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# Mycena News

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*Mycological Society of San Francisco*

*February, 1999, vol 49:2*

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## Finding Morels Is Easy

### Resources for the Avid Morel Hunter

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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, 1609 Valley View Ave, Belmont CA 94002. 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 1999. 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@rahul.net or call at 650.591.6616.

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FINDING MORELS IS EASY, if you know where they are. Morels fruit in the spring, most often on disturbed ground, like burned or logged areas, but occasionally they come up in newly landscaped areas or agricultural lands. Locating areas that have been burnt from forest fires seems like no problem, since forest fires are often large and well reported in the news. Unfortunately, the maps in the newspaper are not as accurate or detailed as you'd like. Another problem is that this information is only available during the fire season (Aug.-Oct.), and small fires are only reported in the local media. This is not the time of year most folk are thinking about morels.

Fortunately, there are alternative sources of information that you can access. The California Department of Forestry (CDF) does most of the fire fighting in non-National Forest Service lands. The CDF keeps detailed records of fire locations and at times will fax very detailed maps to you. The maps can include fires on private lands as well as National or State forestlands and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. Some of these maps will include fire intensity, vegetation type and elevations. At other times, the information will be only latitude and longitude and you must correlate this to a USGS topographical map. The person with the best access to maps and other information in the CDF office is the Prefire

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## Congrats Scholarship Recipients!

Congratulations to this year's winners of the Esther Colton Whited-Harry D. Thiers scholarship. The MSSF lauds your academic achievements, and wishes you the best in your studies. This year's winners are:

- **Kelly Collins** of San Francisco State, who is studying the Poroid Mycenas of Indonesia;
- **Atik Retnowati** of San Francisco State, who is studying the genus *Marasmius* of her native Indonesia; and,
- **Martin Bidartondo** of U.C. Berkeley who is studying the mycorrhizal relationships of *Pyrola picta*, a higher plant with both photosynthetic and non-photosynthetic populations.

Collins' and Retnowati's studies will improve our understanding of the evolutionary relationships in *Mycena* and *Marasmius*. Bidartondo's study will resolve his hypothesis that, in species with chlorophyllous and achlorophyllous populations, forms with green leaves are expected to have multiple mycorrhizal partners, while non-green populations are likely to have few partners.

Congratulations again to these scholarship winners. As they complete their studies, MSSF members will hear about their results when they present at a future MSSF general meeting. Thank you to all MSSF members for directly or indirectly contributing to the success of the Whited-Thiers scholarship program, and thereby to the success of these students.

*- Fred Stevens and other members of the MSSF Scholarship Committee*

# President's Greeting

Finally the rains are back. The mid-January showers should be good for a nice fruiting of chanterelles in the East Bay hills.

I've been using much of this column to thank people for all of the work that they've done. This month I'd like to thank Bill and Louise Freedman for putting up Hal Burdsall, our January speaker, and for entertaining him during his visit. They have also arranged Elio Schaechter's visit to speak in February at the general meeting. I'd also like to thank the Los Angeles Mycological Society for arranging and sharing the costs for January's speaker. The two societies flew out Dr. Burdsall from Wisconsin to speak on Monday in Los Angeles and Tuesday in San Francisco.

I enjoy going to the Santa Cruz Fungus Fair because I don't have to do any work or worry about anything while I'm there. If you like to actually attend a fungus fair where you aren't working for much of the time, Santa Cruz holds their fair in mid January of each year. It is about the same size as ours with some unique habitat displays, vendors that you don't see in San Francisco, and a couple of Monterey

Bay chefs who have written mushroom books. If you get a chance next year to attend, it makes for an enjoyable rainy Saturday or Sunday.

We need help from someone who has a background in insurance. Our insurance broker expressed considerable surprise when he found out that food was served at society events. If anyone has insurance expertise, we would like to review our policy and research whether additional coverage is needed. You can contact either Terri Beauséjour or myself for more information.

Last, I found a pair of men's glasses in a hard black case at the fair in December. Please contact me if you lost a pair.

I hope to see everyone at the February general meeting to hear Elio Schaechter speak. If you're interested in reading his book beforehand, it is titled *In the Company of Mushrooms*, printed by the Harvard University Press in 1997. Happy mushrooming!

- Mark Thomsen

## More Mushroom Madness in Marin

"We had FUN - the first syllable in FUNGI!" said Lorraine Berry of the last "Mushroom Madness in Marin". And another is just around the corner on February 21. If that one's sold out, don't despair, you can plan for the next one to be held on either March 21 or 28 (exact date TBD). In March, Mo Mei Chen will co-host with Lorraine Berry.

The cost of the event is \$26 for MSSF members, and \$29 for non-members or guests. Several persons said that these dinners should have cost \$100!) **All profits are generously donated to the Whited/Thiers Scholarship fund of the MSSF.** Reservations are required. Please bring an apron and a beverage to share; the event truly is participatory.

Please call Lorraine for reservations and particulars: 415.454.0914. Also, please indicate if you have vegetarian needs. Your check will serve as your reservation. The events are 1- 6 pm Sunday afternoon.

