

Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

February, 1998, vol 48:2

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Membership and Subscription Information

To join the MSSF and receive this newsletter, send a \$20 check, payable to MSSF (\$12 for seniors 65 and over and full time students), to MSSF, c/o Wade Leschyn, 219 Sequoia Ave., Redwood City, CA 94061. Please include some contact information such as home and/or work phone numbers and email addresses. New and renewal memberships will be current through December of 1998. To change your mailing address, please notify Wade. MSSF members may also join or renew membership in the North American Mycological Association at a reduced rate by including with their MSSF check a separate check for \$17 payable to NAMA. Send it to Wade at the same address. For further information email Wade at leschyn@visa.com or call at 650.364.1494.

Mycena News is the newsletter of the Mycological Society of San Francisco and is published monthly from September through May. You can send newsletter submissions by the 15th of each month to Mike Boom, 4323 Sequoyah Rd., Oakland, CA 94605, phone 510.635.7723. Or you can email them to mboom@ascend.com, or fax them at 510.553.1578.

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NAMA Nears: Volunteers?

Just when you thought it was safe to shelve your volunteer spirit for the season, here comes the volunteer opportunity of the decade. The NAMA conference, held this Feb. 14-17 in Asilomar near Monterey, will only be the success it should be if many people volunteer their time and energy in helping make the event special. Please give us a few hours of your time during the foray to provide assistance in the areas listed below. Helping out is a great way to meet new, interesting people and learn more about fungi. We're looking for volunteers for the following:

ID/Vouchering Support

Task: General support of mycologists and ID process. Meet incoming forays, sort mushrooms, transport identified mushrooms to display tables. **When/where/how long:** In Merrill Hall, throughout the foray, people will be scheduled for two-hour shifts. **Skills needed:** Enthusiasm. Minimal knowledge of mushrooms required. **# of people needed:** Many! **Opportunity to:** Meet prominent mycologists and learn!

Set up and Clean up

Task: Setup and cleanup of display area. **When/where/how long:** Friday PM, Feb 13; and Monday AM, Feb 16. **Skills needed:** Basic fair setup and cleanup skills. **# of People needed:** Many. **Opportunity to:** Bring home some good mushrooms after cleanup.

Videography

Task: To videotape lectures, cooking demonstrations, panel discussions, and evening program. **Where/when/how long:** Ideally, we need about 7 lectures, etc. taped each day, as well as the evening program. Videographers will be asked to tape some of those lectures they're interested in attending. **Skills needed:** basic video skills. Sandy Hain, professional videographer, will give a brief tutorial. Must

have own VHS camera. Tripod and lighting a plus but not required. **# of people needed:** 5 or 6 would be nice. **Opportunity to:** learn about videography from a professional and enhance others' knowledge.

General Photography

Task: To photograph presenters, workshops, and general goings-on including social events. **When/where/how long:** At various intervals throughout the foray. **Skills needed:** Basic photography skills, camera, spirit of inquiry. **# of people needed:** 2 or more. **Opportunity to:** Meet prominent mycologists and learn more about mushrooms.

Vouchering Phototgraphy

Task: To photograph mushroom specimens prior to drying and cataloging. **When/where/how long:** On an ongoing basis from Friday evening through Monday morning, in Merrill Hall ID area. **Skills needed:** Experience in close-up photography. 35 mm camera with appropriate lenses. **# of people needed:** 4 to 5. **Opportunity to:** Meet prominent mycologists and learn about mushrooms.

Logistics Support

Task: To provide facilities support for lecturers and workshop instructors. Support people would handle lights, provide assistance with AV equipment as needed, monitor session time. **When/where/how long:** On an ongoing basis from Friday evening through Sunday evening. **Skills Needed:** Minimal; familiarity with slide and overhead projectors. No knowledge of mycology required. **# of people needed:** Many. **Opportunity to:** contribute to the smooth operation of the Foray while enjoying a lecture or workshop you really want to attend.

NAMA Volunteers continued on the bottom of page 3.



Fungal Emanations From the Big Cheese

Tulloss Amanita Seminar

We of the Mycological Society have a rare opportunity: Dr. Rod Tulloss will be speaking twice in our area, once for NAMA at \$300 per person, the other venue a more reasonable \$30 per person for the MSSF *Amanita* seminar. In a day-long program Dr. Tulloss will explain the differences between sections and will discuss macro, micro, and species distinctions. He will have available his 125-page monograph on *Amanitas* of North America that includes keys to western *Amanita* species, but only to seminar participants.

This fascinating and dangerous genus should be well known to anyone who eats mushrooms, works with children outdoors, or walks their dog in the park. The genus *Amanita* is responsible for most of

the serious mushroom poisoning and deaths in our area. Nonetheless, some *Amanita* species are collected and esteemed worldwide for their culinary appeal.

The difference between life and no liver is the information that you can get at the MSSF *Amanita* Seminar. This seminar will be excellent for mycological students, land managers, and others with an interest in this group of mushrooms. It will be held on Saturday, February 21st, and will be an all day seminar. Space is limited, so send your \$30 for a reservation (\$35 for non-members) to Norm Andresen at 16096 Selborne Dr., San Leandro, CA, 94577. For more information, call me at 510.278.8998.

-Norm Andresen, President



Our prez with advanced mushroom-hunting equipment on an undisclosed mountain slope full of boletes.

