FUNGIFAMA

SOUTHERN VANCOUVER ISLAND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

ARTWORK INSPIRED BY NATURE

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 3 AUGUST 2014

IN THIS ISSUE:

This delightful photograph is the work of **Buffy Baumbrough.** A former graduate student of Shannon Berch, Buffy did her PhD on communities of springtails in the soil under different conifer trees. Now living in the Okanagan Valley, she has combined her love of nature, including small things like springtails and mushrooms, with her photographic skills to create wonderful, manipulated, macro imagery. For another example of her artistry, see the next page.

Photo by Buffy Boumbrough

FUNGIFAMA DEADLINE

Please submit your stories, announcements, and photos by **October 15th** for the next edition of the newsletter.

jillstanjs@hotmail.com

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Euan Thomson

Ryan Totten

Ritton Jacob-Schram

Catherine Keogan

Katie Moss

Tom and Donna Leong

David Gustavson

Michelle Maillet & Kevin Batycki

Brent Heska

IN MEMORIAM

Bill Chalmers

May 27, 1943 - May 2, 2014.

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of William Thomas (Bill) Chalmers and yet it is a joy to celebrate the wonderful life of an extraordinary man who will be dearly missed. We admire the courage with which he faced his battle with cancer over the past 2.5 years - he truly made the best of his life during this time. Bill always enjoyed hiking, nature, his dogs, exotic plants, his garden, the sweet peas and of course his dear friends, his sisters and their families.

Bill grew up in Point Grey, Vancouver. As a teen he received a scholarship with the air cadets to get his pilots license and won numerous awards at school. Graduating from UBC with a BSc and going on to share his passions, Bill moved out to the Fraser Valley in the 1980s and started his business: Western Biologicals. He was admired and respected in the fields of biochemistry and mushroom propagation and education and was a member of the Vancouver Mycological Society. Bill enjoyed travel and adventure: he drove to Central America in the old family car in the 1960's and traveled again throughout his life to the USA, Vietnam, Taiwan, South America, Peru and China. His most recent trip was to Phoenix, Arizona to explore the botanical diversity of the desert.

Gerald Loiselle

Aug. 26, 1949 - July 7, 2014

We lost a member and friend in Gerald Loiselle. He passed away when hit while driving his motorcycle.

Gerald was a long time SVIMS member, a former Vice President and, along with his wife Marlee, had contributed to SVIMS in many ways over the years.

Our first meeting was at Blueberry Flats while mushroom picking. Gerald and Marlee had a bag of assorted mushrooms including some pines. They told me about SVIMS and suggested I check it out. Thanks to them I have been a member ever since.

Have you ever known someone that is just likeable in every way? A person who is cheerful, kind, calm, honest, enthusiastic and just about everything else good that you can think? That was Gerald. He was a rare individual who enriched the lives of everybody who knew him. If there was ever someone that we should be more like, it would be Gerald. I am very grateful to have known him, and a better person for it.

Heart and thoughts are with Marlee and family now.

Kevin Trim

SVIMS meeting—Sept. 4, 2014

Pacific Forestry Building, 7pm

The Basics of Mushroom Identification

Shannon Berch

SVIMS meeting—Oct. 2, 2014

Pacific Forestry Building, 7pm

Native Trees and their Associated Mushrooms

Andy MacKinnon

SVIMS meeting—Nov. 6, 2014

Pacific Forestry Building, 7pm

Topic TBA

Britt Bunyard

WILD MUSHROOMS:
AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE FOR ADULTS

Swan Lake and SVIMS are organizing the beginner's Wild Mushrooms courses again this fall -- six sessions, before and after our fall mushroom show at Swan Lake. It's a good way to become familiar with the wild fungal companions of our ecological journey. Talks at the monthly SVIMS meetings usually focus on more detailed aspects of our native mushrooms -- the Swan Lake series of lectures and demonstrations provides the background beginners need in order to become full participants in the SVIMS fall and winter programs. Dozens of our SVIMS members have taken previous offerings of this course.

Wed. Oct 15, 7-9 pm

Session 1: Intro to Mushrooms

Instructor: *Shannon Berch*.

PowerPoint lecture. Students should bring mushrooms to class for identification, discussion.

