly in butter.

17. *Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*. You can eat these tiny toothed jelly fungi, but why bother? Feast your eyes instead and remember to give them a little poke and watch that jelly quiver. A highly entertaining fungus.

18. *Laccaria amethysteo-occidentalis*. Probably more fun to say than to eat, this is another beautiful purple edible mushroom.

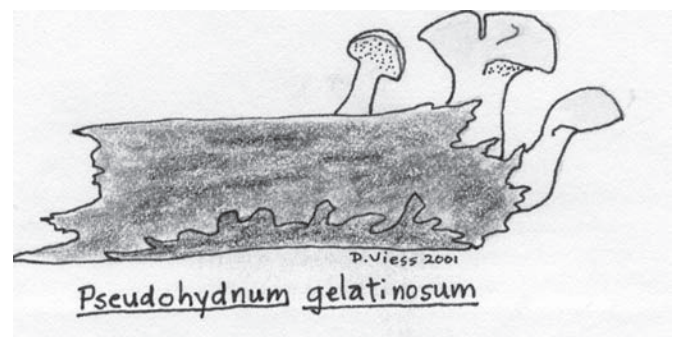
19. *Omphalotus olivascens*. Not an edible, but you've got to love a mushroom that glows in the dark. These fellows are orange like a chanterelle, but with a greenish tinge, and always grow on wood, not on the ground. I saw them glow for the first time in the backseat of Norm Andresen and Terri Beausejour's vehicle, driving at night over the Bay Bridge with my raincoat over my head. Oddly enough, this was the last time those two offered me a ride.

20. *Hygrophorus caeruleus*. No one in their right mind would want to eat this mushroom. It was so weird looking and so foul smelling that it was totally cool. Completely buried at maturity, my husband David only discovered it when he noticed flies emerging from a crack in the ground along a steep bank in the Sequoia National Forest. Its color was an eerie blue-green-gray, and its smell was gaggingly spermiatic. You can see it for yourself on Mykoweb, in the section on Sierra mushrooms; luckily for you, we don't have the “Smell-O-Vision” component up and running yet.

Amanita disclaimer...

Author's note: Because of the risk of illness or death, no *Amanita* should be casually eaten. In the case of the edible species, collect many before you eat any, have your ID checked by an expert, and only eat “type specimens” (i.e. mushrooms that have ALL of the characteristics of the particular sp. of interest). In the case of *A. muscaria*, I am not advocating this species as an edible; I am merely reporting my experience. Although I suffered no ill effects, the levels of toxins within individual mushrooms may vary, as does human susceptibility. There are far better choices for edibles.

Call me!
Debbie



Cultivation Corner

by Ken Litchfield

Yes Fungifolk, it's that time of year again. Time to proselytize all things fungal to the general public - 60,000 of them - at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show hoe-down in the Cow Palace the week of Wednesday March 21 through Sunday March 25, 9:00 am - 6:30 PM each day except Friday and Saturday till 9:00 PM.

We will have both an MSSF booth and a "Mushrooms in the Garden" vignette display at the show. The 10 x 10' booth is #1516, part of Market Place East in the south end of the East Building between the bonsai and Silvestri Sculpture Garden. The 8 x 16' Vignette will be located 7 booths away on the same aisle in the connecting mall in the center of the East Building.

Yep, we need your warm and wonderful bodies resident during the show to volunteer staff the MSSF booth and educate the gardening public about mushrooms, culinary dinners, general meetings, classes, morel forays coming up, mushroom kits, sudden oak death, huitlacoche dip, your favorite top 20, chanterelle sorbet, truffle hunting with feral pigs...whatever your specialty there's something you can contribute toward recruiting new members for MSSF.

