Fondness for Fungi Found Us Foraging by Jack's Fork This Fall

The second MMS Fall Campout happened Columbus Day weekend, October 12 and 13. Marty and Jack Toll graciously hosted the group at their mountain home in Mountain View, Missouri. Veteran club members and mushroomers green behind the gills (still in the mycelial stage) enjoyed themselves immensely.

The Toll's new outdoor living room/kitchen offered a warm fire in the evening around which we'd gather to exchange stories and experiences. We told yarns about *Grifola* long rotted but not forgotten, of falling to sleep by counting morels instead of sheep, and of recipes and all the delicious things we could make if we found edibles.

Did we need edibles? "From the time we arrived on Friday until we left Sunday it was like a non-stop Thanksgiving dinner," John Regnier said. Carol and Larry Hazelip, organizers of the campout, proved the truth in Mae West's saying: "too much of good thing can be wonderful."

Just to say that we ate well would not describe the gourmet treats created by the participants. We all feasted on the juicy smoked turkey and extraordinary coleslaw that Jack made, the breakfast of English muffins with duxelles of meadow mushrooms and mornay sauce (a delicious collaboration by Carol and Ken) and the grilled smorgasbord laid out by Larry Hazelip. For desserts we had the best—oatmeal and Swedish butter cookies by Carol, Erika's new famous apfel kuchen and Marty Toll's hand-picked-by-her-own-hands blackberry cobbler, a la mode if you please!

Perhaps no one enjoyed the food as much as the man we most enjoyed coming, Dr. Walter Sundberg. Dr. Sundberg brought a great measure of joy as well as knowledge to the event. As per his directive, we forayed the woods for every manner of fungus.

After several romps through the gorgeous country, resplendent in fall foliage, the collection table had a good variety of species. A good percentage of the mushrooms were identified by Dr. Sundberg and Jay Justice. Jay was a treat. Co-founder of the Arkansas Mycological Society and editor of NAMA's newsletter, he sure knows his mushrooms.

Had we known that Felicia Bart was going to be 82 that week, we may not have made her climb up and down those steep hills so much—but how could we know?

Jim Low of the Missouri Conservation Department, who attended last year's Winter Meeting, was present for this "premier event." His photos and story will appear in the Missouri Conservationist (within 1-2 years). We really appreciate the in-depth coverage and genuine interest shown by Jim.

Camping out was fun for all. The range of tent styles was amusing. While Rose and Barb curled up in a doghouse-size tent and John had his state-of-the-art camp-out-on-the-moon geodesic-inspired one-man tent, Leland and son Kurt set up a canvas version of the Taj Mahal, complete with heating and air condition-
"Most people think that when wine goes bad it turns to vinegar," Simone said. "Not so—it just goes bad. You need this mother, this starter, for the wine to become vinegar."

Checking the specials at the restaurant on the night the news broke, waiters promised salads with blobs of vinegar (on the side if you prefer), quail stuffed with blob and shiitakelob.

**Lactarius piperatus—not so hot?**

Has anyone out there eaten the peppery milky? In Mushrooms by Otto Usak, Spring Books, London (pub. date not avail.) Lactarius piperatus had the following comments.

"Use: Edible mushroom of peculiar taste. Fried, especially with bacon, it affords a tasty dish, much favored by the inhabitants of Eastern Europe. In the Carpathians and in Romania it is here and there very much gathered and eaten. The mushroom, cut into large pieces (so that the milk may not escape), is fried in butter, lard or bacon, with the addition of onion, pepper and salt. The acrid taste disappears in frying and there remains only the peculiar spicy taste. Boiled it is not good—like all Lactarius."

Wow. This is a very common mushroom in our summer woods. In One Thousand American Fungi, Charles McIlvaine, considered the Father of American Mycology, wrote about an overwhelming quantity of them he found which first sparked his interest in "toadstools."

What is the truth?

Lincoff: "This edible is too acrid to be tasty without being first parboiled."

Arora: "Edibility—not recommended. In Russia and Scandinavia it is eaten, along with other acrid milk caps, after picking or boiling. However, it is rather difficult to digest and may even be poisonous if not properly prepared."