## Mount Tamalpais Foray Findings

Here are the fungi found January 16, 1999 on Mt Tam-Muir Woods. It is interesting to note that two days earlier, no mushrooms were seen in this habitat. *Amanita franchetii*, *Amanita vaginata*, *Armillariella mellea*, *Caulorhiza umbonata*, *Crepidotus mollis*, *Dacrymyces palmatus*, *Daldinia grandis*, *Gomphidius subroseus*, *Hebeloma crustuliniforme*, *Hygrophorus pratensis*, *Hygrophorus psittacinus*, *Hygrophorus puniceus*, *Inocybe geophylla* var. *lilacina*, *Laccaria amethysteo-occidentalis*, *Lactarius rubridus*, *Lactarius xanthogalactus*, *Lenzites betulina*, *Leucopaxillus gentianus*, *Lycoperdon perlatum*, *Marasmius andosaceus*, *Phaeobulgaria inquinans*, *Phaeolus schweinitzii*, *Pleurotus ostreatus*, *Russula brevipes*, *Russula emetica*, *Stereum hirsutum*, *Trametes versicolor*, *Xerampalina caudicinalis*, *Xylaria hypoxolon*.

- Bob Mackler

*Calendar continued from page 10*

at UCSC Arboretum. Fee is \$325, Paul's normal fee is \$500 for this 2-day event. Participants receive spawn for growing seven production quality species. Contact Permaculture Santa Cruz, 348 Buzzard Lagoon Rd. Corralitos CA 95076 Tel 408.763.3848 E-mail permasc@sasquatch.com

**Saturday – Sunday, March 6 - 7: Don Simoni's Mushroom Cultivation Classes in Santa Cruz.** On March 6, Don Simoni of Mushroom Adventures will hold a beginner's class on cultivating mushrooms. Don is known for his abilities to grow difficult varieties of wild mushrooms. Cost \$35. On March 7, an advanced class will be held. Cost \$70. Call 415.586.4082 for details.

**Tuesday, March 16: MSSF General Meeting** at the Randall Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and Books Sales; Meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. Speaker TBD.

**Thursday - Sunday, March 18-21: San Francisco Flower and Garden Show.** Participate in the MSSF's numerous displays at this important show. See inside for details. This year's show will be held at the Cow Palace.

**Tuesday, March 23: Mushroom Photography Workshop.** This workshop will be held at 7:00pm at the Randall Museum. See inside this newsletter for details.

**Sunday, March 21 or 28: Mushroom Madness in Marin.** See last month's newsletter for info about MMM. Make reservations early through Lorraine Berry 415.454.0914. Members \$26, non-members \$29.

**Thursday - Sunday, August 12 - 15: The 1999 NAMA foray.** This foray will be held at the Shawnee National Forest in Missouri. Mark your calendars.

# MSSF Exhibits at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show, March 18-21

The MSSF has two special opportunities to exhibit at this year's San Francisco Flower and Garden show, from March 18 to March 21. The MSSF will sponsor both its traditional educational exhibit as well as a special 'Mushrooms in the Garden' display.

## **The Educational and Informational Exhibit**

The MSSF plans to have an educational and informational exhibit at this year's San Francisco Flower & Garden Show to be held at the Cow Place March 18-21. Volunteers are needed to provide materials for the exhibit or help set it up and staff the exhibit during show hours (9:00 AM to 8:00 PM).

Volunteering in this event is a great way to contribute to MSSF efforts in providing knowledgeable information and promoting an appreciation of fungi to the public. Volunteers will work in pairs to staff the exhibit in 4 hour shifts. Your knowledge of mushrooms need not be extensive, any MSSF member is encouraged to help out. The major task will be to hand out information and to answer general questions about mushrooms and the MSSF.

If you have an interest or experience in public affairs, or like to meet and talk to others with interests in mushrooms, then this is an opportunity to actively participate in the MSSF. Staffers will be provided free parking and admission to the show for the day. To get involved, call Paul Koski at 415-564-6518 or email [pkoski@muse.sfusd.edu](mailto:pkoski@muse.sfusd.edu).

We are also looking for a someone willing to act as the exhibit coordinator for next year's show. The exhibit coordinator acts as the MSSF contact person with the show management, submits exhibit application, oversees the exhibit set up and schedules staffing for the exhibit. By undertaking this responsibility, you can make a valuable contribution to the MSSF through meeting and networking with other members and expanding your knowledge of mushrooms. Paul Koski, who has acted as coordinator in past years, will work with anyone interested in this position to make the transition for next year's exhibit coordinator smooth. Please contact Paul for more information the MSSF's educational and informational exhibit.

## **Mushrooms in the Garden Display**

This year, in addition to providing the educational display at the San Francisco Flower and Garden show, we will also create a 'Mushrooms in the Garden' display, similar to the display at the MSSF Fungus Fair, but on a grander scale. The Cultivation Committee of the MSSF will be organizing this year's 'Mushrooms in the Garden' display.

### What the show will provide:

An 8' x 8' display with backdrop and sign. The show further provides a small cash subsidy to help cover the cost of the displays. We will also be provided with eight complimentary show tickets.

### What we must provide:

The design of the display, plant and ornamental materials (fruiting fungi), signs identifying the plant and fungal material, and literature describing MSSF and the cultivation committee.

### How can you participate?

Here are some ideas for ways in which you can participate and help make the display a success:

- Advise on appropriate mushrooms and plants to include. (There are a few books about mushrooms in the garden that may be appropriate for research. The MSSF library has one or two copies available for check-out. Or surf around the Internet for ideas! Or observe and note garden fruitings during your various travels!)
- Help design the display.
- Donate or loan us some fruiting specimens, either cultured or collected.
- Donate or loan some appropriate plants and trees
- Help provide or create other materials such as plant markers for labeling specimens, garden path materials, garden ornaments, signage, handouts, etc.