Mostly your clientele is not going to be the couple thousand fans that come looking for choir singing at the Fungus Fair. Remember, to the general gardening public fungi often means fungicide and lichens and moss mean algae and slime. But they can recognize beauty and edibility when they see it so you just need to do some consciousness raising in most cases. You can expect that they will be interested in how to garden with mushrooms. Since they are accustomed to purchasing plants to grow they can identify with purchasing kits to plant in the ground for their own mushroom patches. And they also like to increase their holdings by seeds and cuttings so don't hesitate to describe how they can make a spore/mycelium slurry of mushrooms to inoculate a substrate. The job mostly involves handing out literature, answering questions, taking sign ups for future classes, selling memberships, pointing out and spritzing the garden vignette display, and being there to represent MSSF. The vignette display should be pretty nice for showing off just down and around the corner since Paul Stamets' Fungi Perfecti is providing the display kits and we have some nice mossy mushroom logs in the garden left from the Fungus Fair. Lichen logs will be there also. If you have some lichen or moss covered logs we could use, the more the better.

The booth vehicle unload time is 12:30 on Monday for one hour with setup taking however much time until noon on Tuesday. Len Coleman will set up his MSSF triptych and we will have some additional posters and pictures. We aren't allowed to sell anything except memberships at our educational booth and there are certain other restrictions on displays. If you have anything that you think would be appropriate to include with the booth please contact me.

Lorrie Gallagher is coordinating all the volunteer monitoring shifts so get with her early for your favorite schedule time at 415-467-1868 or "lorriegallagher@hotmail.com".

The vignette display will get set up on Monday all day and Tuesday till noon and taken down on Sunday evening and Monday till noon. If you would like to volunteer for the display setup/takedown, we primarily need availability with a truck or preferably van for trans-

port of plants and fungi. We are pretty well set for the display but if you want to volunteer for the display contact me by email or phone.

There are perks for volunteering. Besides presenting your cheerful faces to the public, you will get in free to the show, an \$18/day value (Yayass, that's eighteen, not a typo - the specialest deal you can get is a half day for \$11. And hell that's nuthin, the Tuesday night opening Gala is \$150 toward the Friends of Rec and Park). It is a huge show filling the main arena with massive architectural garden displays and all three side halls with all the latest and coolest in everything related to the finest in garden living including, of course, mycohorticulture. Parking is \$7 at the Cow Palace. Or you can park in the vicinity of the Balboa Park Bart Station and ride a free garden show shuttle back and forth from 30 minutes before show opening to 30 minutes after closing each day. I can spring for peoples' parking fees to set up and take down the booth and display. You must be properly signed up to get the passes and fee reimbursement.

If you know of any society activities taking place after the garden show especially walks, forays, and classes please contact me with that info so we can include it on handouts to the public at the show. Yes, I have the general meetings and regular culinary dinners.

And speaking of classes we will have a "Mushrooms in the Garden" class with SLUG on Saturday afternoon April 14 from 2-4 and later at their demonstration Garden for the Environment at 7th and Lawton in San Francisco. That's a few blocks east and south of 9th and Lincoln where we have the Fungus Fair at Strybing Arboretum. We'll be learning techniques for inoculating various organic substrates with mycelium, various stages of decomposition and their associated species, kit planting, log plugging, and more. It will be a hands on working class resulting in a mushroom demo garden so wear your grubbies. It's \$15 for the general public and \$10 for MSSF or SLUG members. You can sign up with Carey at SLUG at 285-7584. If you have any stumps or whole mushrooms of edibles like Shaggy Parasol, Blewits, King Stropharia, Oysters, Coprinus, or Agaricus from collecting bring them and we'll do the slurry technique.

We have gotten a pretty good collection of logs in the garden but since they decay away we are always looking for new ones. We recently got some nice large oak logs and some other smaller hardwood we'll use for plugging. With all that oak death out there somebody must have some good logs to bring in. I don't think a Phytophthora infection in a log will prevent inoculation with plugs of oysters or Reishi after the tree is dead but bring up what you find to the museum and we'll plug them to see.

Please do bring in any nice lichen and moss covered logs you find out foraging especially if they have turkey tails or other polypores growing on them. They are great in the garden and will add lots of character to the garden show display, the more the better.

That Shaggy Parasol patch that sprouted on the museum grounds has been popping nicely with each of these intermittent rains. The front that produced all the snow popped a flush of over a pound of very tasty mushrooms.

Back to your questions next time.