Lost & Found

More stuff gone astray:

Lost: A telescoping walking stick, a brand new Christmas present. Lost at Devel's Gulch parking lot at Samuel Taylor Park on Friday, 1/9/98. If you find it, please call Chang at 510.444.2226.

Lost: 50 pounds of boletes under Bishop pine at Salt Point State Park. If found, please return in dried condition to Mike Boom, 510.635.7723.

Help With NAMA Sales

The MSSF, in addition to co-hosting the NAMA foray with the Fungus Federation, will sell T-shirts, books, and other items at the foray in Monterey. To do so, we need a few volunteers to man (or woman) the tables on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, February 14, 15, and 16. This will be a good chance to chew the fat with NAMA attendees, take a peek at the goings on, and help the MSSF make some much needed \$\$\$ for our budget.

If you'd like to help out, please call T-Shirt chair Loraine Berry at 415.454.0914 or Book Sales chair Chris Thayer at 510.283.4858.



EDITOR'S RANT

Not much to rant about this month: plenty of rain, lots of (sometimes soggy) mushrooms, the NAMA foray coming up. Things are just too peachy for a good rant. No, wait, I feel one coming on: what about the guy who's been trashing my favorite bolete spot? That's worth a few minutes on the soapbox.

I think we've all been in a position where someone beats us to the mushrooms in our favorite spot. Although it's easy to feel as if someone stole *your* mushrooms, that's not really grounds for complaint. No one owns wild mushrooms, and if you snooze, you lose, as the saying goes. It's a different matter when someone trashes your spot, though, digging up every mushroom in sight, smashing anything that's not edible, and leaving gaping holes in the duff. Although I doubt that anyone who hunts boletes like a feral pig might be reading this column, I can't waste a good rant, so I'd like to present a few reasons why leaving no traces of your mushroom hunting is a good policy for everyone involved.

Rant continued on page 6

Fungus Fair Follow-up Event

by Terri Beauséjour

To all those volunteering and/or attending the 1997 Fungus Fair:

- Did you enjoy the new venue or should we move the fair back to the Hall of Flowers?
- Did you prefer the two-day format or should we go back to one day? Would you like more Saturday forays?
- Do you have suggestions for speakers for next year? Are you planning to volunteer next year?

These and other burning questions will be asked and decided at the February Fungus Fair Follow-Up Event, Tuesday, February 3rd, 1998, 7 p.m. at my house in San Leandro: 2150 Somerset Avenue.

We'll serve snacks and beverages, but potluck contributions are welcome and appreciated. We'll also have the opportunity to view some fair videos.

For more information, call Terri Beauséjour at her *new telephone number*: 510.278.5998, or email beauset@autodesk.com.

Directions

From the city, Oakland area and Marin:

Take 580 E to San Leandro Exit 164th/Miramar. Exit in the left lane, at the bottom of the ramp, take a left. Continue past the freeway entrance on the left to the next 4-way stop. Take a left. Continue under the freeway to Foothill Blvd—there will be a right turn yield lane. Take a right onto Foothill. Continue approximately 3 blocks to 167th Avenue. Take a left at the light onto 167th. Continue up the hill past Ehle on the right to President Avenue on the right. Take a right on President Avenue. Go to the top of the hill and slow way down at the top which is a three-way intersection. 2150 is facing this three-way intersection. Take a left and find parking on the street. The house is tan with dark brown trip, a Douglas Fir in front and a black Nissan Pathfinder in the driveway.



NAMA Volunteers continued from page 1.

If you even think you might be interested in any of these vitally important volunteer options, please contact Lisa Bauer, 415.695.8889, or e-mail your name, phone number, hours available and areas of interest to RecycQueen@aol.com. Thank you for pitching in!

-Lisa Bauer

Christmas Dinner 1997: Roll Those Credits

Due to the holiday rush, I didn't get thank yous written in time for the January *Mycena News*, so I'd like to extend them now:

The 1997 Christmas Dinner was a success thanks to the combined efforts of volunteers. Many thanks to executive chef Rosemary Furfaro and her su chefs Siew Chinn, Tom Beales, Bill Hellums, Hal Waterman, John Candito, and Vince Riviuccio. The excellent soups were prepared and served by Louise Freedman and Karin Roos, the spinach salad was prepared by Juanita Ilnicki, and the truffled prime rib was prepared and served by Tanith Tyrr. Al Carvajal and Hal Waterman served as rib support staff. The fungal fantasy torte was prepared by Jack Aldridge, and cleanup after we were all done was headed up by Bennie Cottone. A special acknowledgment to Hal Waterman for typesetting the meny in an olde English typeface.

- Anna Grajeda, Culinary Chair

Editor's note: And, of course, a big hand for Anna who worked hard and successfully to feed us hungry hordes!

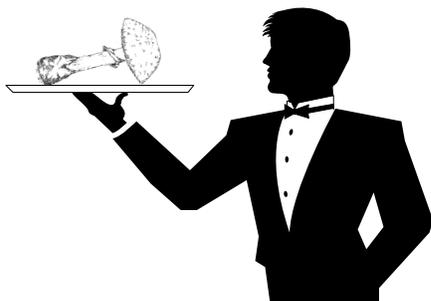
Seeing \$\$\$?

Please check your mailing label to see what your membership dues status is. Members who have paid 1998 dues will have a "\$\$\$ 98 dues paid \$\$\$" note on their mailing label between their name and their address. 1997 members who have not renewed will have a "\$\$\$ last issue \$\$\$" on their label in the same place.