We are not required to supervise the display during the event, so all volunteers may enjoy the show. And I will distribute the eight complimentary tickets to the first eight enthusiastic volunteers!

### Planning Meeting:

I will host a planning meeting on Wednesday, February 10th starting at 7 p.m. Please be welcome to bring your ideas and other contributions. Please call or email me for details and directions.

### Display Setup Dates and location:

Setup will be Tuesday March 16th and Wednesday March 17th at the Cow Palace.

### Show dates and location:

**March 18 - 21, 1999 at the Cow Palace**  
9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Friday & Saturday  
9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. Thursday & Sunday



# Cultivation Committee News

We are currently in the process of organizing and scheduling a series of workshops and events for 1999. These will be elaborated here in the Cultivation Committee column as the dates, times and details are confirmed. Also, please keep an eye on the Calendar Section in this newsletter, and the MSSF website for more information. Better yet, sign up for the mailing list! See below for details.

## **Display at SF Flower and Garden Show**

One of the big events for the Cultivation Committee upcoming is the special display that we will be setting up for the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show, from March 18-21. Please see the article elsewhere in this newsletter for more information about this big event.

## **Other Cultivation Committee tentative plans for 1999, with details TBA**

Fred Stevens has generously agreed to conduct a series of evening introductory workshops on sterile tissue culturing techniques, spawn inoculation, and substrate preparation.

David Jackovich has offered a workshop on Shiitake log production.

Gourmet Mushrooms has agreed to conduct a workshop, topic to be announced when finalized.

Paul Stamet's cultivation workshop is coming up in March. Please see the calendar section in this newsletter for details.

Don Simoni will be conducting a series of classes in Santa Cruz in February and March. Keep an eye on the calendar section for details.

## **MSSF Cultivation Lab**

We may have an opportunity to set up our very own MSSF Cultivation Lab and Garden in a not-yet-disclosable public location in San Francisco. Although in the very early stages of inquiry at this time, this is a very exciting prospect, about which I will continue to inform you as the possibilities are better known!

If you would like to share your cultivation expertise and skills with the cultivation committee, you are cordially invited to do so! Let's talk!

## **Cultivation Committee Mailing List**

If you would like to sign-up for the new cultivation committee mailing list to receive personal notification of cultivation related activities, please provide your name, address, telephone number and email address to me, either via email or telephone. In most cases, the preferred notification method will be email. If no email address is provided, we will try and keep you informed either by USPS or by telephone.

## **Appreciation for Recent Donations**

The cultivation committee has recently received a generous donation of test tubes and test tube racks which were no longer needed by a local middle school and thus had been destined for the dumpster. Thank you very much to member Terry Sullivan for arranging for their salvation and donation to the committee.

A second donation of 200 50ml test tubes containing pre-poured sterile nutrient agar was made by a government agency which is prohibited from using the media beyond the 'expiration date', for control purposes. We are very grateful to member Leon Ilniki for arranging our receipt of this very useful donation.

## Donations Help Keep Activity Costs Low

If you know of other cultivation-related equipment and supplies that are 'destined for the dumpster,' please consider donating them to the MSSF cultivation committee. This will help us to sponsor cultivation workshops and events for minimal or no cost to participants. We are committed to providing educational opportunities to all interested participants regardless of economic wherewithal, and donations of supplies will go a long way toward this goal. See next page for a list of some of the items which would be useful.

## **Thank you's for a successful Cultivation Committee Display at the 1998 Fungus Fair!**

Thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of a number of volunteers, the cultivation committee display at the MSSF fair was quite attractive and sparked a lot of interest in upcoming cultivation-related events. And over 50 individuals signed up for the cultivation committee mailing list, so it should prove to be an exciting year for the committee!

Special thanks to Bill Chalmers of Western Biologicals, Inc. for providing the oyster mushroom kits and other supplies at a generous discount, and for his considerable effort in shipping them down from Canada such that the timing allowed us beautiful fruitings on the event days!

Thanks to Don Simoni for the fruiting of 'clamshells', and for taking time out from his own booth to talk about dowel plugging techniques!

Thanks to Tom Chester for ensuring the committee had 'prime real-estate' in the floor plan!

Thanks to Toby Garonni for the fruiting Shiitake block, which added variety to the display!

Thanks very much to Jeannie Campbell for her creativity and support in constructing the 'Cultures and Cultures' pictorial and the 'Mushrooms in the Garden' display. And thanks for ensuring that I had a few bio-breaks during the event!

Thank you, Norm Andresen for two very informative hands-on demonstrations of *Hericium* and Shiitake log inoculation, complete with oak logs, drill and candle!

