

Fungifama



The Newsletter of the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society
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Dues: \$15.00 per year per household, payable in January by cheque made out to SVIMS or by cash at meeting.

Meetings: First Thursday of the month (no meetings December, January, July, and August), 7:00 p.m. sharp at the Pacific Forestry Centre, 506 Burnside Rd. W., Victoria. Lots of free parking. The meeting room is near the main entrance door. Non-members welcome.

Monthly Meeting:
Thursday, April 5

Richard Winder: "Mushroom Research at Liard Hot Springs Provincial Park" and **Adolf and Oluna Ceska,** Video of Liard Hot Springs Mushroom Foray.

Thursday, May 3

Rob Countess: Spring Mushroom Madness

Thursday, June 7

Mycophagy (Mushroom Cooking)

Forays/Field Activities

Mushroom foray to the west coast

by Carmanah Forestry Society, provided by Bryce Kendrick

At the March meeting, Bryce talked about possible forays to the west coast. The following is more information on the Carmanah Forestry Society trips. Our trip would have a mushroom focus.

Tour overview

Outdoorsy types will love this wilderness experience. Victoria's Carmanah Forestry Society is planning a series of Saturday and Sunday day trips and camp-overs to a number of Big Tree destinations on Southern Vancouver Island. Most of our trails are non-strenuous and we explore beautiful emerald canyons, rivers, waterfalls, huge trees, selective logging blocks, second growth forests and recent clearcuts. There's plenty of room on the 24 passenger bus, with two experienced woodsmen as guides.

The Carmanah Forestry Society's goal is to provide access to endangered areas of rainforest on Vancouver Island, to build trails and campsites and preserve habitat and eco-tourism values. The society specializes in working to protect areas that Victorians can access in a day. While it's very well to protect millions of acres in the middle of nowhere, these places are so much more valuable, because they are in our own back yard, where we can enjoy their splendor.

Trips leave Victoria at 6:30 am and adventurers are picked up along main arteries near their homes, with stop-offs for coffee, and food before reaching the Caycuse Deer Trail, where a brief hike takes you through the last of the Douglas-fir in this rich valley. Back on the bus to the main destination, with magnificent Sitka Spruce and giant Western Red Cedars along the 4-5 hour hike (at your own pace) through Walbran, Carmanah or Nahmint. We return at about 8:30 pm. It's a 14 hour day and nearly half of

it's driving, but outside of that, people can put in as much time walking as they like. Or they can just sit down by a big tree and relax. Cost of \$50 includes membership in the society. Call 381-1141 or email carmanah@pacificcoast.net.

Bring: Personal effects, first-aid kit, whistle, bug repellent, candles, matches, flashlight, knife, raingear, food and water, good hiking footwear, spare clothes and dry footwear.

Special Group Rate: \$600 full bus of 24 seats.

Even more special SVIMS Group Rate: If we can fill the bus, we can get the trip for half price (\$25 per person).

For more information, contact Bryce Kendrick.

Prez Sez

by John Dennis

Spring is definitely here. They are calling for temperatures of 20° C for today. For those of you who did not make it to the March 1st meeting, I showed the Pacific Forestry Centre's records (see below) indicating that morels were found in Goldstream Park as early as March 1st! They were found on burnt ground. Rob Countess pointed out that the B.C. Ministry of Forests has a web site giving locations of last year's fires (www.for.gov.bc.ca/protect). Sounds like a good place to start.

Other records showed all sorts of local areas where morels have been found, even at Hartland Dump. Reluctantly, I have included the tables I presented at the meeting. I say reluctantly because not only should the members attending the meeting have the advantage, but the President should have exclusive rights to the information. Okay, maybe not. This is a friendly club that exchanges all sorts of knowledge and information. Just don't ask me to tell you where the spot is in Victoria where I picked over 350 morels 4 years ago. I left many behind to "seed" the ground for the future but have not found 1 morel at that spot since. Even though I can't tell you where this spot is, I will describe it to you. It was a recently created chip trail. Clay type soil was laid down, crushed rock containing some sea shell material was put on top and then the chips put on top of that. The morels grew from the shoulder of the raised trail. Lots of plants have taken over these sites and may have changed the microenvironment making it unsuitable for morel fruiting. Who knows? I sure don't. One of the most exciting aspects of morel hunting is their unpredictability. There are lots of new and refurbished chip trails in Victoria. Just another place to look.