Thanks Ken
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CHAPARRAL CHANTERELLES REVISITED: THE ECOGRADIENT HYPOTHESIS TO CANTHARELLUS FRUITING IN CENTRAL COASTAL CALIFORNIA

By Steve Bowen

During the 1997-1998 mushroom season I finally wrote an article for the Mycena News depicting a pattern I had observed for a number of years, of Golden Chanterelles (primarily *Cantharellus cibarius* and *C. formosus*) fruiting in the Santa Cruz mountains. Although I and others have observed this pattern before, I have never read about it in any of our local mushroom guides. In fact, most people who collect on a regular basis seem to agree with the pattern once it is brought to their attention, but have never really thought about it themselves.

The pattern of fruiting is quite simple. In the central portion of coastal hills and mountains of California, we have a wide variety of habitats and ecosystems. Extreme would be the best word to describe them. Starting at the coast, the mountains collect water early in the season. These Redwood forests are very damp and co-mingle with hardwood forest (Tanbark Oak and Madrone) in the same way as the North Coast forests do, let's say up between Fort Bragg and Willits. As one ventures east, however, the valleys give way to live oak forests. Many xeric shrubs grow in these areas. Finally, due to the mountain's rain shadow, the most easterly and southern exposed slopes give way to chaparral. These habitats are extremely dry. Only shrubs adapted for xeric conditions can survive. Examples of the shrubs are well known, but not usually for any association with Chanterelle fruiting. These include, but are not limited to, Manzanita, Toyon, Sagebrush, Buckbrush, Coyote Bush and others. I call these tertiary areas. Depending on the rain patterns of the season, most Chanterelles fruit first in the westerly damp regions. I call these primary areas. Secondary and Tertiary areas fruit later in season, but not every season. Most often these areas do not fruit at all, which is why most people would not think of going to such a dry area to collect. They merely feel the season is over, once the "normal" wet primary areas have finished fruiting.

As of today, (2-19-01). I have collected over 500 lbs of Golden, and most of these are from my secondary and tertiary areas. This is the first year since the 97-98 season that the tertiary areas have fruited again. Before 97-98, it was the 93-94 season which produced in these dry areas. As I go back in my records they seem to fruit on an average of about 3-4 years (between fruitings). I think these areas do not have adequate moisture for yearly sequential fruiting, alas. However, there is enough moisture for the mycelium underneath to store nutrients. When adequate rainfall appears, we get families and troops of them, and, at times, the fruiting can be in awesome numbers. Just last week I collected over 40 lbs under perhaps 4-5 giant Manzanitas. These were the giant chanterelles people speak of in California, but in families of 10 or more, some weighing up to 2 lbs; what a sight!

There were no oaks or other trees around. It's too dry for them to survive! In special years, I believe the primary, secondary and tertiary areas fruit simultaneously. Only then do we experience what mycophiles call a "massive fruiting".

This year I really put this hypothesis to the test. I tried to find some new areas (it's always hard to leave mushrooms to find mushrooms!) based on this hypothesis. It worked! This year is definitely what I would call a tertiary year. Not only that, but the primary areas have pretty much shut down leaving only secondary and tertiary areas viable. I have found 2-3 absolutely new areas, based on this pattern, full of chanterelles, in areas I have never found them before. I used the ecogradient hypothesis to guide me.

How about you? I would appreciate your thoughts and observations. Of course there are several exceptions to these patterns and this new hypothesis may be indeed over simplified. However, I do remain convinced that, with the number of field observations made most recently, it must still be regarded as highly significant.

Steve Bowen
sbowen@usa.net

The Neighbor

By David Rust

God! It's my own fault.
I should have hidden my treasures
From the neighbor who likes everything outdoors.
The hiker, the biker,
And now the mushroom enthusiast.

I should have spurned his inquiries
Told him they were poisonous.

No foray led by the society,
No fair,
No good.

Now he describes my favorite tree
And plucks the huge golden beauties
That hide under the fallen leaves,
the thistles just so high,
The nest of fallen twigs.

Guard well your spots, my friends,
And bring in the mushrooms
Through the back door.

Rhododendron Connection to Phytophthora Discovered

By David Rust

Since the discovery of a new *Phytophthora* species in the Bay Area last July, there have been some strange developments, but perhaps the oddest came to light in early January, when British researcher Clive Brasier matched the California species with a *Phytophthora* first seen on rhododendrons in Germany and the Netherlands in 1993. Because the pathogen did not kill the plants, or spread to oak trees, it received no further investigation.

