

MISSOURI MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



No rain, lots of fungi! Photos and story by Mike Snyder

I led a small but enthusiastic group of mushroom seekers on a foray for the Mid-MO chapter at Lane Spring Recreation Area on June 3rd, 2023. I thought it would be fun to inform members of the club about the variety of fungal life we discovered and documented and show you why you need to attend the next MOMS foray in your area.

Lane Spring is in southern Phelps County, just south of Rolla, MO. It's a nice spot for a picnic or camping as it lies along the banks of the Little Piney Creek. There is a beautiful spring in the park, which is where it gets its name. The place was well-populated the day of our foray, mostly by folks fishing for trout or heading to the water for a swim. We gathered at 10 AM and we ended up with a small group, less than ten of us. As we waited for all the participants to arrive, some of us were discussing the fact that our region had been severely dry for weeks. We were aware that could mean that fungi would be scarce, but we were optimistic, nonetheless.



I am now the head of the Research Committee, so a big focus of the foray was collecting specimens. We are trying to make as many collections as possible for addition to our collection at the Illinois Natural History Survey in Champaign, IL as well as for sending to Stephen Russell of the Hoosier Mushroom Club to have them DNA sequenced. Stephen has agreed to do DNA work for our club to help us get a good picture of the fungal diversity of the state and we intend to take advantage of it!



As soon as we hit the trail, we began to find fungi. After examining a tricky-to-ID polypore (where's Jay Justice when you need him?), collections of many of the usual suspects were made, including *Trametes*, *Stereum*, *Xylobolus*, and the ubiquitous *Schizophyllum commune*. A few of the group were not afraid to go off-trail in search of different species, which provided us with several unique and interesting finds. There was a tiny, fragile *Hemimycena* sp., some equally tiny *Scutellinia* sp. winking at us, some reliably spooky *Xylaria* sp. on a few rotten stumps, and two different species of *Sarcoscypha*, one stalked and one not. We quickly realized that the woods were full of mushrooms despite our fears of finding a crunchy forest devoid of fungi – what luck!

Cook's Corner

Maitake mushrooms with dried chiles

Recipe by Georgia Freeman from *Cooking South of the Clouds*

Ingredients:

7 ½ oz. maitake (hen of the woods) mushrooms
2 tbsp. vegetable oil
10 dried Thai chiles
3 small garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 ½ tsp. light soy sauce

Directions:

Pull the maitakes apart into small clusters, about 2 inches at the widest spot. (You will have about 3 cups.) In a wok, heat the oil over a high flame until very hot. Add the chiles and stir and flip until they begin to darken, about 5 seconds. Add the mushrooms and garlic and stir-fry, stirring and flipping constantly, until the mushrooms are soft and have begun to brown, about 3 minutes. (If working on a regular stove, press the mushrooms against the sides and bottom of the wok and let them sit for 20 to 30 seconds at a time to brown.) Drizzle in the soy sauce and continue to cook, stirring and flipping constantly, until the flavors have melded, 1 minute.

Buy *Cooking South of the Clouds* here: *Cooking South of the Clouds: Recipes and stories from China's Yunnan province* - Kindle edition by Freedman, Georgia. Cookbooks, Food & Wine Kindle eBooks @ Amazon.com.



As we braved the insects and the slippery air, more fun discoveries were made. A profuse fruiting of the adorably fuzzy *Panus lecomtei* with a few of its purply cousins *Panus conchatus* nearby. Some very fresh *Mycorrhaphium adustum*, barely showing their toothiness yet. A patch of extra-earlike *Auricularia angiospermarum* which we couldn't help but give a giggly jiggle.

We began to climb the hill to a beautiful overlook, and as the terrain changed so did the species of fungi we found. About halfway up the hill a very freshly-emerged *Amanita flavorubens* was discovered, with a large specimen of *Phellinus everhartii* right next door on a standing White Oak tree. Just a few more steps up the hill and a couple eagle-eyed participants found a tiny little *Cantharellus* sec. *Sublaeves* and an even tinier *Cantharellus* sec. *Cinnabarini*! It was very early to find either species and we were all impressed.