The MSSF membership year is from January to December. New members joining this winter and spring will be current through December 1998, everyone else's dues have expired at the end of 1997. Since members are used to renewing at the December or January mushroom fairs we traditionally give members some slack in terms of one or two "free" newsletters. But we have to cut off our non-renewing members at some time and the February issue is it. We certainly hope you wish to renew and have found your membership in the Mushroom Society interesting at least, and we hope you have had a chance to participate in some of our many activities. Since there is not a January fair this year, mailing your renewal is the only way at this time to renew. Please send in your membership dues. Rates are \$20 for adults and families, and \$12 for seniors (65 and over) and full time students. Make checks out to MSSF and mail to: MSSF, c/o Wade Leschyn, 219 Sequoia Ave. Redwood City, CA 94061.

Some MSSF members also choose to join NAMA. The MSSF pays NAMA club dues based on our total membership in order for us to be considered an affiliated club. In turn NAMA offers MSSF members a 15% discount for joining NAMA. NAMA dues are \$17 when included with your MSSF dues. NAMA dues sent without an MSSF renewal cannot be processed. Also please note that an error in several previous *Mycena News* reported that the NAMA dues for MSSF'ers was \$12. Such payments will be returned.

-Wade Leschyn, Membership Chair



MycoChef in a Blue Mussel Stew

by Patrick Hamilton

Join Patrick in a look back at the end of last summer when *El Niño* was just a glint in the weatherman's eye...

Feeling once again like he had the proverbial Albatrellus tied around his neck, the Ancient Mariner (as in being 50 in Marin) set forth bound to be evermore on another arduous morning jog along beautiful Tomales Bay.

This too-often agonizing ordeal takes place for the sole purpose of not allowing the intake of assordid microbrews to add their caloric presents to his presence.

Along the way he does see mushrooms—and not just because the run is so slow...

It is because there can be so many of them here! But the ones seen today I can mostly do without. *A. phalloides* were emerging in their pearly green deadliness from drip lines under California live oaks. Glistening under the morning dew these guys mean business. I can understand why they are “the poisonous mushroom of choice” for the *ignorami* of this region. They are the most striking and profuse of all fungi seen so far this year! Jeez.

If this was a comical column, an essay to be taken lightly and not a serious cooking section of a thoughtful magazine, then I might offer a recipe for this most deadly of all mushrooms. But no, I don't mess around with even kidding about feeding people mushrooms of ill repute. Seriously.

I drove out to a spot where candy caps and *Russula xerampelina* fruit later and where oyster mushrooms usually begin to be seen now, but today only death caps were there and they were everywhere. I stopped counting at around 50 buttons and 50 more fully flowered venomous things.

What a waste of fungal flesh.

Zounds! Pounds of poison were presented looking perhaps to unfortunate fools like fine bounty. Kinda like black widows—in-heat-booty waiting to be enjoyed only to make victims of those hungry fatefals wondering how come something looking so good could end up being so bad.

Sort of.

Because of early rains here in Marin County we have had a glimpse of just what might be later on. Kathy (my lovely and well-loved fungal friend) and I last month picked maybe 20 pounds of chanterelles along the coast, one bolete and some sulfur shelf.

The summer chanterelles grow as almost unseen shrumps beneath the pines along the Sonoma coast. Finding them is quite difficult and if it weren't for Kathy's eagle eye for mushrooms (and she has a great eye for men) I probably would not have too many so far. But since she does better with me alongside (a true partner) together we find usually more than others do and that is priceless.

But price is not to us what it is to the commercial circuit pickers like up in Ft. Bragg, Mendocino County.

The currency paid to them (as reported by Connie Green of Wine Forest, Napa, Ca., a purveyor of the finest to the finest restaurants in San Francisco) is but \$.75 per pound. Yes, 75 cents for a pound of those golden lovelies.

(If so inclined one can get a lot more for the death caps when sold to certain scientific companies. The toxins are used in a process unrelated to ingesting them, duh. If anyone desires more information on this topic simply contact me via e-mail).

So, chanterelles and death caps, where do we go from here? How about far away from the *phalloides* and closer to stuff that we like to eat.

I was thinkin' of just a simple dish for this column (thinking simply is, well, easy for me) until this past weekend's little trip up into Mendocino county.

We took off after work on Friday and drove north on Highway 101 traveling through the just harvested vineyards of Sonoma county into Cloverdale for the night. Saturday about 8:00 we went west through Anderson Valley past the vines of Roderer, Handley, Navarro, Greenwood and other, smaller, wineries and I wondered how I would talk Kathy into doing a little early wine tasting.

“At 8:45 a.m.?” She spoke it rather loudly, I thought, and somewhat rudely too. “Sure,” I defended and then feinted with a “What, it's too late...?”

At least we both agreed on taking this remote winding road over the coastal mountains toward a particularly productive and secret stand of *Pinus contorta* (coastal lodgepoles). Twenty five urpy miles later we were so happy to come out right across the highway from “our” spot. Sneakily we slithered into the forest, each going a little different way.

Kathy squeaks (squeals?) when she finds great mushrooms and within a few minutes I heard one of her calls—but this one a bit different. Not a “Hey, over here, I've found mushroom to pick!” More of a “Hey, over here, I've found a mushroom picker!”

Indeed it was David Campbell of the MSSF and a great friend of both of ours standing there with a shiitake-eating grin three hours from home in a “secret spot.”