Thanks to Steve Herron, who was instrumental in the creation of the

*Continued next page*

## Supplies needed by Cultivation Committee

Test tubes (especially with autoclavable screw caps such as polypropylene)

Test tube racks

Petri dishes

Beakers or flasks

Graduated cylinders

Scales (esp. with measurement by grams)

Thermometers and hygrometers

Humidifiers

Pipettes

Scalpels

Innoculation 'loops'

Canning jars and lids - all sizes

Filter disks for spawn jars

Autoclavable bags of translucent

polypropylene- all sizes

Pressure Cookers - all sizes

Laminar Flow Hoods, Hepa filters

Alcohol lamps

Propane torches

Plastic syringes (without needle) - all sizes

Ph testing supplies

Rolled Cotton

Stainless commercial shelving

Chemicals, Stains and Culture Media Components

Adenine sulphate hydrate

Agar Agar

4-amino benzoic acid

Ammonium sulphate

Benzyl adenine

Boric Acid

Calcium carbonate

Calcium chloride dihydrate

Calcium nitrate tetrahydrate

Citric acid

Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid

Distilled Water

Ferrous sulphate heptahydrate

Gentamycin sulphate

Giberellic acid (GA3)

Glucose

Glycine

Hydrochloric acid

Indole acetic acid

Indole butyric acid

Inositol

2-Isopentenyl adenine

Kinetin

Magnesium sulphate heptahydrate

Malt Agar

Manganese sulphate hydrate

Naphthalene acetic acid

Nicotinic acid

Peptone

Potassium dihydrogen phosphate

Potassium iodide

Potato Dextrose Agar

Potato Flour

Potato Starch

Pyridoxine hydrochloride

Sodium hydroxide

Tetracycline hydrochloride

Thiamine hydrochloride

Vanillin

Wheat Flour

Yeast Extract

### Substrate Components

Corn Cob (loose)

Hard-wood chips

Hard-wood dowels

Millet Grain

Rice

Rye Grain

Rye Grass Seed

Straw

Wheat Grain

Wheat Grass Seed

Sorghum

Wild Bird Seed

Mushrooms in the Garden display. Not only did he help set up the display and forage for appropriate fungi, but also introduced us to his lovely wife, Julie Baldwin, who happens to work at Sloat Garden Center on 3rd street in San Francisco. Julie consulted with us on appropriate plants for the display, and provided a generous discount on the purchase of the plants and trees.

Bolek Kusnik very generously contributed several of his personal cultures, cultivation books and several beautiful photographs for the pictorial display, including two of his lovely daughters beaming over massive fruitings of his successfully cultivated Shiitake logs! Thanks, Bolek!

Thanks very much to Lorrie Gallagher, who as MSSF Librarian provided cultivation related publications from the MSSF Library for the

display. Lorrie also helped with the finishing touches of the 'Mushrooms in the Garden' display by gathering the duff and placing the mushrooms.

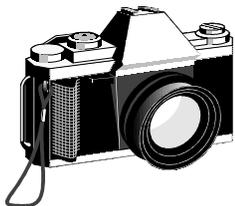
Thanks to Fred Stevens and Michael Wood for photographing the display!

And thanks to all of you, who signed up for the committee and offered support and encouragement throughout the event!

### ***New Email Address for Cultivation Chair***

I (Terri Beauséjour) have a new email address for mycologically-related activities. It is russula@home.com.

- Terri Beauséjour



## Mushroom Photography Workshop

You're walking through the woods when suddenly you come across an extraordinarily beautiful mushroom. You wish you had a camera, but which camera? Should you use a flash, tripod, or both?

These questions and many others will be addressed in a workshop given by Fred Stevens, Mike Wood and other contributors to the Bay Area Fungi Web Project (<http://www.mykoweb.com/>).

On display at the workshop will be various cameras, lenses, flashes, and tripods. The workshop is open to all but will be of most value to those who already have a basic understanding of photography, i.e. depth of field, f-stops, etc.

The date and location of the workshop is: **Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>**, at 7:00pm, at the Randall Museum.

- Fred Stevens

# North to Alaska, 99 – Let's Go!

Come join us for the trip this year!

Here are some highlights from our past trip, to whet your appetite: we're feasting on Alaskan halibut with porcini mushrooms at Trail Lake Lodge on the Kenai Peninsula. Dave, the French Commercial Counselor and collectible wine investor, shares with us some of his finest. It's a family style dinner featuring garden greens, locally-harvested seafood and, of course, today's wild mushroom treasures. Satiated, I retire to my hammock by the sea, where I'm visited by humpback, minke and orca whales. The lush forest behind me shelters black bears, moose and eagles beneath towering spruce trees. Before hitting the sack, I stroll the tidepools that reveal a variety of colorful starfish, sea anemones, mussels, clams and octopus.

Nancy and Glen, our friends at the Alaskan Mycological Society, explain that late August rains bring out the plethora of delectable fungi we see scattered about the peninsula. Mushroom hunting in Alaska is a rewarding hobby that combines four fun activities: getting into the outdoors, wildlife viewing, traveling in exotic locales and finding free food.

Driving to Denali National Park three days later, Glen explains that we can stop almost anywhere along the roadside to prowl the woods *pour les champignons sauvages*, since most land is publicly owned - delightfully different from the lower 48! Along one particularly lush, narrow trail, Silvie calls out, "Oh my Lord, come see the beautiful Angel Wings!" She is either a fundamentalist visionary or under the influence of Dave's 1975 Henri Martin Bordeaux served earlier with our picnic lunch. Well, neither — she plucked a basketfull of *Pleurocyhella porrigens* off a fallen log. Further along, we greet old friends in the forms of *Boletus mirabilis*, *Amanita muscaria*, *Lactarius deliciosus*, and *Paxillus involutus*. "Not surprising," she claims, "considering that basidiospores travel the stratosphere."