Jack Czarnecki in Joe's Book of Mushroom Cookery of L. piperatus: "...hotter than Tabasco sauce." He describes in a general description for preparing Lactarius that delicious "is one of the finest wild mushrooms in the forest... often prepared by being wrapped in bacon and placed in a hot oven for five minutes. The crunchiness of the mushroom and the smokiness of the bacon combine for a burst of sensory joy."

McIlvaine: "It has been eaten for many years in most countries, yet a few writers continue to warn against it. It is the representative fungus of its class—meaty, coarse, fair flavor. It is edible and good food when one is hungry and can not get better. It is best used as an absorbant of gravies."

**Toadstools Bad--Mushrooms Good?**

I got a call this summer from a woman who knew that I know a bit about mushrooms. She and her husband are country folk who gather morels and "pink-bottoms." They enjoy mushroooms and got the bug to try new ones. She had found mushroom in the yard and looked them up in a Reader's Digest Guide to North American Wildlife or some such compendium. Incredibly she identified it correctly as Chlorophyllum molybdites, the "Green-spored mushroom."

She was ready to put the poisonous mushrooms in the pan and eat them, but she thought she'd double check and call me. I assumed that it was edible because the book called it a "mushroom" and not a "toadstool." Close call.

Have fungi but be careful!
Seasonal Foray Wrapup

We had more forays and fun than ever this year thanks to efforts by coordinator Don Dill, foray leaders and energetic new members. We went to new places and met at new times.

Drought from summer to fall brought out more mushroomers than mushrooms, but everyone loved getting out and finding what little they found. When in late fall we finally got a torrential three-day rain, a telephone tree got us out just in time to a bountiful foray to Rockwoods. Shortly thereafter the bitter cold and snow came. Soaked blewits froze solid. So until next spring, it will be up to you to forage for oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) and the velvet foot (*Flammulina velutipes*).

Forest 44, August 11

Don Dill's foray to this new area hinted to what it might be in not so hot and dry times. No species list.

Engelmann Woods, September 7

Lunch at Head's Store in St. Albans is always a treat, even if there were no mushrooms but for a few *Agaricus campestris*.

Meramec State Park, October 5

Jim Winn led us through his "backyard", Meramec State Park. Facilities there were great, as was Jim's planning. Park visitors were encouraged to join in the hunt and given a handout on the basics that Jim had prepared. Some twenty species were identified--some of them: *Clitocybe odorata*, *C. suaveolens*, *Collybia dryophila*, *Coprinus comatus*, *Laccaria ochropurpurea*, *L. lacatta*, *Lactarius piperatus*, *Lepista nuda*, *Leptota cortinarius*, *Lycoperdon pyriforme*.

Emmenegger Park, September 23

An early evening exploration led by Barb O'Brien in a suburban park and cemetery was delightful. Encore! Of this foray, I must tell this: A lovely widow, a new member, visited with her husband in the cemetery. She told me that "he had offered to buy me all the mushrooms in the store I ever wanted as long as I wouldn't eat the wild ones. Funny, here I am hunting them right over him." Perhaps, for her, as for me, mushrooms are life affirming.

Rockwoods Foray

A foray was held on October 27th at Rockwoods Reservation in St. Louis County. Don Dill was foray leader. This turned out to be one of the most productive forays of the season. A period of rain covering three days brought the little buggers out in abundance (and some big ones, too.) It also brought out plenty of members, in excess of twenty hunters.

Everyone seemed excited and eager after a long, dry summer. There were so many mushrooms that we had neither the time or the expertise to identify them all, however the following list should indicate the productivity of the hunt: *Amanita cokeri*, *A. citrina*, *Armillariella mellea*, *Auricularia auricula*, *Bisporella cirrina*, *Clitocybe nuda*, *Flammulina velutipes*, *Fomes tomentarius*, *Grifola frondosa*, *Hericium erinaceus*, *Hygrophorus conicus*, *Ischnoderma resinosum*, *Lenziella betulinia*, *Lycoperdon pyriforme*, *L. pulcherrimum*, *Myella haematopis*, *Panaeolus campestrans*, *Schizophyllum commune*, *Tremella mesenterica*, *Trichaptum biformis*.