Ah, those “secret spots” can be so much not so. So we exchanged “guffaws” and “hellos” and “what have you founds?” The list of different mushrooms that we were to gather later that day was astounding in its eminent edibility. *Agaricus augustus*, *A. arvensis*, *R. xerampelina*, *Macrolepiota rachodes*, golden chanterelles, *L. deliciosus*, and of course, biggo boletes. Actually not that large in size this early in the season, but in their amazing ability to tickle our fungal fancies they are always “biggo boletes” to me.

So what do we do with all this neat stuff? A house with a great kitchen at Sea Ranch near Gualala was available to us and we brought our goodies. A nearby store had some fine looking bivalves... Hmm, what to do what to do?

How 'bout "Mixed Mushrooms and Blue Mussel Stew?" Yes. To illustrate how really easy a dish can be this recipe won't be in a regular format. You know how some little kids' toys are absolutely simple so that their imaginations can be developed instead of just following a pedantically didactic put tab "A" into slot "A". Well this will be up to your creativity as to how it will ultimately taste.

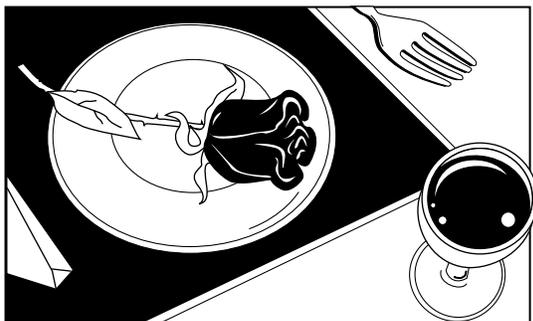
There is another thought though that my silly mind is entertaining. What if I made a "connect the dots" game but without numbers to follow? I had intended a giraffe but you drew an elephant. Hmmm...let's see how this stew comes out for you.

Should serve 6 (... "people." Just checking, I want to start you off correctly.)

Take whatever kinds of mushrooms that you want to use and that might go well with shellfish. I used the princes, the chanterelles, the shrimps, and the boletes. For a stew base I sautéed the mushrooms and some shallots with red bell pepper, onions and fennel root and a bit of garlic. I used a 1/2 can of Swanson's veggie stock, a 1/2 cup of dry white wine, about a 1/2 cup of water and 2 1/2 cups of whole milk. I put in the mussels to poach with some Kosher salt, fresh ground pepper, and a little thyme. Gobs of sweet butter to finish the stew was good for me and should do you, too.

For a salad we roasted some red bell peppers, peeled them and put them into a hot oven atop bolete and chanterelle slices with some garlic and a drizzle of good olive oil. (This is one of David Campbell's most excellent ideas.)

I hope that it was good for you.



Rooshroom Surprise

Just to prove that you never know what you'll run across when you're prowling the Web, I thought I'd print the following recipe. I found it at <http://www.wsnet.com/~ang/recipe/main/> along with another fine recipe for Balmian Bugs with Mango sauce. These are, believe it or not, serious Australian recipes. The real question, of course, is what Australian mushrooms to use with this dish.

Kangaroo and Mushrooms With Red Wine

Serves 2 hungry, or 4 not so hungry people.

Ingredients:

- 600 gms loin (or long) fillet of kangaroo
- 6 to 10 mushrooms preferably field mushrooms
- A good knob of butter, say 40 gms
- Half a glass of good Australian red wine (the Barossa Valley Estate 1995 Shiraz Cabernet was wonderful!)

Directions:

Melt the butter in a large iron frying pan or on a barbecue plate. Brown kangaroo steak and add sliced mushrooms. When the steak is browned on both sides quickly slice into pieces about 1.5 to 2 cm thick. Quickly brown the slices on both sides and cook until the steak is nearly cooked—not too well done please! It should be still a little

pink inside. Throw in the red wine and allow to continue cooking for a few more moments. Remove the meat and mushrooms and place on plates.

If you are using a pan you can reduce the remaining fluid a little, then pour it over the meat.

Serve with potatoes cooked in their jackets or cut into slices and fried and salad or green vegetable depending on the season.

Of course the remainder of the red wine will not go to waste.

For those connoisseurs of kangaroo the Northern Territory Blue Flier is the best kangaroo meat you can get. Kangaroo is a very rich meat which is low on cholesterol; most people would not eat as much kangaroo as they would beef steak.

And for the wine lover, the Barossa Valley Estate 1995 Shiraz Cabernet is a medium bodied red wine full of ripe berry flavours and low on tannin. My wife, who is not normally fond of red wines, loves it. I can recommend it as an excellent accompaniment to kangaroo.

Courtesy of Peter Bradley.

- Mike Boom

Mushroom Memorabilia, Anyone?

Robert Duquenne writes to us from France to ask if anyone in the MSSF collects mushroom objects. M. Duquenne collects everything showing mushrooms: pins, postcards, phone cards, pictures, stamps, lucky charms, cigar bands, stickers, and so forth. If you'd like to swap or sell anything like this, you can contact him at the following address and phone number:

M. Robert DUQUENNE
60, Rue du Château
59570 AUDIGNIES
FRANCE
Tel. 327 66 81 09

New Culinary Item: Fungus on the Rocks

by Bill Freedman

Fungal mycelia have been found growing inside pores of rocks and sand grains in coniferous forest soils in Europe. The fungi are mainly ectomycorrhizal. If you want to see good photographs of this phenomenon, check out NATURE magazine, October 1997, page 682.