Our myco-minibus next drops us off for a trek in the tundra elfin forest, where we excitedly scramble over lichens, mosses and tussock grasses to stuff our bags (and mouths) with handfuls of red and blue berries that decorate hundreds of knee-high shrubs. As the sun settles toward the horizon, we notice berry-gathering competition in the valley below from an Alaskan brown bear. We're a safe distance, to be sure, but we nevertheless high-tail it back to the bus, packing our pie-filling contributions for this evening's dinner party at Denali Windsong Lodge.

As Ian plunders his second piece of fresh blueberry pie, he reminds us to invite our Bay Area mycophile friends to return with us next trip. We toast Dave's last bottle of 1990 Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin brut and promise to return soon.

So let's go — August 24 to September 4, 1999, for an eye-popping, mouth-watering tour of southern Alaska. Karen Killebrew has made our travel arrangements and is waiting to hear from you, at 800-868-7710, ext. 15 or karenk@escapeartists.com. And, see below for the Kenai Halibut Porcini Mushroom recipe, just in case you can't join us for dinner next time "up there."

- Terry Sullivan

## Kenai Halibut Porcini Mushroom recipe

Non-stick vegetable oil spray  
 2 tablespoons olive oil  
 4 1-inch thick halibut fillets  
 2 tablespoons white wine  
 1 yellow onion, chopped  
 1/2 lb. Porcini mushrooms, chopped  
 2 red bell pepper, chopped  
 12 pimiento-stuffed green olives, chopped  
 1 teaspoon hot paprika  
 salt  
 pepper



- Preheat oven to 375 degrees, spray inside of 10 inch baking dish with non-stick spray.
- Sprinkle wine over halibut. Season with salt and pepper.
- Heat olive oil in skillet and saute onion, mushrooms, and bell pepper.
- Add olives and paprika for last two minutes of cooking.
- Spread vegetable mixture over halibut. Bake uncovered until fish is cooked through, about 20 minutes.

*Morels, continued from page 1*

Officer. There are 27 separate, local CDF offices in California. You may need to contact several to find a fire to your liking. When you talk the people at these offices, it is best to be up front about your purpose for wanting this info to avoid causing alarm. They may think you are an arsonist doing Quality Control!

The National Forest Service (NFS) is another good source of land / soil disturbance information. The Forest Service generally only keeps records of activities on NFS lands. They not only can provide information on forest fire location; the local district offices keep records on logging and controlled burns, both of which are excellent morel habitats. Being a federal agency, the NFS is obligated to supply almost any information they possess under the freedom of information act. As with most bureaucracies, the NFS is more helpful if they think you are a friend and supporter of their little fiefdom. So do yourself a favor and buy their \$10 permit or at least tell them you intend to when the time comes. Paying money to the government is abhorrent to many of the MSSF leading members, but in my experience there is a major improvement in attitude toward mushroomers when we obey their rules. Don't forget: **"the more they bleed us, the more they need us"**. That \$10 or 20 will make you a respected revenue source for the NFS.

To find the information that you need, there are several types of people to talk to; for fires on NFS land and control burns (you must to ask about each), you want the fire management officer. For tree cutting and salvage logging, ask for the timber sales officer, especially the small sales officer. There are five or six National Forests that can be of interest for morelling in California and each of those may have as many as six Ranger Districts within. Each district keeps its own distinct set of records, with little overlap. Just think of it, since each district has its own control burn and salvage-logging program, there must be a hundred places a year that no one ever picks! I have seen some of these places, but alas too late; it's impossible to get to them all. My heart was broken when I saw literally thousands of large rotting morels, as I did this last spring.

The most important and useful information source is ourselves: an informal network of people can supply you with a host of information types. These can include fruiting locations, conditions of roads, moisture, burn locations, unusual habitats, and places that no one has been, just to list a few. These networks work on the exchange of information — to be a part of the net you must be able to provide as well as receive info —but they can save everyone work. There is always an almost paranoid concern about people finding out about your spot but the reality is that in a good fruiting location there's enough for your friends. I think it's more fun to share a spot with

five friends and get 20 lbs. each than for one greedy person to find 100 lbs. Remember next year it may be your friend that finds the SPOT!

To my mind the ideal habitat for morels is a dense conifer forest between 4,000 and 10,000 ft. under burnt trees but the large trees not killed, the ground gently sloped to provide moisture gradients, and needles on the forest floor to provide humidifying cover. The morels will start to fruit when the soil temperature reaches 50F. In a good location you may find some precocious fruiting as much as a month before the main flush in warmer spots. Generally, the snow-melt will not provide enough moisture for large fruitings; some rain or run off will be needed. When the rain comes at the right time / temperature, the fruiting can occur on even the most unpromising soil. Below 4,000 ft. it seems rare for the rain to come at the right time for good fruiting, but every year we see morels fruiting in urban locations in small numbers. The most common of these habitats is the bark bed, newly landscaped area often sprinkled. You may have heard of some famous fruitings; the Holiday Inn in Palo Alto, 7-11 in Gilroy in August, and along the freeway in Daly City to name a few.

