

Fungifama

March, 1993 The newsletter of the South Vancouver Island Mycolgical Society

Vol. 1.2

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SOUTH. VANCOUVER ISLAND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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MEMBERSHIP & MEETINGS

If you would like to be a member of the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society, please contact Gilles Patenaude at 642-4566 or write to him at Sea Lion Way, R.R. #4, Sooke, B.C. V0S 1N0 for payment of dues (\$15.00 Canadian per year per family, \$10.00 for seniors and students). Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. SHARP on the first Thursday of every month, unless otherwise noted, at the Pacific Forestry Centre, 506 W. Burnside Rd., Victoria, B.C.

NEWSLETTER

Published monthly. Editors' addresses: Lynn Solomon, 1413 Fernwood Rd, Victora, B.C., V8V 4P6, and Richard S. Winder, 5614 R.R. #1, Sooke, B.C. V0S 1N0. This newsletter is formatted using "The Publisher" on an enhanced Commodore Amiga 1000 with an ALPS Allegro 24 pin dot matrix printer. Submissions are welcome in the following forms: Photographs (real, or digitized IFF, GIF, or ILBM files), Text in Amiga Dos, IBM DOS ascii files, Macintosh files Xmodem/Kermit ascii file transfer, E-mail (Internet RWINDER@ALPFC.FORESTRY.CA), or, of course, typed or written in old-fashioned longhand and sent by Snail-mail (regular mail). In the age of information, there are no excuses for procrastination, so tell us what you know...

COVER:

Artistic, high contrast, xerographic reproduction of a mushroom spotted growing in a redwood forest Santa Cruz, Cal. in December 1993. Photo contributed by Ronald Brox of Victoria. Ron, the experts (Scott Redhead and RSW) have mulled this over and concluded that yes, indeed, it is one of several types of Agaricus species common in the area.

WINDER'S WOODLOT

I'll keep my column short this time because:

- 1) We've got a lot of ground to cover, and
- 2) A cougar has taken up residence, near my favorite mushroom patch on Mt. Brule, leading me to wonder- are cats myophages?

This month's selection from Sasseenos: *Mycena* sp. (compost heap, *Paxina recurvulata* (old chair left out in rain), and *Ramaria* sp. (large cluster under pine tree).

Enjoy reading. If you haven't sent in your dues yet, please be advised that you will only be receiving one (1) more newsletter after this one. Several people have joined who have time conflicts with the monthly meeting but look forward to participating in the upcoming forays- so don't let our monthly meeting time stop you from participating! Let us know who you are at the forays, and you're sure to be made welcome. -RSW

MAGIC AND MAYHEM

Reishi-'Immortal Mushrooms'

Reishi mushroom or *Ganoderma lucidum*, is highly prized in China and Japan. It's native to Europe, North America and Asia, and can be found on fallen and aging trees. It's used as a health food and medicinal substance, as an all around health tonic. *G. lucidum* aids the body in resisting a wide range of physical, biological and environmental stresses. It's claimed to enhance sleep, digestion, and energy. It is prescribed by doctors to treat cancer, viral hepatitis, chronic bronchitis, and some autoimmune disorders. *G. lucidum* is also used to lower excess fatty acids and cholesterol, helps cure hardening of the arteries, angina, fast heartbeat, and shortness of breath. *G. lucidum* contain polysaccharides that besides attacking malignant cells, and free radicals, also strengthens the immune system. As if that isn't enough, it improves digestion, normalizes blood sugar and helps insomniacs get a good night's sleep. When you first begin taking *G. lucidum* mushrooms in one of its many forms, you may experience increased bowel movements, have sore bones or a skin rash as your

body excretes toxins, but these symptoms will disappear. Wild Canadian *Ganoderma lucidum* are found in the coastal mountains of British Columbia. -LDS

SWIMS HIGHLIGHTS

As you hopefully noticed, our society and newsletter have new names, selected by the membership at the last general meeting on March 3. "South Vancouver Island Mycological Society" was the winning entry for the society name submitted by Adolf Ceska, botanist at the B.C. Royal Museum. "Fungifama" was the winning entry for the newsletter name submitted by Brenda Callan (-fama roughly translates to 'gossip' in Latin). Enjoy your mushroom posters, winners!

Dr. Scott Redhead gave an excellent presentation at the meeting on mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest. SVIMS members were dazzled with beautiful slides of both known and unknown fungi from the area. The presentation was an eye-opener in more ways than one- Dr. Redhead felt that even as an expert he could not immediately recognize 20-30% of the species that are found in the PNW. Many of the species had to be tracked down in European taxonomic literature, and some were totally new. So if you've been finding mushrooms here that you can't name- don't despair. You may have a discovery on your hands!