After a much-needed respite at the overlook, we headed back down the rocky hillside to finish the loop at the river bottom. Before we made it down, another surprising mushroom was found, a *Russula*! This was later identified as *Russula compacta* and yes, it was fishy smelling. Upon our descent, the river bottom was found to be loaded with huge, dead Elm and Ash trees, which is always a boon for finding interesting fungi. There were multiple flushes of the regal *Artomyces pyxidatus*, a late-blooming *Cerioporus squamosus* that was harvested, some patches of beautiful, smoky-colored *Kretzschmaria deusta*, massive fruitings of *Trametes aesculi*, and lots of what was probably the fungus we encountered the most on the foray, the wavy and jiggly *Ductifera pululahuana* (which incidentally is also one of the most fun binomials to say out loud).



Feeling quite proud of ourselves for being almost at the end of the "trail" and for having found way more fungal diversity than expected, we trudged on, sweaty and worn out. The fun wasn't over yet though, as we found the two most amazing discoveries at the very end of the hike! First was an exuberantly guttering *Abortiporus biennis*, completely covered in droplets of what looked like the inside of a jelly donut. It was quite photogenic. The final and coolest find of the day was an inconspicuous, medium-sized brown mushroom. When plucked from the ground, we examined the underside and were blown away by the spectacle of a super-fresh *Lacrymaria lacrymabunda*. This mushroom has the spot-on common name *Weeping Widow*. Not only was the stipe and cap-edge covered in black droplets of liquid, but every edge of every gill was covered in glistening droplets of liquid. It was jeweled!

We emerged from the sweaty jungle and laid out our finds on a picnic table. We ended up with 40 fungi on our species list (okay, actually 39 and a slime mold)! Definitely better than expected during mid-Spring during such dry conditions! Thirty-six species were photographed during this foray and added to iNaturalist and 25 or so of them were dehydrated, vouchered, and are set to be added to the INHS as well as sent to Indiana for DNA sequencing. Thanks to all my fellow forayers for making it a successful day in the woods! This is a link to the iNaturalist project I made for the day where you can see more photos of and other information about our finds:

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?project_id=moms-foray-lane-spring-recreation-area&place_id=any&verifiable=any

If you are interested in joining the Research Committee and becoming a collector for MOMS, don't hesitate to contact me at mycomike79@gmail.com! As a club, we want to work hard this year to help document our state's species of fungi and we need your help!

**It's true what they say about elms...
Photos and story by Israel Tockman**

Almost every morel I found this spring was growing beneath a dead or dying elm.

Since I moved back to Missouri almost four years ago, I've had middling luck finding morels. Until this year, I basically found them by accident. My first spring, I found a couple at the mossy base of an oak, one or two in a pawpaw grove. My cat found a few in the alley. Year two I stumbled upon a handful while working in the woods. Last year I didn't even try searching.

This spring I spent a couple full weekend days and a few evenings after work sauntering about in local wild spots. I was determined to gear down and see if I could learn the habits of the succulent morel. And since April is far from cruel in this bio-region (no chiggers, no ticks, reasonable temps, bright with fresh leaves and breaking buds), I figured I'd enjoy myself even if I didn't find any mushrooms.

Though I saw a lot of spring ephemerals and pollinators on my first couple walks, I saw very little in the way of fungal diversity. Certainly no morels. I searched the bottomlands, the sycamore banks, the floodly riparian zones. I shuffled through last year's leaves beneath cathedral white, red and black oaks. Walked the rocky uplands and brushy road beds. No luck. But it was ok. I was taking my time, right? I was determined not to succumb to the greedies, the desperate craving to see a glowy honeycomb cap hovering above the forest detritus. (Easier said than done!)

On a brisk and cloudy afternoon, after walking past a disheartening swath of cut morel stumps on a wet creek bank, I fought back a gloomy mood. And I just stopped moving.



You hear all the stories. The ones about morel hunters hitting the wall after hours and days of fruitless searching. They sigh and plop down on the ground with their heads in their hands. "This is dumb," they think. "What's the point?" After a few minutes, they rouse themselves from their piteous state and look up. And there they are! Morels in battalions in all directions!