Here are some of the phone numbers to get you started:

**California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection**

State headquarters: Sacramento (916) 653-5121

Local ranger units:

Amador-El Dorado (530) 644-2345  
Tolumne-Calaveras (209) 754-3831

You may be able to get the CDF to fax you a list of all their office numbers if you are nice! Remember there are twenty seven separate ranger units in California

**USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region supervisors' offices:**

Eldorado National Forest (619) 622-5061  
Stanislaus NF (209) 532-3671  
Tahoe NF (916) 265-4531  
Pumas NF (916) 283-6131

There are too many local district offices to list, but you can find those numbers from the supervisors' offices. The local Districts are the ones with the info you need!

Next month, IF there is an interest, I'll write more on habitat and morelling, so please e-mail me at [nandresen@home.com](mailto:nandresen@home.com) with your best or most unusual habitat.

- Norm Andresen

## February Meeting: Dr Elio Schaechter

Dr. Elio Schaechter will be speaking at the February 16th general meeting at 8:00pm at the Randall Museum in San Francisco.

Dr. Schaechter is a Distinguished Professor of Molecular Biology and Microbiology, Emeritus, at Tufts University School of Medicine and the author of *In The Company of Mushrooms*. Elio Schaechter's delightful book was published in 1997 by the Harvard University Press and is an interesting combination of biological, culinary and foraging tales. Dr. Schaechter gave an enjoyable presentation last year to the MSSF, and we're pleased that he has accepted our invitation to return with some new material. He is a funny and interesting speaker who you won't want to miss.

# THE MUSHROOM SCOOP

This monthly column solicits input concerning mushroom collections of particular interest, rarity, or amazement.

E-mail me at [yogidog@earthlink.net](mailto:yogidog@earthlink.net) to contribute.

- David Campbell



Ah, the chanterelles... they smell and taste good, have a pretty name, enjoy global recognition, don't much tolerate worms or weevils, tend to grow in profusion, store really well, and they virtually glow in just the purdiest golden-orange tones.

It's that time of year according to the calendar. January is often the chosen time, the heart of chanterelle season in central coastal California where the live oaks thrive. The cold and dry weather which has haunted us for the last several weeks has not yet seriously daunted this year's flush; the freeze of late December has been endured, and sufficiently supportive soil moisture retained to maintain them in suspended animation, and now, as of this writing, it is raining warm! I anticipate that by the time this publication is issued, the hills be will singing of chanterelles, and many other mushrooms as well.

*Cantharellus cibarius* is the name I learned to call all Golden Chanterelles, although a recent species split has declared *C. formosus* to be the chanterelle which is collected in prodigious quantities in the Pacific Northwest. It still remains to be seen just where our local golden beauties will reside in the nomenclature after the *Cantharellaceae* taxonomists cease rattling their mighty pens. The studies that established the *formosus* identity over the last several years focused on the Oregon/Washington habitats (and especially the Olympic Peninsula). Information from that study ended up in the 1997 publication *The Chanterelle Book* written by Olle Persson, with gorgeous illustrations by Bo Mossberg. It is a lovely and informative book, offering a Euro-Swedish perspective on the global dispersal of the *Cantharellaceae*, and canterelloid fungi. *C. cibarius* was originally described from Sweden by Elias Fries, and author Persson stresses distinct differences, especially culinary superiority, of the original over the upstart *formosus*. Unfortunately, the closest our SF bay area 'trel gets to recognition in this book is a vague reference: "Farther south—in California—there are also white chanterelles belonging to an undescribed species. They grow among 'evergreen oaks.'" Since the author had just discussed the *C. subalbidus*, correctly referencing its association with Douglas Fir, though inexplicably claiming that it possesses "a wonderful intense apricot scent," I suspect the above quotes may represent some garbled notes concerning a rumor which got translated into Swedish and then back to English. In any event, I view these comments to be inaccurate, or at least irrelevant to our local scene.

It is clear to most observers that our local chanterelles have physically apparent differences as well as different mycorrhizal associations from the above mentioned. It is quite possible that the eventual moniker assigned our chanterelle will be neither *formosus* or *cibarius*. For the time being, I'm thinking that "OUR chanterelle" works for me. Or California Mudpuppy, an apt tag I've often heard in reference to the most readily apparent distinction our local nuggets possess—that they tend to grow feloniously filthy.

Oh sure, every once in a while we find a small flush, coddled in

clean oakleaf duff, which has by some freak of nature been spared the evident mudpie fights being waged by their brethren. More typically, however, their fine golden crowns are fully heaped with a gluttonous scoop of Mother Earth, sometimes sporting green grass hair, other times, the dirt has simply melted from deluge, and run all about, spilled over and down the sides, and permeated the very tissues of the fungal flesh. Should the mushroom crack or splay, as so often happens when one attempts to extricate it from its poison oak or blackberry vine earth-strap, miniature clods come tumbling into the crevices and there become imbedded. Our chanterelle itself joins the conspiracy, with its fleshy undulations wrapping and enveloping rocks, twigs, leaves, slugs, and dirt. Any vagabond foreign speck that just happens to be passing by will most certainly become ensnared in the furrows between the primitive gill ridges. When it rains hard enough, the muddy splatters blast up and into all those between-the-gill-grooves. After picking a few of these "black-gold" babies, every thing a collector touches is fingerprint slimed, including the next nice and clean specimen found. Mudpuppy, indeed.