There was a bit of discussion about lobster mushrooms after the presentation- I would like to ask that those who are familiar with these mushrooms consider summarizing available information for the newsletter, since their commerce is definitely a local phenomenon.

Dr. Redhead was kind enough to identify some mushrooms brought in to the meeting, which were: *Amanita pantherina*, *Mycena* sp., *Nolanea sericea*, and *Cryptoporus volvatus*.

-RSW

BAMBERTON FIELD TRIP SUMMARY

by Hannah Nadel

The first trip of the year on March 20th, was low on fungi but high on spirit. A group of 17 intrepid fungophiles, plus beagle and ferret, braved the chilly, dourly, weather for

the promise of a good walk in the woods, if nothing more. Leader Bruce Norris took us over brushy slopes and rotting stumps through a beautiful mixed coniferous forest with patches of alder and maple. But it was clearly too early even for early morels (*Verpa* species), the pin-headed sisters of the voluptuously sculpted true morels. (Bruce assured us that by Easter weekend there will be plenty of morels in that area!) The closest we got were two minute species of elfin saddles or *Helvella*, which seemed small, even by elf standards, but which, nevertheless, hinted at the promise of bigger things to come. The most beautiful fungi found were undoubtedly the two brilliant yellow-orange waxy taps (*Hygrophorus acuticonicus*), but a close second was a group of tall, elegant, white-stalked, brown-capped *Psathyrella* (*Psathyrella longipes*, or a near relative and *P. longistriata*) that grow from duff buried under emerald green moss. The best tasting, (but, alas, we found only two) mushrooms were the brick-red *Lactarius fragilis*, a milk cap with only meagre amounts of whitish latex. Only great restraint prevented me from polishing off the specimens. The nose prize went, without question, to the small, pale, *Clitocybe deceptiva*, which is aptly named, because its size belies the strength of the sweet anise fragrance it emits. We expected the nose prize to go to the beagle, who is being trained to hunt mushrooms, but, unfortunately, his introduction to the ferret appeared to distract him from the task at hand. Well, there's always next time. Here's what we found:

Auriscalpium vulgare
Clitocybe deceptiva
Crepidotus sp.
Dasyscyphus virgineus
Fomes pinicola
Ganoderma applanatum
Geastrum ? saccatum
Helvella sp. (maybe very young *acetabulum*)
Helvella stevensii
Hygrophorus acutoconicus
Lactarius fragilis complex
Marasmius types (a bunch, dry)
Marasmius candidus
Melanoleuca meloleuca
Mycena types (a bunch, tiny)
Naematoloma ? capnoides
Psathyrella longipes (or close relative)
Psathyrella longistriata
Pseudoplectania nigrella
Ramaria sp.

and Tremellales group (some immature pinkish blobs) and a bunch of thin-fleshed polypores, which we won't tackle until after this report goes to press. Incidentally, we will keep many of these species for future identification. Many thanks to Shannon Berch for volunteering time, equipment, good humor, and expertise with microscopic characters to help with identifications. Little does she suspect that this might turn into a habit!

ALDER ANYONE? by Dr. J. Harvey

For millennia, the Japanese and Chinese people have eaten a fungus grown on hardwood logs. Shitake mushrooms, or *Lentinus edodes*, are those funny little bits of black that you never cared to ask about in case it was something unpleasant, which is found in some Chinese dishes. *L. edodes* grow best on maple, alder and oak bark. The 1994 Territorial Seed Catalogue lists oyster and other common mushrooms as kits in the form of inoculated blocks, from which the mushrooms sprout. They also sell bags of dowel plug spawn for *L. edodes*. I ordered a couple of bags full from Dig This, in Bastion Square, Victoria. Also, you can get a comprehensive catalogue for many fungi from Western Biologicals Ltd, P.O. Box 283, Aldergrove, BC, VOX 1A0, phone and fax number is 856-3339. Send \$3.00 and they will send instructions and the catalogue. To inoculate the logs, you need clean, freshly felled logs because old logs are either too dry or have become infected with other spores. Drill holes about 6" apart and then hammer in the dowel inoculum so that it fits tightly. Set it in about a centimeter with a punch. Western Biologicals recommends painting over the holes with hot paraffin wax to seal the fungus in. Stack the logs out of the sun and keep damp. They can be covered with plastic or a tarp. The mycelium grows rather slowly: a fourteen inch diameter log may take up to

three years to colonise. The process is speeded up by keeping the log out of the cold. Hammer lots of dowels in and be patient. When the fungus runs out of wood to digest, it enters the fruiting stage. At this point, the logs can be stood on end to facilitate gathering. Logs that are reluctant to produce can sometimes be stimulated by either soaking in water for 24 hours and/or hitting them vigorously with a sledgehammer. The fruiting bodies exit through the bark and a large log may fruit intermittently for 3-5 years. How are my logs doing? I'll let you know in two or three years.