Numerous examples of *Cortinarius*, *Lactarius*, *Hygrophorus*, *Fomes*, *Polyopus*, *Ramaria* and *Xyalaria* were tentatively identified but we failed to clearly identify them as to species.

Nothing is quite so humbling to us pseudo-experts as a really prolific foray.

-Don Dill

Gillespie Lake Foray, September 21

It was a beautiful morning for a mushroom foray at Gillespie Lakes in Macoupin County, Il. It was perhaps a little dry for finding lots of fresh specimens.

In attendance were myself, Leland Von Behren, Mary Brent, Peter Huskey, Jim & Collete Winn, Phyllis Roberson, Arlene Lilie, Vicki Duncan, Rose Denness, and last but certainly not least, Professor of microbiology from Sangamon State University, Springfield, Il., Dr. James Veselenak.

We found perhaps 17 different species of fungi and there were in excess of 50 sporocarps laid on the table for identification.

Here's where we were a little short, but we did identify a few to species, a few to genera, and just sort of burped off the others. But that was okay because we were busy getting to know each other, which really is one of the best part of forays.

Arlene and Co. laid out a wonderful meal for the foragers--I identified a huge pile of chicken bones in front of Leland though my vision was distorted through the bottom of my wine glass.

Another attraction was Arlene's photo album of mushrooms from her trip to Colorado. It gave me itchy feet.

Our special guest, Jim Veselenak was the mycological attraction. He had studied under Alexander Smith and had accompanied him on forays. He seemed to actually draw mushrooms out from their subterranean hiding places in a woods that seemed to have little to offer. We hope he will attend more forays.


-Kris Klocke

Gillespie Lake Foray, November 2

Boy was it cold that Saturday! Everything we collected was frozen.

An *Auricularia auricula* looked like an abstract sculpture of brown glass.

Frozen *Armillariella mellea* was found in profusion. Specimens varied greatly--from huge, heavy solid ones in tight clusters to meager, low lying specimens--both of which became quite mushy when thawed out.

Also collected at the foray: *Laetiporus sulphureus*, *Lycoperdon pyriforme*, *Auricularia mellea*, *Tremella mesenterica*, *Grifola frondosa*, *Phyliitopsis nidulans*, *Favouls alveolaris*, *Coprinus atramentarius*, *C. disseminatus*, *Flammulina velutipes*, some old *Clitocybe odorata* and *Pleurotus ostreatus*.

-Kris Klocke
Can You Identify These Mushrooms?

Kris Klocke drew these for a survey he took at his job. Identify all 9 by common name and you could get a trip to Europe if you pay for it. Or better yet, get someone else to pay!

A.  
B.  
C.  
D.  
E.  
F.  
G.  
H.  
I.  

Upcoming Events

Morel Madness

Our actively contributing new members Jim Winn and John Regnier are planning what may turn out to be yet another annual event for the Missouri Mycological Society. They are calling it Morel Madness and will probably be a campout at Meramec State Park in mid-April. The production will be less grand than the Fall Campout—folks will take care of their own meals.

Winter Meeting

Our annual potluck fungal extravaganza is in the planning stage and will be in January or February. It will be held in the St. Louis area.

St. Louis Flower Show

The Junior League of St. Louis has asked us to participate in their annual Flower Show, held in Queeny Park, April 23-26, 1992. We can set up an information and education booth.

Show hours are from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday to Saturday, until 6:00 p.m. If you can to help assemble or person the booth call Ken. If don't hear from a dozen people quickly, we may not do this. They need a response by the end of November. I am sure it could be a lot of fun for anyone who participates.

Gulf States Mycological Society Winter 1991 Foray

Held December 6-8 at the Gulf Park Campus of the University of Southern Mississippi in Long Beach Mississippi. Shrimp boils and fungi! For more information contact Toby Feibelman, 7030 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, (504) 861-1191. Registration deadline is December 2.