With electron micrographic techniques, a group of Swedish forest scientists studied the horizontal layers of soil in infertile forest lands. The top level are called "podzols." They are acidic. Tree roots pass through them, but do not spread out many roots in those layers. The upper layers are ashen grey, depleted of "colloids," (gel particles binding inorganic chemicals), and some essential minerals such as iron and aluminum. In the brown layers below, "Cambisols," are accumulated those compounds which have leached downward from the upper layer. Such soils are common in Northern American and Eurasian forests. These soil substrates are of great interest to foresters and the lumber industry who want to improve the health and yield of timber.

Fungal hyphae were found growing into pores of 3–10 micrometers width in sands, hornblende, and feldspar rocks and in granitic bedrock lying in podzol soil below Scotch pine, Norway spruce, and ericaceous plants such as Laurel trees. Pores were seldom seen in rocks in the brown layer below the podzol layer.

It is presumed that the invading hyphal tips produce many kinds of organic acids which dissolve nutrient chemicals in the rocks before directly transporting them to the roots of trees. Strands from ectomycorrhizal fungi such as *Suillus granulatus* and *Piloderma croceum* have been identified running from rocks to tree roots. Microchemical studies showed that the hyphal tips were surrounded by the maximum concentration of such acids. DNA techniques were used to identify the fungi of the mycelial mats.

To reduce acidity, Swedish foresters add lime to the soil. This procedure is being questioned as necessary now that fungi have been observed bypassing acid soils to penetrate rock particles where they can absorb essential nutrient chemicals. This may explain why European forest production has not decreased while excessive soil acidification from pollution has occurred.

In January 1996 and February, 1997, we reported in the Mycena News that fungi can "eat" rock. Fungi grown on plates of agar to which has been added finely powdered rock use up the rock particles and the agar is clarified around each colony. That was also reported from Sweden by Dr. Torgay Unistrom in 1995. It may represent a digestive reaction similar to that taking place within the micropores of rocks.

What is new here is that a pathway from rocks via fungi to specific plant partners has been revealed. This clear demonstration of fungal contribution to forest tree nutrition reveals another significant element in the symbiotic relationship and interdependence of fungi and plants. When you are out enjoying the forests, you can now release your thoughts and feelings to penetrate deep into the soil with a more complete understanding of some of the life-giving activities being carried out underground by fungal members of the Third Kingdom.

Editor's note: Please don't blame Bill for all the titles on his series of articles. I freely admit to exercising editorial license to create spicy titles of my own from time to time—for example, last month's Promiscuous Mycorrhizae Provide Scientific Titillation. Bill's title for this article was Ectomycorrhizal Fungi Use Acids To Get Minerals From Rocks. The subject line of the email he wrote to send me this article, however, was the fine title you see at the top of the article—and I gave in to temptation. Mea culpa...

Rant continued from page 2

1. Uprooting, overturning, and smashing mushrooms that you don't want is wasteful. A mushroom stands upright so that it can drop spores and protect its spore-bearing underside from the rain. An upside-down waterlogged mushroom is not a successful spore disperser, and is ruined for anyone who wants to examine it closely, photograph it, or eat it if it's edible. If you pick a mushroom to examine it and decide you don't need it, put it back in the ground stem down so it looks like it was never picked. Better yet, feel the mushroom before you pick it. If you're looking for boletes and feel gills under the cap, there's no need to pick it.

2. Leaving holes in the duff is a good way to dry out and harm the mycelium in dry weather. If you pick up duff to check out a mushroom, put the duff back when you're done. A moist, healthy mycelium produces more mushrooms than a dry, shriveled mycelium.

3. Trashing unwanted mushrooms looks like hell. Even if it's not environmentally damaging (the worms will eventually eat up the

trashed mushrooms), it's esthetically damaging, and let's face it: most of us are out in the woods to enjoy the beauty of our experience. Mushroomers making a mess of fungi in the woods can kick up resentment, something that inevitably blows up in our faces when land-use authorities hold hearings on whether or not to allow mushroom picking.

4. Leaving your mushroom trimmings uncovered tells the rest of the world what you've been up to. If you want everyone to know exactly where you found each mushroom and just when you've been there, then by all means leave your trimmings in plain sight. If you'd rather keep it a private experience and picking spot, bury the trimmings under the duff.

The upshot of the matter is this: making sure you leave no trace of your mushroom picking helps you, your fellow mushroom hunters, and the mushrooms themselves. Be an artist when you pick, and if you see someone rooting like a pig, see if you can enlighten them.

Here's hoping your hunting is fruitful as well as artful.

- Mike Boom

Preserving Mushrooms

by Tom Beales

Should you be fortunate enough to find more mushrooms than you can reasonably consume while fresh, here are some ways you can deal with this delectable dilemma. The information comes from my talks with MSSF stalwarts including Norm Andresen, Terri Beasejour, Mike Boom, Don Simoni, Larry Stickney, and Mike Wood.

Preserving

Always start with fresh specimens. Remove dirt and any bad parts. Slice into 1/8- to 1/4-inch thick pieces. Some of the most successful methods of preserving your bounty are these:

Sautéing and freezing: Sauté in butter or oil, but not olive oil since it adds other flavors. Don't add any salt. You can use oils with no flavor of their own but results are not as good as with butter. Mushroom varieties that require a lot of cooking and that hold a lot of moisture, such as chanterelles, can be dry sautéed—that is, without using oil or butter. Place in air tight containers and freeze. For even better results, use a vacuum packer so air in the container won't make the butter go rancid over time.