As you may well expect, the dirt simply does not taste very good, and when it's laced with a little mold, it can ruin one's palate for an entire meal. Considering the exquisite apricot/pumpkin aromatic essence of a chanterelle properly isolated from its above mentioned "habitat", my eyebrows arch and eyeballs pop when I hear people refer to the *earthy* flavor of this mushroom.

So, let's keep it simple: the orange and cream color is the edible part of the chanterelle, therefore all black, brown, green, gray, and rainbow parts should be removed and discarded before cooking. I think we should all be able to agree on that! The question of *how*, however, is where things get a little more, well, muddy. Here's the scrubdown, so pick a muddpuppy and get to work!

The first thing to do with chanterelles, and most important unless you plan to go to plan "B", is to clean your collection in the woods as you go. The goal in the outback being to remove any contaminate from the mushroom that may broadcast to other mushrooms as you add them to the basket—typically this task entails trimming the dirty base and brushing or scraping (or, sometimes, shoveling) debris from the cap and underside. A linen and/or brush is always a useful addition to one's knife towards accomplishing this end.

Once home, there are basically three methods you may employ to complete the cleaning process and usually two or three of these techniques are required in combo. They are knifing /scraping, wiping/brushing, and rinsing/hosing.

With a paring knife alone, chanterelles can usually be rendered quite clean, though the waste factor becomes significant and the remnants of the delicate fungal vases frequently more resemble cubist sculp-

*Continued next page*

ture. Scraping the dirt-laden gill ridges is sometimes the only way to deal with that problem; this is accomplished with a knife blade by pulling it down from an approximate middle point along the stipe, and then up from the same latitude so the blade doesn't bite excessively into the grain of the flesh and unnecessarily remove the good tissue. Also, when the cap is infused with mud tea (it's not dirty, but it's blackish-brown, not orange), sometimes it is effective to drag the knife edge across it and squeegee the top moist layer right off. (Unless, of course, you are a geophagist and prefer the earthy flavor.) Any specimens which have dirt-contaminated splits running from cap to stalk should be pulled apart along the fissures and may then be effectively knife scraped clean..

Fortuitously, the combination of a moistened mushroom brush and damp towel can effectively clean many a chanterelle. This is your best case scenario—wipe and brush to orange and cream, chop, chop, chop, let the fry pan sing.

There are times, though, as heretical as it sounds, when a good blast from the spigot or a quick dip in a tub with fingers massaging is the best way to clean the chanterelle—and it's always the fastest. The myth that water should never be applied to mushrooms is all wet. After all, mushrooms thrive on rain, and they are designed to deal with water, especially when it comes from above. The truth is, care must be taken not to compromise sensitive, normally protected areas of sporocarps (typically the undersides). Sponges and gilled surfaces usually suffer the most from being wetted. Furthermore, the slower the growth pattern of a mushroom, typically, the greater its tolerance to moisture. Chanterelles sit out there in the weather for weeks, even months, if we leave them be. And their underside, from my experience, is not especially vulnerable to water-logging. If you want to blast them with water in order to get them clean, one way to proceed is just do it right before you intend to cook them, don't leave them to lie around wet, and towel them dry before tossing into pan. It's okay.

Certainly, it is important to control the moisture vis-à-vis cooking chanterelles, for it is not a sauté when the cook pan floods two inches deep in mushroom sweat—it becomes stew. So, lacking a delicate dehydration process to bring the mushroom to a viable pan-ready state, the removal of excessive moisture as it develops in the pan is suggested. Of course, it is important to find a way to reserve and employ that flavor-laden juice into your cooking process.

Sometimes the Chanterelles are already water-logged when picked. Even these long-lived fruits have their limits. The amazing thing is, they can frequently be reclaimed to culinary usefulness by spreading in a cool, dry place—I use my carport—and providing ventilation, either naturally or with a fan. In two or three days, it can be quite a pleasant surprise to see the transformation of what was headed for the compost heap reverse field and head for the kitchen larder.

Knowing this, another method of handling the chanterelles emerges—the aforementioned Plan “B”—which is to pick them as is, bring them home dirty, spray-hose them off immediately (go for low H2O volume, high pressure, set garden nozzle to barely open, adjust intensity of the “water knife” by distance from the mushroom), until they are squeaky clean. Then spread and fan them and monitor till they reach ideal moisture content, at which point you box or basket them and refrigerate, and perhaps consider covering with a damp-

ened towel to prevent excessive defroster dehydration. Healthy chanterelles can easily last 2-3 weeks if properly stored. Note: some moisture is desirable, but not so much that juice may easily be squeezed from the cut base.

Wade Leschyn reports on “a Saturday walk through the Woodside hills in mixed woods with a good deal of Madrone, discovered a good deal of *Omphalatus olivascens*, one old *Amanita*, lots of *stereum*, *mycenae*, *cortinari*, brown, black and orange witches butter, some old oysters, several red and purple capped *russulas*, and some candy caps. Noticeably absent were the boletes, and *A. phalloides* which were conspicuous in their quantity just several weeks ago.” Well, you can probably plan on kissing your sweet boletes goodbye for the season, Wade; their next showing is expected in the spring Sierras. The decidedly British photographer George McCarthy, in his book *The Wild Mushroom*, comments that the black *Exidia glandulosa* “delights” in the common name “Witches Butter”, whereas *Tremella mesenterica* is properly called “Yellow Brain.” Reasoning? “...whoever heard of a witch eating anything other than black butter?” The edible but bland brown “butter”, *Tremella foliacea*, he did not comment upon.