Eating the Resinous Polypore

At the Fall Campout, Leland’s son (I think) found a large specimen of Ischnoderma resinosum on an old log. The water could be squeezed out of it like a sponge so it was young and fresh. On the dubious principle that any polypore is edible if it is soft enough to chew, I checked some books. Two called it “not edible” but Arora says “said to be edible when young and watery, but soon tough and corky.” (p. 573)

We took a lot home. Erika got out her electric meat grinder and made patties with hamburger, egg, bread, parsley, onions, garlic, spices and a bit of bacon. In two she cautiously substituted mushroom for meat and fried them in a separate pan.

After trying them, we agreed that the patties with polypore had a bit less flavor than those with hamburger although the difference was minor. Arora’s right: It is edible, but not worth the trouble. Ken inquired if a red or white wine is appropriate with a vegetable meat substitute. Since this mushroom is a meat “extender”, the cheapest will do.

Erika says that it could be used, with hamburger, in a meat loaf or, with bread and spices, in stuffing for poultry. In either case, it will absorb a lot of drippings.

—Phil Root

Wanted—volunteers throughout Missouri who would be interested in helping in a project to amass information on Missouri fungi. Please contact Gregg Bogosian or Don Dill

Culinary Corner

Requests were made for the recipe for the soup from Friday's dinner at the Fall Campout. Don Dill also made the soup for the Winter Meeting last year, to everyone's delight. The recipe is from Jane Grigson's The Mushroom Feast, a marvelous collection of mushroom recipes. She got the recipe from Michael Field's All Manner of Food (Knoff, 1970). I use the black, smoky flavored boletes available for $7.50 per pound at Viviano's Grocery on the Hill in St. Louis. They are incredibly flavorful and make this soup a perennial favorite, both to warm the body and stick to the ribs.

Mushroom Barley Soup in the Middle-European Manner
1 ounce dried mushrooms
3 ¼ pints chicken stock
2 ounces butter
1 small onion
½ medium carrot, finely chopped
½ medium onion
4 ounces pearl barley
1 rounded tablespoon flour
salt, freshly ground pepper
fresh dill or parsley, chopped

Put the mushrooms into a small bowl. Heat a ladleful of the stock, and pour it over them. After 20 minutes, or when the mushrooms are pliable, remove and chop them. Reserve their soaking liquid. (I wash the mushrooms well to remove any sand, checking especially the base of stipes.) Meanwhile, melt half the butter in a large pan. Add the onion, carrot and celery and cook them gently for about 10 minutes. They should not brown. Pour in the stock, add the pearl barley, and the mushrooms and their soaking stock when they are ready. Simmer for 1 hour, or until the pearl barley is cooked.

Melt the remaining butter in another pan, stir in the flour, and cook until it becomes a delicate brown. Add enough stock from the soup to make a smooth sauce, then tip it into the pan of soup, stirring well until everything is amalgamated. Simmer 20 minutes. If the soup becomes too thick, dilute it with more stock or water. Correct the seasoning. Sprinkle with a few tablespoons of dill or parsley, and have more in a bowl for people to add extra if they like.

Using Black Trumpets
Okay, you've been hoarding your dried Craterellus fallax long enough. Eventually they're going to loose flavor.
Reconstitute them and try them sauteed with onions and butter on a baked potato, use them in a risotto, or make the best damn meatloaf you've ever tasted by adding the trumpets of death and cognac to regular meatloaf.
DUES ARE DUE!

According to our Bylaws, the fiscal year starts in November. Therefore, dues are now due. However, if your dues were received on or after June 1, they count for the next fiscal year. If your dues are due, your mailing label will have a message and an asterisk (*) next to your name and address. If your dues are not due, your mailing label is plain vanilla. Check that label!

Dues are $8.00 for regular members, $3.00 for associate members. You are eligible to be an associate member if you are already a member of another regional club, such as Kaw Valley or Illinois. Please make your check payable to Missouri Mycological Society.

If you belong to NAMA, or wish to, send your NAMA membership renewal form along with your check for $12.00. Remember, this check should be made payable to NAMA. As a member of the MMS, you receive a $3.00 discount when joining NAMA.

Please send all dues, signed Responsibility Statement and any other membership information (e.g., a change of address) to: Phil Roos
2544 Lexington Dr.
Jefferson City MO 65109-5610

Thanks for your prompt attention and don't forget to look at your mailing label before reaching for your checkbook.