QUOTE

"There are old mycophages, and bold mycophages, but no old, bold mycophages."-anon.

SPEAKING OF BOLD..

The following timely information about living dangerously in the Scandinavian mushroom scene was submitted to the global computer network Internet by Anders Sundin at Lund University, Sweden. [WARNING: The method that Anders talks about (as well as drying) does not remove all poison- *G. esculenta* should be regarded as poisonous in any form, and is not recommended here for consumption.] Anders' nomenclature is a bit skewed, by the way. *G. esculenta* is a lorchel or false morel, not a true morel. Also, his *M. conica* is probably *Verpa conica*. Although *G. esculenta* is poisonous, filet of moose and rowanberry jam sounds like a good thing to try with a true morel. -RSW

"In Sweden we find *Morchella* [sic] *conica* (Toppmurkla) and similar morels that are nonpoisonous and good. However, the most delicious morel [sic] is the very poisonous *Gyromitra esculenta* (Stenmurkla) which is widely used in Sweden. To prepare *G. esculenta* [we] cut it to pieces (1 kg) and put it into 10 liters cold water. [We] make sure that [we] have good ventilation during the boiling since the cook has on occasion been poisoned from the vapours without even eating... [We] heat to boiling, and let it boil for 4 minutes. [We] pour out the poisonous water and

add 10 liters fresh cold water. [We] heat to boiling and boil for another five minutes. [We] pour out the water and stew the false morels. [We] serve the [false] morels with filet of moose and some rowanberry jam. The *Gyromitra* poison is the volatile and water soluble Gyromitrin ... which in the acid stomach decomposes to the ['highly poisonous] rocket fuel methylhydrazine (or monomethylhydrazine MMH)."

OLD-FASHIONED ROWANBERRY JAM FOR MORCHELLA AND MOOSE

We can recommend the consumption of *Morchella esculenta*, however! This recipe is adapted from "Jams & Jellies" by May Byron (1917).

3 lbs. mountain ash berries
2 lbs. preserving apples, peeled, cored
sugar
scented geranium (oak-leaved)

Boil apples in a quart of water for 20 minutes until pulpy, strain off water, add mountain ash berries, simmer until very pulpy. Strain off the juice, adding 1 lb. of sugar per pint of juice, boil fifteen minutes, skim, and pour into sterilized jars. A scented geranium leaf was sometimes placed into each jar.

Rowan or Mountain ash berries are used throughout Scotland and Scandinavia. In Ireland rowan is known as quicken. It is credited with having many magical and mystical properties- the Irish believed it restored youthfulness and full strength.

Now all you need are a few true morels and a moose.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

General meeting and beginner's workshop at 7:00 PM sharp at the Pacific Forestry Centre, 506 W. Burnside Rd, Victoria. Featured speakers (in no particular order) to include:

Carol Harding- "The anatomy of a mushroom"

Christen Geall- "How do I pick mushrooms?"

Victor Benek- "What do I do about mushroom poisoning?"

Shannon Berch- "A year in the life of basidiomycetes"

Henrik Jacobsen- "What is symbiosis?"

Brenda Callan- "What is a fungus?"

Joe Schoelzel- "Edible mushrooms of the Victoria area"

Lynn Solomon "What is a spore print and why is it important?"

NOTE: Don't forget to bring some goodies to munch on, and speakers- please consider submitting a short summary of your talk to the newsletter for those who miss the meeting.

9 April

Spring discomycete hike. 1:30 PM, Thetis Lake Park, near the information sign of the parking lot. Organized in conjunction with the Thetis Lake Natural History Club- learn your morels and Verpas, contact Brenda Callan for details.

10 April

Vancouver Mycological Society (VMS) Bowen Island field trip, 10:00 AM, leaving from Horseshoe Bay. For details contact Drew Simpson (879-9759) or Paul Kroeger (322-0074)

5 May

General Meeting (SVIMS) 7:00 PM sharp Pacific Forestry Centre.

6-8 May

Puget Sound Mycological Society weekend foray. Cispus Environmental learning Centre near Mt. St. Helen's. Contact Dick Sieger Seattle (206) 362-6860 for details

15 May

VMS Squamish Valley foray. Meet at 11:00 AM at Shannon Falls by the Chief. First parking lot by highway. Contact Paul Kroeger for details.

22 May

VMS Snowbank Mushroom foray at Mt. Seymour. Contact Paul Kroeger for details.

I BLEWIT

In the last newsletter I mentioned bluets. Bluets are flowers, blewits are mushrooms. So we now have the perfect name for the corrections dept. in this newsletter. Keep those cards and letters coming... -RSW

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