Wed. Oct 22, 7-9 pm	**Session 2: Mushroom Field Taxonomy 1** Instructor: *Juliet Pendray*. Students should bring mushrooms to the class. Juliet will discuss morphological clues for mushroom identification.
Wed. Oct 29, 7-9 pm	**Session 3: Identifying Mushrooms with Keys and Books** Instructor: *Ian Gibson*. Illustrated talk, Mushroom MatchMaker demonstration, keying practice. Free MatchMaker CD.
Sat. Nov 1, 2-4 pm	**Session 4: Mushroom Field Taxonomy 2** Instructor: *Kem Luther*. Place TBA. Students work on field identification skills, collect mushrooms for upcoming mushroom show
Sun. Nov 2, 10-4 pm	**SVIMS annual Swan Lake Mushroom Show** Supplementary event to beginner program. Admission by donation.
Wed. Nov 5, 7-9 pm	**Session 5: Cooking with Wild Mushrooms** Instructor: *Bill Jones*. Lecture/demonstration/tasting.
Wed. Nov 12, 7-9 pm	**Session 6: Mushroom Cultivation** Instructor: *Scott Henderson*. Lecture/demonstration/hands-on practice.

The cost of the program will be $20/class for Swan Lake and SVIMS members ($25 without membership). There is a 10% discount if you register for all 6 classes. Call Swan Lake at 250-479-0211 to register. Sessions at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary (except Session 4).

It's not too late! Win a wonderful prize for your best Stinkhorn photograph.

Accompany it with a short observation including where and when found, and it could bring you fame and fortune as well as publication in Fungifama. Deadline is October 31st 2014 and the winner will be announced at the November 6th SVIMS meeting. All entries to jillstanjs@hotmail.com Open to SVIMS members only.

STINKHORN
PHOTOS AND STORY BY JEAN JOHNSON

Aseroe rubra, also known as the anemone stinkhorn or the starfish fungus. From the Latin for "red" and Greek for "disgusting juice".

I found this fungus, mid-January 2014, in Wilderness National Park, South Africa. This area is part of the Cape Floral Kingdom (a World Heritage Site) and is recognized as one of the most biologically diverse areas on earth. The habitat is lush forests and imposing mountains and protects the fynbos (natural shrubland or heathland vegetation) which is characterized by four major plant types: restioids, ericoids, proteoids, and geophytes.

Wilderness National Park is always boasting that something is in bloom and this is where I discovered the beautiful flower-like stinkhorn. This *Aseroe rubra* was the only fungus I observed on a birding trip and I was able to amuse the other birders with tales of Victorian prudery regarding stinkhorns. They were NOT amused when I made them smell the fetid feces odor of the mushroom.

SVIMS CHINESE DINNER
MARCH 22, 2014
GOLDEN CITY RESTAURANT

By Jean Johnson

At the fourth Annual Chinese Dinner, about 30 salivating SVIMS members gathered at the Golden City Restaurant to consume a 10 course mushroom-themed dinner. Once again we had Adolf Ceska to thank for making the arrangements with Vicky Low, the owner.

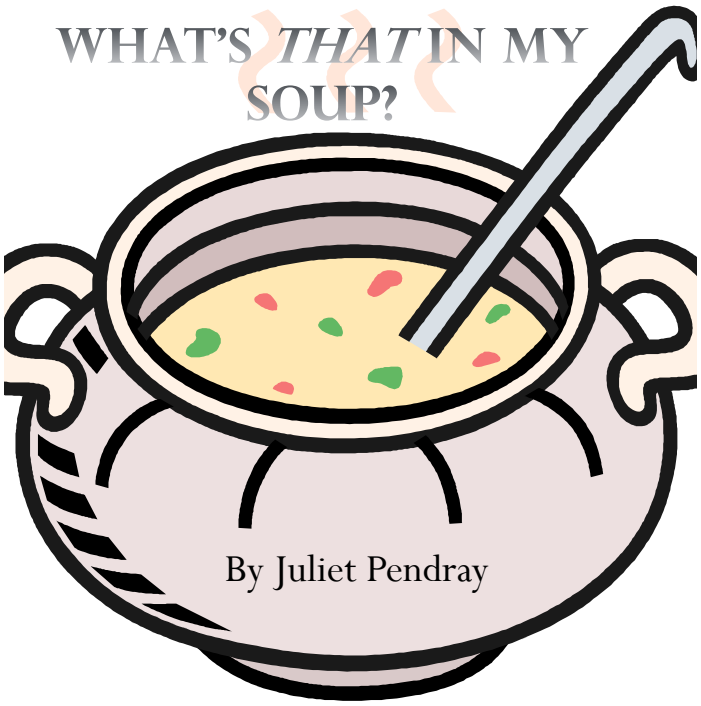
This year, Vicky travelled to China to bring back a special health-inducing fungus which appeared in the first dish - Mushrooms with free-run Chicken Soup.

This was not your standard quick wok Chinese dinner. Each dish was prepared with a view to increasing health, longevity, and balance - and incredibly delicious at that. The ingredients were of the best quality and freshness.

Please visit the SVIMS website (www.svims.ca) to view photos from the dinner. But be warned - you'll get incredibly hungry if you do!

Happy Chinese New Year to all you fire element Horses.