Mike Boom reports from during the depressing chilly drought period, “from my hike yesterday through the south Oakland hills: 1 small cluster of *Psathyrella* sp.; 1 medium cluster of *Camarophyllus pratensis*. “

Mike's killing them again! *C. pratensis* is a delicious mushroom.

Around Marin County, pickings have been slim, however. Jeanne, hiking in the hills above San Rafael, found the following: *Agaricus praeclaresquamosus*; *Naemetaloma fascialare*; *Omphalatus olivascens*; *Lactarius alnicola* and *L. fragilis*; *Russula brevipes*; way too many *Amanita phalloides*; *Clitocybe nuda*; and *Cantherellus cibarius* (?).

The following is a species list compiled at the New Year weekend foray at Oz Farm near Manchester in *Mendocino County*:

<i>Agaricus hondensis</i>	<i>Laccaria laccata</i>	
<i>Agaricus subrutilescens</i>	<i>Lactarius deliciosus</i>	
<i>Amanita francheti</i>	<i>Lactarius fragilis</i>	
<i>Amanita gemmata</i>	<i>Lactarius luculentus</i> (candy-cap look alike)	
<i>Amanita muscaria</i>	<i>Lactarius pallitus</i>	
<i>Amanita pachycolea</i>	<i>Lactarius xanthogalactus</i>	
<i>Amanita vaginata</i>	<i>Oridea onotica</i> (Donkey Ears)	
<i>Boletus aereus</i>	<i>Phaeocollybia olivacia</i>	
<i>Boletus edulis</i>	<i>Pluteus cervinus</i>	
<i>Boletus regius</i>	<i>Pluteus sp.</i>	
<i>Camarophyllus pratensis</i>	<i>Polyporus hirtus</i>	
<i>Camarophyllus russocoriaceus</i>	<i>Ramaria sp.</i>	
<i>Cantherellus cibarius</i>	<i>Rhizopogon sp.</i>	
<i>Chroogomphus rutilus</i>	<i>Russula alutacea</i>	
<i>Clavariadelphus pistillaris</i>	<i>Russula cremoricolor</i>	
<i>Clavariadelphus truncatus</i>	<i>Russula cyanoxantha</i>	
<i>Clitocybe nebularis</i>	<i>Russula densifolia</i>	
<i>Cortinarius traganus</i>	<i>Russula murillii</i>	
<i>Cortinarius vanduzerinus</i>	<i>Russula paxilloides</i>	
<i>Cratrellus cornucopioides</i>	<i>Russula rosacea</i>	<i>Tricholoma aurantium</i>
<i>Gomphus clavatus</i>	<i>Russula sanguinea</i>	<i>Tricholoma flavovirens</i>
<i>Gomphus floccosus</i>	<i>Russula xerampelina</i>	<i>Tricholoma magnivelare</i>
<i>Helvella lacunosa</i>	<i>Russula maxima</i>	<i>Tricholoma saponaceum</i>
<i>Hygrocybe conica</i>	<i>Suillus acerbus</i>	<i>Tricholomopsis rutilans</i>
<i>Hygrocybe mineata</i>	<i>Suillus pungens</i>	<i>Tylopilus pseudoscabae</i>
<i>Hygrophorus chrysodon</i>		
<i>Hygrophorus pudorinus</i>		
<i>Laccaria amethysteo-occidentalis</i>		

- David Campbell

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## Calendar

**Sunday, January 31: 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. Contact Henry Shaw (925.943.3237, shaw4@llnl.gov) for details.

**Saturday, February 6: Joaquin Miller Park** (Oakland Hills) beginners' walk. Meet at 10:00am at the Sequoia Arena. Call Norm Andresen for details (510.278.8998).

**Thursday, February 11: 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 Bob Gorman (650.340.8986, mycoforager@att.net) for details.

**Sunday, February 14: Salt Point Foray.** Valentine's Day foray at Salt Point State Park. Meet at 10:00am at the Woodside Campground parking lot. No need to register; just show up. If you have questions, contact Henry Shaw Shaw (925.943.3237, shaw4@llnl.gov).

**Tuesday, February 16: MSSF General Meeting** at the Randall Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and Books Sales; Meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. This month's speaker will be Dr. Elio Schaechter. See inside for more details.

**Saturday, February 20: Joaquin Miller Park** (Oakland Hills) beginners' walk. Meet at 10:00am at the Sequoia Arena. Call Norm Andresen for details (510.278.8998).

**Sunday, February 21: Mushroom Cultivation Class in Santa Cruz.** Don Simoni of Mushroom Adventures will hold a beginner's class on cultivating mushrooms. Cost \$35. Call Don at 415.586.4082 for details.

**Sunday, February 21: Mushroom Madness in Marin.** See inside this newsletter for details.

**Friday – Sunday, February 26-28: Los Angeles Mycological Society Mushroom Weekend in the Santa Ana Mountains.** Contact Steven Pencall (spencall@genesisnetwork.net) for more information.

**Sunday, February 28: 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. Contact Henry Shaw (925.943.3237, shaw4@llnl.gov) for details.

**Saturday – Sunday, March 6 - 7: Paul Stamets "Gourmet and Medicinal Mushroom Cultivation Seminar".** To be held in Santa Cruz

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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.mssf.org>**