Drying: Dry in a food dehydrator for the best and quickest results, but be sure to set it no higher than 115 degrees (if it has a thermostat) so the mushrooms are dried without cooking them. Air drying on screens in the sun works well, but bring them inside at night. If you are drying on screens inside, you can speed the process along using a heater or fan to circulate the air under the screens. A convection oven set to no more than 110 degrees also works well. Leave oven door slightly ajar to allow the moisture to escape. You can also slice and string mushrooms on a string or thread to air dry. You can dry small specimens whole this way.

Blanching: (Par-boiling.) Blanch in salted, boiling water for 2-3 minutes. Plunge into cold water to stop further cooking. Transfer onto paper towels to dry. Store in plastic bags in freezer. Again, a vacuum packer keeps them longer.

Storing and Reconstituting

Once you've preserved your mushrooms, you need to store them and—when the time is right—reconstitute them.

Storing: Package dried mushrooms into air tight jars. Store in a cool, dark place. You might freeze them for a few days to kill off bugs, or keep them in the freezer. You should place sautéed mushrooms in airtight containers in serving size portions and then freeze them. You may process sautéed mushrooms in a food processor until the size of rice grains, place them in ice cube trays and freeze them. Store the cubes in plastic bag and use one or two cubes to flavor any soup or sauce.

Reconstituting: Soak dried mushrooms in warm water for 30 minutes or more. Simmer tougher varieties like chanterelles, save the soaking water for stock or reduce and use with sauces. Allow frozen sautéed mushrooms to thaw slowly and use immediately.

Tips For Different Species

Common species that you can preserve successfully include these:

Morels: Drying works best. You can dry small ones whole; you should cut larger ones lengthwise in half or cut them horizontally into wheels. You may also sauté and freeze them, or blanch them and freeze them whole. Don't freeze them raw; they turn to mush.

Chanterelles: Sautéing and freezing is best. White and golden Chanterelles dry well but are leathery. The best preservation method for black chanterelles is to dry them.

Boletes: Slice lengthwise and dry. The pores can be removed from older specimens. Dried boletes age well and increase in flavor intensity. Boletes do well sautéed, and you can freeze rock-hard buttons whole. Grind dry boletes into powder and use for flavoring soups, sauces, etc.

Candy Caps: Dry. The maple-syrup-like aroma comes out strongest when dried.

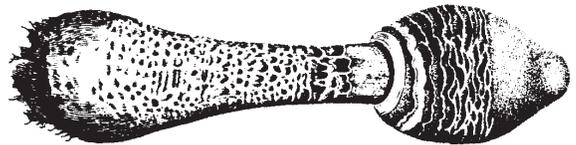
Hedgehogs: Sauté or blanch and freeze. You can also dry or pickle them.

Lepiota: Slice and dry. They age well.

Oysters: Cut into strips and blanch, then freeze. Great in potato soups with a little thyme. You can also dry and powder them.

Agaricus: Dry. Use this method if you find them on sale at bargain prices at your favorite supermarket.

Sparassis: Cut into one inch thick slices and dry.



Phalloides Correction

Tom Duffy adds a correction to his article on *Amanita phalloides* in last month's issue. He notes that *Amanita caesaria* does occur in Eastern Arizona and New Mexico. He also mentions—in response to another article on *Chlorophyllum molybdites* and *Macrolepiota rhacodes* on the UC campus—that he's seen the former in Sacramento but never here.

He says, "One of the things I learned at the Colorado Copper Mountain NAMA foray was that at least in Colorado (I saw huge rings in Denver grassy areas when I was there) some collections of *Chlorophyllum molybdites* have honey-colored spores and there is some uncertainty as to whether this is a local variant or whether young or partially aborted specimens do this briefly in their life cycle under appropriate weather conditions. Some specimens from the Denver area have had predominately green spores mixed in with the lighter spores."

Calendar continued from page 10

Saturday, February 21: Amanita seminar with Dr. Rod Tullos, a pre-eminent authority on *Amanitas*. This is an all-day seminar at a location yet to be determined (probably somewhere with microscopes). Charge: \$30 for members, \$35 for non-members. Call Norm Andresen at 278.8998 for details.

Saturday-Sunday, February 21-22: Salt Point State Park camping foray. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at Woodside Campground on Saturday. Call or e-mail Henry Shaw for details: shaw4@llnl.gov, 510.943.3237.

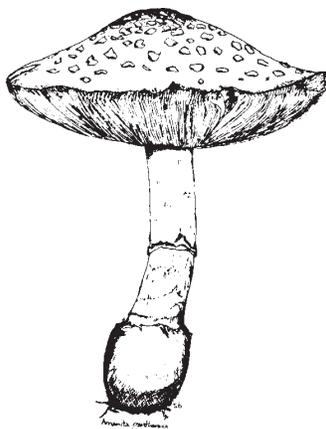
Saturday-Wednesday, February 21-25: 13th North American Mushroom Conference and Expo held by the American Mushroom Institute at the Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco. This is a conference for serious (mostly professional) mushroom cultivators. For more info, call the AMI at 202.842.4344 or send email to ami@msmlaw.com.

Tuesday, February 24th: Study Group Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. The topic is "San Francisco Mushrooms Then and Now."

Saturday, February 28: Joaquin Miller Park (Oakland) beginners' walk. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Sequoia Arena. Call Norm Andresen for details: 510.278.8998.