—Phil Roos

Personal Responsibility Statement

Everyone please read, sign and return immediately (with your dues if due) to Phil (address above).

I understand that eating wild mushrooms can be risky. I also understand:

• Some mushrooms are fatally poisonous.
• Some mushrooms which are considered edible may be poisonous or cause allergic reactions to some individuals.
• Some mushrooms are edible only if cooked properly and are otherwise poisonous.
• Some mushrooms are psychoactive and may cause hallucinations or other abnormal psychological states.
• Some mushrooms are edible but are difficult to distinguish from look-alike poisonous mushrooms.
• Some mushrooms may or may not be poisonous—there are mushrooms whose edibility is unknown.
• Some mushrooms may be generally edible but poisonous if eaten in combination with certain foods (Coprinus atramentarius, or "alcohol inky", is reputed to be poisonous if consumed with alcohol, for example)
• Well respected mycological authorities do not always agree as to whether or not a particular mushroom is edible or not.
• Members of the Missouri Mycological Society can and do make mistakes as to whether a particular mushroom is edible.

I accept personal responsibility for any ill-effects resulting from my eating wild foods, including mushrooms. I assume the risks associated with eating these foods, including the risk of receiving careless advice from others.

I agree that the Missouri Mycological Society (and its officers, members, and other representatives) shall not be held responsible for any harm that comes to me (including death) as a result of my eating wild fungi or other wild foods.

The Missouri Mycological Society respects each individual's right to just say no to wild foods.

Date __________________ Signature __________________ (please print name)

Date __________________ Signature __________________ (please print name)

Under 18, please have guardian sign for you.

Date __________________ Signature __________________ (name of minor)

It Was Written in the Spores

Mycologists Meet their Match

Erika Petke and Phil Roos got married Sunday, November 17. A shared love for mushrooms united them.

The catalyst for the romance was the Missouri Mycological Society, the group that Phil himself founded about five years ago for mycological as well as social interests. His enthusiasm and bravado for mushrooming has charmed all of us.

Erika came to America about two years ago to make a new life for herself and is finding the good fortune that this talented woman deserves. She learned mushrooms in her native Germany. When she discovered the MMS about a year ago, she was thrilled to find a group that shared her interests. At last year's Fall Campout Erika met Phil and it was written in the spores.

They live together in Jefferson City where Phil works with the state government in statistical analysis. Erika goes to Lincoln University to study horticulture.

The marriage ceremony was performed at the Stawski's home by Gertrude Stawski, retired Unitarian minister and MMS member. The small but joyous event was also witnessed by Conrad Stawski and Ken Gilberg, also MMS members.
Mushrooms
a poem by Margaret Atwood

Boletus edulis
drawing by Don Dill

i
In this moist season,
mist on the lake and thunder
afternoons in the distance
they ooze up through the earth
during the night,
like bubbles, like tiny
bright red balloons
filling with water;
a sound below sound, the thumbs of rubber
gloves turned softly inside out.

In the mornings, there is leaf mold
starred with nipples,
with cool white fishgills,
leathery purple brains,
fist-sized suns dulled to the color of embers,
poisonous moons, pale yellow.

ii
Where do they come from?
For each thunderstorm that travels
overhead there's another storm
that moves parallel in the ground.
Struck lightning is where they meet.

Underfoot there's a cloud of rootlets,
shed hairs or a bundle of loose threads
blown slowly through the midsoil.
These are their flowers, their fingers
reaching through darkness to the sky,
these eyblinks
that burst and powder the air with spores.

iii
They feed in shade, on halfleaves
as they turn to water,
on slowly melting logs,
deadwood. They glow
in the dark sometimes. They taste
of rotten meat or cloves
or cooking steak or bruised
lips or new snow.

iv
It isn't only
for food I hunt them
but for the hunt and because
they smell of death and the waxy
skins of the newborn,
flesh into earth into flesh.

Here is the handful
of shadow I have brought back to you:
this decay, this hope, this mouthful
of dirt, this poetry.

from Selected Poems II: Poems Selected and New 1976-1986 by
Margaret Atwood © 1987 Houghton-Mifflin Company

MISSOURI MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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