WHAT'S *THAT* IN MY SOUP?



By Juliet Pendray

I was surprised and elated to discover that the soup course at the Chinese dinner contained two fungi species which I had not eaten before, nor had I previously encountered these in restaurants serving Chinese cuisine. I was also happy to discover that I enjoyed the taste. Both species are sold in stores in Chinatown in Vancouver and Victoria.

The first, ***Agrocybe cylindracea***, is also called *Agrocybe aegerita*, the Tea Tree mushroom, 茶树菇, Chá shù gū (Mandarin), Cya Syu Gu (Cantonese), Pioppino (Italian) and the Poplar mushroom. This brown-spored fungus is known to be a decayer of hardwoods, especially poplar, but also maple, elm, elder, and in Asia it associates with *Camellia oleifera,* the evergreen tea flower oil tree. *A. cylindracea* is cultivated in Europe and Asia and other parts of the world, and is often considered to be the first cultivated mushroom, as it was grown in ancient Rome. There are wild populations in the Southern U.S., but it is not known to grow in our area.

Photo: Ramiro Barreiro/CC-BY-SA-3.0

Photo: James Holkko

Its use as an anti-inflammatory and for treating kidney deficiencies and bed-wetting, are the medicinal qualities that appear to have the strongest backing and the most documentation. While there are many other healthful qualities attributed to this species, particularly by its proponents and sellers, it seems clear that this mushroom is appreciated primarily for its culinary aspects. A common traditional use is in chicken-based soups.

I cannot be absolutely sure of the identification of the second mushroom, as I did not keep a sample. However, I am reasonably certain it is ***Cordyceps militaris*****,** also called Gold Flowers Winter Worm Summer Grass, 金花 冬虫夏草 or Jīn Huā Dōng Chóng Xià Cào (Mandarin) and Gam Faa Dung Cung Haa Cou (Cantonese), and Cultivated Scarlet Caterpillar Fungus or 人工蛹虫草.

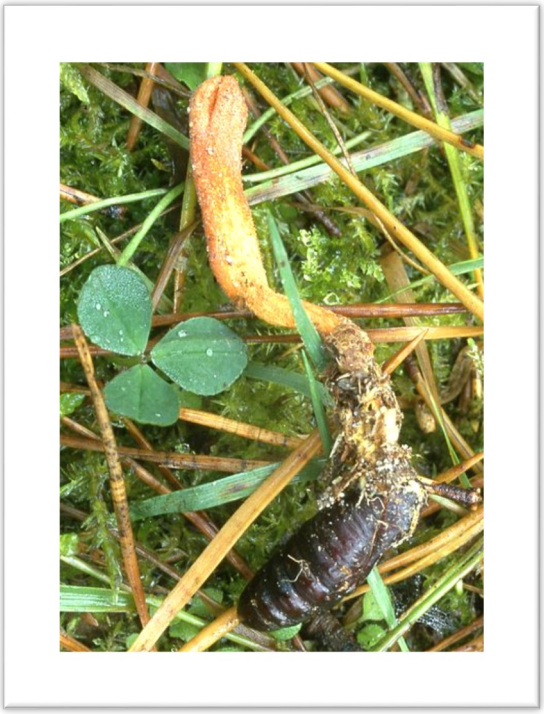


Photo: Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Myklogie/ Wikimedia Commons/CC-BY-3.0

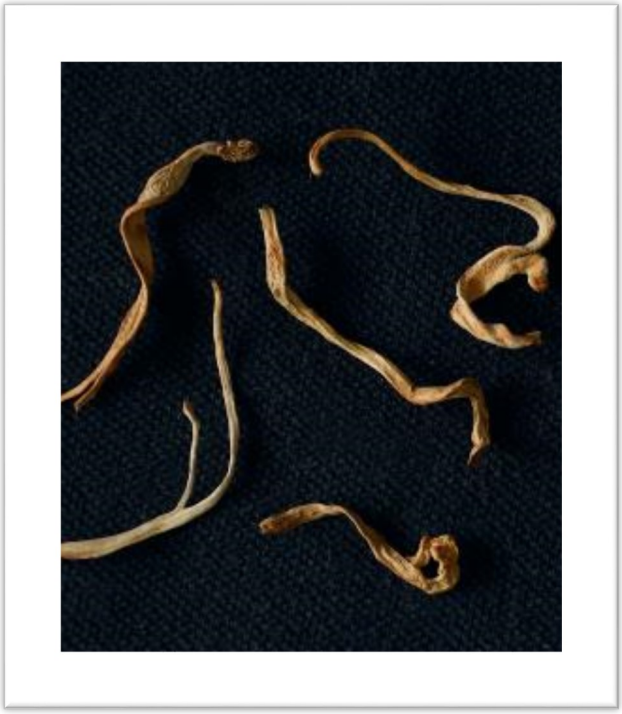


Photo: James Holkko

You may be familiar with *Cordyceps sinensis* or Dōng Chóng Xià Cào, one of the top most expensive mushrooms in the world, harvested wild in Tibet and sold globally for medicinal purposes. While *C. sinensis* is also cultivated commercially, only the anamorph or non-sexual form is grown. So, as this lacks the fruiting body attached to the caterpillar it grows from, the price it commands and the popular interest in it is relatively low.