Sunday, March 1: Los Angeles Mycological Society Mushroom Fair. 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum, 301 North Baldwin Avenue in Arcadia. Arboretum entry fee \$5.00 adults, \$3.00 children 5-12, under 5 free. Information: email spencall@genesisnetwork.net or call 213.292.1900.

Sunday, March 15: March Mushroom Madness. A sumptuous dinner at Loraine Berry's house in Ross that starts at 1:00 p.m. and ranges into the evening. Charge is \$30 for MSSF members, \$35 for non-members. Call Loraine Berry at 415.454.0914 for details.



Tuesday, March 17: General Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and book sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. The speaker has yet to be determined.

Tuesday, April 21: General Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and book sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. The speaker has yet to be determined.

Tuesday, May 19: General Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and book sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. The speaker has yet to be determined.

Monday-Thursday, July 6-9: Asia-Pacific Mycological Conference in Thailand. For details you'll have to break out the web browser and check out <http://www.biotec.or.th/diary/mycology/mycology.htm> or send email to mycology@biotec.or.th.

March Mushroom Madness

On Sunday, March 15th, at 1 pm, Loraine Berry will hold another of her sumptuous Mushroom Madness dinners at her home at #4 Ames Ave. (cross street is Shady Lane), in Ross (Marin county). This dinner continues a series that's occurred in October, November, and January. As an example of the menu served, these items were listed in the November menu:

Macademia nut, pecan, and mushroom paté on french bread; portobello pizza; sweet and sour rock cod with wood ear mushrooms; matsutake and shrimp broth; white porcini, chicken, and rabbit cacciatore with fettucine; roast pork loins with platinum chanterelles and portobellos; roast Yukon gold potatoes; homemade applesauce; baby greens salad with Stilton dressing; candy cap and home grown apple spice cake; cheese platter with zesty sprouts; chocolate mushroom truffles; microbrewed beer, various wines, waters, and juice; coffee and tea.

The charge for the dinner is \$30 for MSSF members, \$35 for non-members. The dinner is limited to 16 people, and is a participatory event; bring an apron and a decent bottle of wine to share. Loraine will provide microbrewed beer, waters, and some wine plus coffee and tea.

Loraine has earmarked all of the money made through her Mushroom Madness dinners to go to the MSSF's Scholarship Fund. To attend, make a check out to "MSSF" and send it to Loraine at P.O. Box 1106, Ross, CA 94957. Your check is your reservation.

For more information, call Loraine at 415.454.0914.

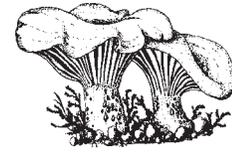
February Meeting: Learning About Lepiotas

The speaker for the general meeting this February is Dr. Else Vellinga of the Netherlands, in California to attend the NAMA foray. She'll speak about fungi in the genus *Lepiota*. This is a good chance to learn more about a group that ranges from the wonderfully statuesque (and tasty) *Macrolepiota procera* to some of the rosy, tiny, and deadly *Lepiotas* we find sprinkled throughout the forest floor.

The February general meeting is on Tuesday, the 17th of February, at 8:00 p.m. It's held in the Randall Jr. Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. for pre-meeting schmoozing, book sales, and gapping at mushrooms that we all bring in. See you there!

The Forager

by Bob Gorman



Is there any question that El Nino has arrived? As I write this edition of The Forager rain is coming down in sheets; a virtual river of water is cascading down the street. I can relate a little bit to Noah.

Mushrooms which sprang up yesterday are reduced to rubble today. And yet there have been periods of weather dry enough so that fungi can reveal themselves to the undaunted forager.

Our "real" winter with nighttime temperatures hovering in the thirties lasted but a few days. The rains have had a rather "tropical" feel. Nature seems a little bewildered but is taking it in stride. Cherry trees in my neighborhood started blossoming the day after New Years. Flocks of geese circled about yesterday morning seemingly unable to make up their minds whether to fly south or north! *Chlorophyllum molybdites* (green-spored parasol) usually confined to warmer, more southern areas are showing much further north than before. *Craterellus cornucopioides* (black chanterelle, black trumpets, or in France "trompettes du mort") are having an incredible season from Salt Point to the Santa Cruz Mountains. Although generally associated with tan oak, they have also been found this season with madrone trees. Their earthy, generous flavor and aroma are damn near the equal of *Tuber melanosporum* (black truffles). In one of the culinary events of the season Henry Moore prepared black trumpets in a sauce for smoked goose. Ou la la!

Lactarius fragilis (candy caps) are fruiting nicely in a number of locations. Norm Andresen found *Naucoria vinicolor* in Joaquin Miller Park. Also in the East Bay, Mike Boom found an extraordinary and first-recorded fruiting of *Amanita magniverrucata* (pine cone amanita). For the second year in a row there has been a major fruiting of *Tricholoma magnivelare* (matsutake) in Mendocino County in the area of Boonville and Philo.

On the Peninsula Bill Freedman has been finding *Leucopaxillus gentianeus* (bitter paxillus) in unusual numbers. There have been several downed logs with fruitings of *Phyllotopsis nidulans* (sewer gas fungus) usually not that common. He was leading a foray and happened upon a whole field full of *Coprinus comatus* (shaggy manes) to the delight of the participants. Fred Stevens found *Hericium erinaceus* (lion's mane) at Juniperro Serra Park (a first for that park). On a foray at Memorial Park in the Santa Cruz Mountains he found several species in the *Hygrophoraceae*: among them *Camarophyllum pratensis* (meadow waxy cap), *C. russocoriaceus* (cedar waxy cap) and *Hygrophorus psittacinus* (parrot waxy cap). There was also a nice fruiting of *Crucibulum laeve* (bird's nest fungus).