“We now know we have a host that could have carried the fungus a long way,” said Matteo Garbelotto, a plant pathologist and adjunct professor in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy & Management in UC Berkeley’s College of Natural Resources. “People don’t really export oak trees across state lines or around the world,” he said, “but they export rhododendrons.”

The State of Oregon slapped a 90-day emergency quarantine on California oak wood and wood products on January 4th. When the rhododendron connection was announced a few days later, they immediately extended the quarantine to rhododendrons and azaleas. Oregon has a thriving rhododendron industry, and may extend or make permanent the quarantine based on new discoveries.

The State of California, on the other hand, still demands more “study” on how *Phytophthora* is spread before taking action and will pursue education over quarantine. The California Board of Forestry declined on February 6th to declare a “zone of infestation,” which would have given state foresters authority over removal of diseased trees from affected areas. The State Department of Food and Agriculture has urged Oregon to rescind their quarantine, because of the potential harm to California’s rhododendron industry. While state officials wait to act, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is now considering a more comprehensive quarantine to prevent diseased plants and wood from moving across state lines.

UC Davis plant pathologist David Rizzo confirmed the presence of the new *Phytophthora* on rhododendrons at a nursery in Scotts Valley, right in the middle of a severely affected area in Santa Cruz County. The nursery is a major source of Rhododendron stock in California. Their plants have been sold in the past year to over 400 retail nurseries in the Bay Area. While the new pathogen does not usually kill rhododendrons, it does cause dark spots on the leaves. This disease has not been found on the leaves of coastal live oaks and black oaks, but has been isolated on the leaves of tanoaks, which seem to be very susceptible. Because the pathogen affecting Rhododendrons spreads from the leaf tips to small

continued on page 9...

Culinary Corner



by Bennie Cottone

1/13/01

It’s been five days since our January Potluck Dinner. I’m still eating the leftovers. My parents are still eating the leftovers. Fred Kron is still running around begging people to take home some eggnog. And those little Fuschia Club people are probably still there complaining about all that noise we (didn’t) make. Amazing.

Somehow, all went well and my secret plan backfired. See, in January we usually have a regular planned-menu dinner, not a potluck. The planning for this dinner was to have occurred at last November’s dinner. At THAT dinner about twenty oinkers without reservations showed up and the evening was great but ah, challenging. The time came to plan the January dinner but we still had to get through the Fair and the Holiday Dinner. People were already volunteered out and I had to pile this on? Yuck. No way. So how about a potluck? If I didn’t actually say it, I thought it so loudly that someone else said it for me. So potluck it would be — minimal extra work at a busy time. Now we fast-forward, many Nutcrackers later and it’s past the New Year. I begin to realize—hmmm— if I just let this be a true potluck, we eat what shows, no fancy organizing, it could be a bust! There might be 50 salads, or not enough food—who knows? Then the lightbulb appeared over my head. ‘Hey, I was appointed to this chair IN ABSENTIA, I didn’t want it — now I can get them back. Don’t do ANYTHING, let it flop! Maybe someone will say ‘I can do better anytime!’ and I’d be off the hook.” But no. Someone phones,— ‘yadda yadda potluck real soon yadda organize.’ emails,— ‘yakkety yak try this yakkety yak alphabetize yak yak.’ So I post something to appease them, but I’m not worried, it’ll flop like a bad soufflé. Make some manicotti just in case ten people show without bringing anything. I show up and find twenty-seven people there — with enough food for fifty! &^#*#&^@!@-*& There were at least 17 different dishes, all delicious. And with plenty of mushrooms featured. Everyone was having a good time. No yelling, no complaining, plenty of food — dammit, they probably won’t fire me now.

But know what? I had everyone sign in and list what he or she brought with a promise that they’d get their credit in the Mycena News. I have the list. And I’ve always kept my promises...UP TO NOW!