I stopped. I did not look up to find a sea of mushrooms, but I wandered a few yards to the base of a hill. I looked up, and there in the embrace of a very large and very dead elm a few morels were scattered. As I was harvesting a couple, I noticed another elm with peeling bark about 15 feet away. I could see more mushrooms poking out near the trunk.

I spent the rest of the day, and all of my subsequent searches, looking not down at the forest floor, but looking up at the stems of trees and the forest canopy.

Ergonomic mushroom hunting: easy on the neck! I occasionally found a morel beneath a healthy-looking elm tree, but I found at least one morel in the sprawl of 40% of the struggling or dead elms I encountered.

I'm sure this is old news to the seasoned Missouri morel hunter. But, it was surprising to me how consistent and predictable the elm/morel dynamic is. There are a number of elm species in the state; some native, some exotic. Many of them are having a hard time due to Dutch Elm Disease and other fungal pathogens. Once I started looking, I noticed a lot of dead or compromised elms out there.

If you're new to hunting morels in the Midwest, learn the elm. They can be challenging to ID at the species level because some of the species have almost identical characteristics, but it becomes easy to spot trees in the genus once you get the knack. When I'm searching for fungi next spring, I'll be looking up!



Scheduled forays:

Saturday, August 5, 2023 @ 10:00 AM with Dennis McMillan and Steven Franz

Sponsoring Chapter: St. Louis
Rockwoods Reservation

Saturday, August 12, 2023 @ 8:30 AM with Ken Gilberg and Israel Tockman

Sponsoring Chapter: St. Louis
Kennedy Forest, Forest Park

Saturday, August 19, 2023 @ 10:00 AM with Mike Snyder

Sponsoring Chapter: MidMO
Long Ridge Conservation Area

Sunday, August 27, 2023 @ 2 PM with Brittany Martinez and Nathan Athans

Sponsoring Chapter: Kansas City
James A Reed Memorial Wildlife Area

Sunday, September 10, 2023 @ 9 AM with Crystal Wake

Sponsoring Chapter: Springfield
Little Sac Woods Conservation Area

Sunday, September 10, 2023 @ 10 AM with Mike Snyder

Sponsoring Chapter: St. Louis
Wildcare Park

Saturday, September 16, 2023 @ 10 AM with Emily Heymeyer

Sponsoring Chapter: St. Louis
Cuivre River State Park

Friday, September 22, 2023 @ 1 PM through Sunday, September 24, 2023

@ 1 PM with Rob Wunder and others
Sponsoring Chapter: Private
Dockley Ranch

Saturday, September 23 @ 10 AM with Malissa Briggler

Sponsoring Chapter: MidMO
New Bloomfield, Private Farm

Sunday, September 24 @ 10 AM with Rachel Lawson

Sponsoring Chapter: St. Louis
Don Robinson State Park

Sunday, October 1 @ 10 AM with Joey Hafley

Sponsoring Chapter: SEMO
Hickory Canyons Natural Area

Thursday, October 5 @ 3 PM through Sunday, October 8 @ 3 PM with Dawn Lover

Sponsoring Chapter: SEMO
Brad's Fall Foray

Saturday, October 14 @ 10 AM with Crystal Wake

Sponsoring Event: Springfield
Roaring River State Park

Sunday, October 15 @ 10 AM with Steve Booker

Sponsoring Chapter: St. Louis
Eldon Hazlet State Park

Sunday, October 15 @ 2 PM with Brittany Martinez and Nathan Athans

Sponsoring Chapter: Kansas City
Landahl Park

Friday, October 27 @ 5 PM through Sunday, October 29 @ 5 PM with Shannon Stevens

Sponsoring Chapter: St. Louis
Hawn State Park

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To see the full calendar of events:

<https://momyc.org/calendar.cshtml>

MOMS MISSION STATEMENT

Foster and expand the need, understanding and appreciation of mycology.
Provide education and training for the proper collection, identification and documentation of fungi.
Provide a means for sharing ideas, experiences, knowledge and common interests regarding fungi.
Support efforts to preserve natural environments in the State of Missouri.

Thank you for supporting the Missouri Mycological Society!