Although the flush of *Boletus edulis* (king bolete) on the local scene (reported here last month) has wound down, there are still a few being found at Lands End. Sad to say, Mike Boom reported on the activity of a bolete hunter in the East Bay who upturned every mushhump, dug large holes, trashed every large fleshy fungus in an elemental, frenzied search for the fungus, showing no respect whatsoever for the habitat. An experienced bolete hunter can discern rock, gall, Russula, bolete or whatever under a mushhump with the simple probe of a stick without upturning the duff. The feel or give of the object beneath tells the story. There is no reason to trash the habitat. Humankind has no natural right to plunder the resource. Foraging is rather a privilege granted by nature to those who have at least a modicum of understanding and respect for its processes. From primitive times to today it has always been and should always be thus.

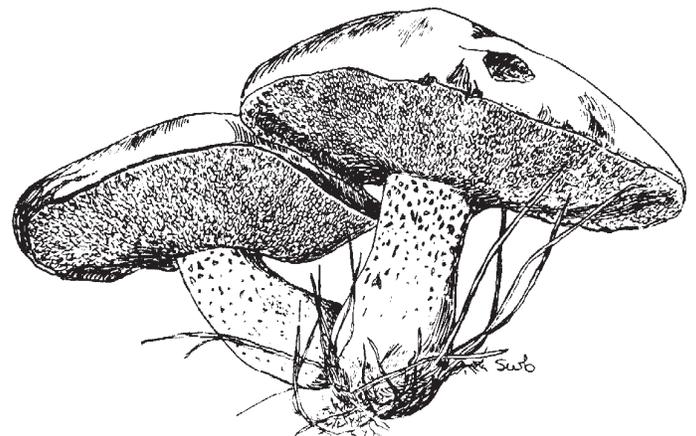
(To contribute to The Forager, call me at 650.340.8986, e-mail to mycoforagr@aol.com. or post your findings on Wade Leschyn's Natural World Bulletin Board at 650.261.1212. Thanks to Mike Boom, Norm Andresen, Henry Moore, Bill Freedman, and Fred Stevens who contributed to the preparation of this report.)

Mushrooms of San Francisco, Then and Now

The 24th of last month marked the 150th anniversary of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill. Sixty thousand new "miners" headed for California in 1849. The hamlet of Yerba Buena became the city of San Francisco and by 1875 was the 10th largest city in the United States.

What was the mushroom flora like on January 24, 1848? And what changes have happened to it since? Would you have preferred to collect then or today? You may have an educated guess, but we guarantee some surprises.

Chester Laskowski leads us through 150 years of mushroom history in San Francisco at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 24, in the Yellow Room at the Randall Junior Museum.



The pungent suillus



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Calendar

Sunday, February 1: Wunderlich Park Foray. Leader: Herb Saylor. This is a Coyote Point teaching foray where there will be no collecting. Call Chester Laskowski at 510.843.6537 for details.

Sunday, February 1: Land's End Walk, Lincoln Park, San Francisco. Meet at 10:00 a.m. by the water fountain in the parking lot in front of the Palace of the Legion of Honor. Heavy rain cancels the walk. Call or e-mail Henry Shaw for details: shaw4@llnl.gov, 510.943.3237.

Tuesday, February 3: Fungus Fair Follow-Up Event. Help go over the particulars of this year's Fungus Fair to help make next year's even better. Refreshments served, 7 p.m. at the Presidio Child Development Center. Call Terri Beauséjour at 510.278.5998 or email beauset@autodesk.com.

Saturday, February 7: Point Reyes National Seashore foray. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in the parking lot in front of the visitors' center. Call or e-mail Henry Shaw for details: shaw4@llnl.gov, 510.943.3237.

Saturday & Sunday, February 7 & 8: Cultivation class taught by Dr. Mo-Mei Chen. The title of this class is Mushrooms: Farming, Spawn Production, and Marketing. It's offered at UC Berkeley, on the Berkeley campus. The class room is 3030 Valley Life Sciences Building. Contact UCB for more info.

Sunday, February 8: Lands End Walk, Lincoln Park, San Francisco. Meet at 10:00 by the water fountain in the parking lot in front of the

Palace of the Legion of Honor. Call or e-mail Henry Shaw for details: shaw4@llnl.gov, 510.943.3237.

Friday–Monday, February 13–16: 1998 NAMA Foray at Asilomar on Monterey Bay. Your chance to meet fungi fans from around the nation! You must pre-register to attend; call Shea Moss, Registrar, at 408.353.2906 for details or check the NAMA web site at <http://countrylife.net/ffsc/nama98/>.

Sunday, February 15: Land's End Walk, Lincoln Park, San Francisco. Meet at 10:00 a.m. by the water fountain in the parking lot in front of the Palace of the Legion of Honor. Heavy rain cancels the walk. Call or e-mail Henry Shaw for details: shaw4@llnl.gov, 510.943.3237.

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For the most current Calendar information, call the MSSF hotline at 415.759.0495 or check the MSSF web site at:

<http://www.mykoweb.com/mssf>