Unfortunately, nobody brought any Morels to the March meeting. Who will be the first to find them this year? There should be a reward if for no other reason than making sure they tell us where. Anyway, good hunting to all. Bragging rights go only to those who show their finds at the next meeting.

Those that didn't make it to the meeting also missed an excellent presentation by Bryce Kendrick

on lichens. These composite organisms are a partnership of a fungus and an alga. Bryce's professorial skills made for an exciting and interesting talk and made the complex topic a lot easier to understand. Thanks, again Bryce. We are so lucky to have you in the club.

We are also very lucky to have Richard Winder, Adolf and Oluna Ceska in SVIMS. How would you like to have somebody pay you to go mushroom hunting in northern B.C. and the Yukon? Well, these scientists are just that fortunate and will share their findings during the next meeting. They will probably tell us exactly where they found the mushrooms because they think few of us will get to this area. I, for one, will be taking notes. Who knows when I might have the opportunity to visit Liard Hot Springs? Also, the information will be useful in planning other trips to areas with a similar environment. The more you know, the more you find, the more you eat, etc....

Bryce also brought the **SVIMS club T-shirts** to the meeting. They are fabulous, only \$15 and are on sale right now. Congratulations and thanks to both Bryce and Christine Roberts for the work and artistry displayed in the shirts. They are an excellent symbol for the club. We will have to make sure we have them in our SVIMS shows and displays.

Finally, where to find morels this spring, possibly right now? Bring them to the meeting alive! Only for positive identification, of course!

Monsanto Genetically Engineers Potato That Resists Common Fungus

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<http://www.monsantoindia.com/news/archives/november2000/281100.html>

Scientists at Monsanto Co. have genetically engineered a potato to resist a common fungal disease. In the December issue of Nature Biotechnology, the Monsanto researchers report that potatoes engineered with a protein from alfalfa can ward off a common fungus. The fungus - *Verticillium dahliae* - lurks in the soil and kills young plants, robbing farmers of yield, Stark said. American potato growers lose between \$70 million and \$140 million in profits to the fungus every year. The fungus is usually kept in check by fumigation of the soil, Stark said. Fumigation kills both the fungus and some harmful nematodes, but is not a particularly attractive option for most growers because of the cost and health hazards from the chemicals. "Soil fumigants are not the most worker-friendly chemistry," Stark said. Potato farmers in the US spend about \$75 million to control the fungus each year.

The scientists isolated a protein from alfalfa that makes the plant naturally resistant to *Verticillium*. When they tested the protein - called alfAFP, for alfalfa anti-fungal protein - in the lab, it stopped the fungus from growing. The protein also halted the growth of two other plant fungi that cause early blight

in potatoes and head scab, a wheat disease. The protein was not effective against *Phytophthora infestans*, the potato late blight fungus that caused the Irish potato famine of 1845-1851. Although the scientists aren't sure how the protein stops fungi from growing, evidence suggests that the alfalfa protein latches on to a molecule called chitin and stops the fungus from making cell walls, Stark said. Chitin is the sugary chemical that makes up the hard outer covering of insects and the shells of lobsters and crabs. The famine blight is from a different family of fungi, which do not have chitin in their cell walls, so the alfalfa protein has nothing to grab on to.

The scientists still have to demonstrate that their fungus-fighting spud is otherwise identical to the Russet Burbank potato and that it is safe for human consumption and the environment, Fry said. The fungus-resistant potatoes won't make an appearance on the dinner table anytime soon. Stark estimates that it will take another eight to 10 years to bring the spud to market.

UK Poppy-killing fungus developed

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/uk/newsid_121000/121735.stm

Scientists are developing a virulent fungus in an effort to combat the worldwide trade in heroin. The fungus kills opium poppies, the raw material for the drug. The UK Foreign Office has confirmed a report in The Sunday Times newspaper that Britain is helping to fund the biological research.