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

BC out

Mz. Myco-Manners

DEAR MZ. MYCO-MANNERS:

I am having great distress. I must have your advice on how to coordinate blindfolds for my friends that beg to go out with me to my favorite 'shrooming grounds. Whilst I cannot bear to share the locations, I would be pleased to share the bounty and the picking. Keeping my places secret must need entail blindfolding my companions to and from these hallowed grounds. What are some basic guidelines for good fashion in these matters?

Not trifling nor trampling whilst truffling.

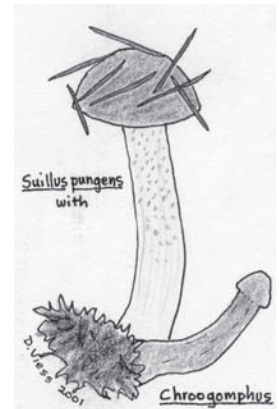
GENTLE READER: It's hard to imagine anything so horrible as a fully packed and fueled jumbo jet crashing into an elementary school's Christmas pageant and hence, spoiling the Holidays; but having to divulge your secret 'shrooming grounds surely tops that event.

I don't usually trust blindfolds. They are made of fabric, and therefore let light through. I also wouldn't trust the sworn word of my friends telling me that they can't see anything. So, if you're in a state where this remedy isn't illegal, just blind them. I've heard that it doesn't really hurt for too long. If they are really your friends, they will understand. If your state doesn't condone blinding, go to your local fetish shop and buy one of those vinyl hoods that fits completely over the head and only has a nose hole for breathing. You can remove it when you get to your destination. Have said friend pick and clean the mushrooms for you till their little heart is content. After the collecting, put the hood back on and head for the car. Don't remove it until you are home.

This can only be done with true friends who trust you. They will need to understand, before the event happens, that they will have a very extreme case of "Hat Hair". A full hour's washing of the hair should relax it back to a somewhat normal look (believe me, I've been there).

Do enjoy traipsing through the Tremella, and trampling the Trumpets; I'll take the Tartuffi myself.

Ms. Myco-Manners



Phytophthora, continued from page 8

twigs and branches, its behavior confirms what researchers have observed in the field: aerial spread through the crowns of the trees.

At the second meeting of the California Oak Mortality Task Force (COMTF) on February 1st, it was announced that San Mateo County had been dropped from the list of affected counties. Since that time, San Mateo County and Santa Clara County have been added to the list with confirmed infestations. The disease is now found in seven Bay Area counties.

Three bills before the state legislature could use our support to ensure their passage: Assembly member Patricia Wiggins (D-Santa Rosa), Senator Wesley Chesbro (D-Arcata) and Assembly member Joe Nation (D-San Rafael) introduced legislation (AB53, SB31, and Assembly Concurrent Resolution 5) in December to provide \$10 million to fight *Phytophthora*. Carol Migden later authored AB62, which unanimously passed in committee and now moves to the floor of the Assembly.

Huckleberries Also Infected

As if there weren't enough bad news about *Phytophthora*, scientists were stunned to learn that the pathogen has now spread to huckleberries in Muir Woods and the Marin Municipal Water District. In news reports published in late February, UC Davis plant pathologist David Rizzo said, "We're hoping it's not as bad in the huckleberries as it is in the oaks, but it's something I admit I'm a little nervous about. It's another potential way for this thing to spread around."

Matteo Garbelotto confirmed this alarming new development. "We are now screening everything that doesn't look healthy in the forest, with the exception of poison oak," he said. "These plants serve as a bridge in the natural gaps between oak forests." Rhododendron and huckleberry are both in the family *Ericaceae*. There is concern that other members of the family, such as madrone and manzanita could be susceptible.

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Calendar

Tuesday March 20. MSSF General Meeting. Our Speaker for the March General Meeting will be Dr. Nancy S. Weber. Dr. Weber is Professor in the Department of Forest Science, College of Forestry, Oregon State University, Corvallis Oregon. She specializes in teaching, research, and outreach with a specialization in mycology. Of particular interest is her extensive expertise in the study of morels, truffles and allied cup fungi of western North America. Meeting will take place at the Randall Museum. Talk is at 8PM, but doors open at 7 PM for conversation, book sales, mushroom ID and more!

Saturday March 17, 2-5 PM. Volunteer appreciation Party at the Radall Museum. See Presidential Preamble for details.