Fruiting bodies of *Cordyceps militaris* however are cultivated from lab grown larvae and other substrates including rice mixtures. It is considerably less costly than *C. sinensis* and its popularity

appears to be growing. In the wild, this fungus has a broad global distribution including a wide range in North America, and is found growing from the larvae of moths and butterflies. The medicinal qualities attributed to *C. militaris* are very similar to those for *C. sinensis,* for example its use in treating fatigue, tumours and kidney problems, as an immune tonic, and for antioxidant and aphrodisiac qualities. Some studies ascribe to it stronger antioxidant qualities than the far better known Cordyceps. A full list of claimed qualities is too long to list here, but a great deal of material on this topic is available. It is difficult to assess the validity of individual research, but it is encouraging and intriguing reading.

Discussing medicinal qualities of fungi species is usually controversial. As with any food or drug, much of the material and research on the topic is written by or funded by companies with a vested interest in the success of that food or drug. At the same time it is difficult to test or investigate a substance, at least by the current accepted scientific methods, without considerable funding. With any substance, the need for and impossibility of having long-term testing on humans, can quickly block the possibility of general consumption.

Given this need and taken to a logical extreme (if I may put those words together), it is surprising that we are allowed to consume any food or medicine at all. Happily we are saved by the existence of long term records of use of medicinal and or nutritive substances, which have been investigated by methods pre-dating modern science, employed by various cultures around the world. Carrots, for example, have a long-term folk history of use as an acceptable food source.

The long history of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) provides the world with a wonderfully broad and diverse *materia medica*, which includes long term histories of side effects and benefits of various substances. While these records may not meet our current testing and recording standards they do provide us with the kind of documentation it is currently extremely difficult to obtain.

It is important to note when considering the reported TCM qualities of a fungus, or any substance, that TCM almost always prescribes substances in combination, with qualities balanced against each other and in accordance with specific attributes and conditions of the person being treated. Rarely are substances taken alone, and it is best to consult a TCM practitioner before taking TCM substances for medication purposes.

OFF TO THE HERBARIUM

By Adolf Ceska

How many collections of fungi can you fit into 52 shoeboxes?

Well, if you are Oluna Ceska, then the answer is three thousand…3,316 to be exact.

In May 2014, Oluna Ceska brought her fungal specimens to the UBC herbarium. It consisted of 3,316 collections packed into 52 shoe boxes. A large part of the specimens came from our long-term Observatory Hill project that is supported by the Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics and various anonymous donors, including some SVIMS members. Other collections came mostly from Vancouver Island. Our herbarium material also included specimens that were collected during our SVIMS forays and at the Metchosin and Whistler Bio-Blitzes. Oluna had already donated close to 1,000 specimens to the UBC herbarium (mostly Cortinarius, Inocybe and Russula) and her material helped to solve some taxonomical problems of these difficult groups of fungi.

Herbarium collections are important material for study of fungal taxonomy, distribution of fungi and their ecology. Especially in mycology, photographs are not considered a real proof of fungal occurrence and are practically useless for any more thorough study. Dr. Barbara Ertter, along-time curator of the UC Berkeley herbarium, always said, "Remember that without a herbarium specimen, it is a rumour!"

SVIMS can contribute to the better knowledge of macrofungi in BC by continuing to collect and preserve fungi to be used for further research.

SVIMS EXECUTIVE 2013—2014

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SLIME MOLD

Photos by Chris Shepard

Chris found this slime mold on a dead Douglas-fir on Mount Doug, the biggest being about 1cm in diameter. Oluna and Adolf Ceska were among those who helped in its identification as *Lycogala epidendrum*.

THE LAST WORD

Argh! I am choked. I was looking forward to the NAMA foray so close at hand in Washington State this October, and in the March newsletter urged SVIMS members to register for this opportunity to hear and meet so many of the Big Names in the mycological world. How I wish I had taken my own advice and registered then, because I have just learnt that by June the registration was closed because it was FULL! Who knew there were so many mycophiles who were not procrastinators like me? Hopefully some SVIMSers will be going, however, and will bring us back glowing reports of the terrific time they had, the rare and wonderful mushrooms they found, the camaraderie they enjoyed, and the new things they learned from the myco-gurus. Just wish it were me.

Cheers

Jill