The programme is based in Uzbekistan, in central Asia, which borders the so-called "Gold Crescent" of countries that supply up to 90% of Britain's heroin. The action comes after bumper harvests have seen the UK and much of western Europe flooded with cheap heroin. The street price has halved and seizures at ports and airports have risen sharply. The Foreign Office was unable to confirm details of the report, but a spokeswoman stressed that work was "in its very early stages at the moment."

Britain would hope to unleash enough fungus to infect thousands of acres of poppies grown in the central Asia region.

John Dennis's Table of morel reports in the Victoria area.

Fungus	Date	Location	Remarks
<i>Morchella angusticeps</i>	March 1, 1968	Langford, V.I., B.C.	Goldstream Park on burned ground
	May 13, 1957	Saanich, V.I., B.C.	Cordova Bay
	May 17, 1961	Port Alberni, V.I., B.C.	Long Lake Rd.
	March 23, 1968	Shawnigan Lake, V.I., B.C.	Malahat Drive on burned ground
	March 23, 1968	Langford, V.I., B.C.	Goldstream Park on burned ground
	April 5, 1977	Saanich, V.I., B.C.	Cordova Bay
	April 12, 1987	Brentwood Bay, V.I., B.C.	Tod Inlet
	April 14, 1947	Saanich, V.I., B.C.	Blenkinsop Lake
	April 18, 1956	Saanich, V.I., B.C.	Cordova Bay
	April 23, 1963	UBC Campus, Vancouver	
	April 23, 1948	Saanich, V.I., B.C.	Blenkinsop Lake
	April 30, 1959	UBC Campus, Vancouver	Under <i>Acer circinatum</i>
	May 9, 1971	UBC	On pile of soil and bricks
	May 14, 1961	Clinton, BC	Aspen grove
	May 14, 1961	Clinton, BC	Aspen grove
	May 16, 1961	Whipsaw Ck, Hope-Princeton Hwy	Among aspens
	June 1, 1960	Kane Valley Rd, Merrit-Princeton Hwy	Along creek banks
July 2, 1967	Lightning Lake, Manning Park	In rock crevices	
<i>Morchella crassipes</i>	May 5, 1980	Brentwood Bay, V.I., B.C.	
	May 13, 1944	Duncan, V.I., B.C.	
	June 3, 1959	Victoria, V.I., B.C.	
<i>Morchella deliciosa</i>	April 22, 1947	Sooke, V.I., B.C.	Matheson Lake
<i>Morchella elata</i>	March 29, 1977	Victoria, V.I., B.C.	Fairfield area
	April 11, 1974	Saltspring Island, B. C.	Cranberry Road Arbutus
	April 19, 1984	Shawnigan Lake, V.I., B.C.	Bamberton Park
	April 21, 1970	Victoria, V.I., B.C.	
	April 22, 1970	Victoria, V.I., B.C.	
	May 3, 1970	Victoria, V.I., B.C.	
	May 5, 1982	Sooke, V.I., B.C.	East Sooke Park
	May 9, 1972	Pender Island, B.C.	Pender Island North
	May 17, 1975	Victoria, V.I., B.C.	John Dean Park
	June 4, 1985	Shawnigan Lake, V.I., B.C.	Bamberton Park
	June 4, 1985	Shawnigan Lake, V.I., B.C.	Bamberton Park
	June 11, 1988	Saanichton, V.I., B.C.	Centennial Park
	June 14, 1972	Saltspring Island, B. C.	North end
	June 17, 1975	Saanich, V.I., B.C.	Hartland Road Dump
June 19, 1974	Shawnigan Lake, V.I., B.C.	Spectacle Lk Park	
<i>Morchella esculenta</i>	April 5, 1977	Victoria, V.I., B.C.	University of Victoria
	April 12, 1987	Brentwood Bay, V.I., B.C.	
	April 21, 1969	Victoria, V.I., B.C.	
	May 15, 1989	Cobble Hill, V.I., B.C.	
	June 2, 1950	Arrowhead, B.C.	
June 10, 1979	Barriere, B.C.		