2nd Morel Madness at Meramec State Park

The weekend of April 17th at Meramec State Park is the date and place picked by organizers Jim Winn and John Regnier for the 2nd annual Morel Madness Weekend. Members and non-member alike are welcome.

Schedule of Events
Friday, April 16th
Campers arrive before 10:00 p.m. Look for MMS signs in campground, but you may choose any campsite, find MMSers by campfire (probably #181 to #188)

Saturday, April 17th
9:00 a.m. - Meet at Shelter #1 marked with MMS sign. We will discuss morel hunting, the status of current crop and get strategies and tips from the "pros."
9:30 til 12:00 noon - Morning Hunt. Search with a group or chart your own course.
12:00 til 1:30 p.m. - Identification of finds and lunch at Shelter #1. Pack your own picnic or (for optimists) bring a skillet, butter, eggs, etc. Some will provide camp stoves, you provide recipes and ingredients. There'll be more talk, tips on preserving, recipes, etc.
1:30 til 4:00 p.m. - The Great Morel Hunt. On your own or in small groups.
4:00 til 4:30 p.m. - The official weigh-in at Shelter #1. Morels will be weighed, measured, classified and eaten. Other found fungi will be identified.
7:00 p.m. - Madness Dinner at Meramec Park Lodge will be buffet style from their buffet but we'll be seated in a private room. We may well have a mushroom talk with slides, etc. Incredible Mushroom stories and good jokes will be told.

Sunday, April 12
More Morel Madness for those who stay over, choose your own groups and departure times.
9:00 a.m. - Wildflower hunt and identification led by park naturalist. Meet at visitor's center.

Meramec State Park is located 3 miles south of I-44 on Hwy 185 at Sullivan, MO. Driving time from Clayton, MO - 1 hr. 15 min. Jefferson City - 1 hr. 30 min., Springfield - 2 hr. 30 min.

This large state park, combined with even larger nearby Meramec Forest offers an incredibly varied and productive hunting ground. Trails are mapped and well marked. This is a great place for kids of all ages. The new visitor center has interesting displays and guided cave tours are available several times per day. Morels are abundant and the area is seldom hunted.

Accommodations
Cabin - The park has 20 small cabins that they rent for $40 to $60 for 2 to 8 people. Call (314) 468-6519 for additional information and reservations (soon).
Camping - There are over 200 camping sites in the park. Prices range from $6.00 to $11.00. The procedure is to enter, pay fee at gate (or if unoccupied, go to an unoccupied site and set up camp - fee will be collected at site). It is not necessary to reserve a site at this time of year. Senior citizen discounts are available to those over 65. Two tents or one trailer and one tent are permitted per campsite. Quiet hours are enforced at 10:00 p.m. till 7:00 a.m. The main entrance is shut down for the night at 10:00 p.m. so schedule your

Overnight, Foray and Cultivation Seminars at Hellmuth Shiitake Farm Near Round Spring

MMS members Nikki and Dan Hellmuth have invited the Society for a special Memorial Day weekend (Friday to Sunday, May 28-30) at their retreat near Eminence, Missouri, about three hours south of St. Louis.

The Hellmuths grow shiitake on some 8,000 logs and are expecting a fruiting about that time. The mushrooms will surely take a prominent role in the dinner on Saturday night.

Some of us will camp and others will stay in guest houses. A limited number of beds are available. Who gets the beds will be determined on basis of need and availability for a nominal $10 charge for sheets, etc.

Dan will give us a tour of the growing facility and an in-depth discussion of the process from spawn to market.

Also, we will foray around scenic Sinking Creek and other locations.

Details of this special event are yet to be planned. Cost of the weekend will be quite reasonable, based on expenses including the meals the committee decides to serve, etc.

If you are interested in participating (and you will be asked to help) drop a card to the chairperson, Kati Fritz-Young, 9414 Sonora, St. Louis, MO 63144. Space is limited. Make reservations by May 9. Confirmation, map and other information will be mailed.

Continued on page 4
The Iceman Mushroometh

Several members are wondering what kind of mushroom was found on the 5300 year old man found mummified/frozen in the Alps recently. A special on PBS television and an article in *Time* magazine said the "iceman" was carrying two mushrooms on a cord which "botanists" suggested he used as an antibiotic.

Don Dill reports to the Earthstar: Popular Science magazine identified the mushroom carried by the "iceman" as *Piptoporus betulinus*, the birch tree polypore, also noting that it was used as an antibiotic. Charles McIlvane writes young birch tree polypores are eaten by deer. David Aurora lists it as edible.

Gary Lincoff, in the Audubon guide, comments, "Through its varied history this species has been used in the absence of matches to keep fires blazing, as an anesthetic, and as a razor stop." When interviewed by the Earthstar, Lincoff said he believed the iceman probably used it for starting fires.

—Thanks to Lawrence Keenan and Don Dill for sending notices.

Ornamental Mushrooms: The Next Gardening Fad?

Belgian researchers have been testing various mushroom species, including some that grow on wood and others that grow on compost, as ornamentals to be sold by florists. Arrangements using *Coriolis versicolor*, *Pholiota specobilis*, and *Pholiota brunonis*, usually growing on birch stumps and accented with more conventional ferns and foliage and flowering plants, have been most popular with consumers. If ornamental mushrooms catch on in Europe, we predict they will soon become "the rage" among upscale North American gardeners, too. In fact, enterprinis florists on this side of the Atlantic would be well advised to begin experimenting with arrangements incorporating mushrooms now. But we guess that it would not do to include mushrooms in "get well soon" arrangements!


Seasonal Mushroom

Did anyone else notice the motif above the orchestra during the Vienna Philharmonic's annual presentation of Johann Strauss' music for the New Year's holiday? Two *Amanita muscaria* were prominently displayed above the orchestra. How that ubiquitous white speckled cap gets around. I heard no explanation as to the mushrooms significance to the event, if there was one.

—Don Dill

News of the Weird 1/1/93

In October, biologists at China's Northwest University in Xian reported finding a 77-pound slimeball floating in a river in Shaanxi province. According to the scientists, the slimeball, a pure white fungus, gained 22 pounds in the first three days the scientists observed it and has the ability to move across the ground on its own.

Book Sales

Books sold briskly at the Myco Luncheon — proof positive of a group hungry for knowledge as well as venison with shiitake. Don Dill reported selling out of Roger Phillip's book but promised to order more. Take advantage of the Society's discounts of more than 15% off list price on many books. Books will be distributed at meetings and forays.

Available are (with discounted price): Arora's *Mushrooms Demystified* ($21), Phillips' *Mushrooms of North America* ($21), and the Metzlers' *Texas Mushrooms* ($15). You may reserve copies by dropping a card to Don Dill, 1101 Surrey Hills Dr., St. Louis, MO 63117.

Photo Contest Update

Photo Committee Chairman Larry Douglass has gotten the ball rolling for an annual photo contest. Hopes for a show of the winners at this year's Myco Luncheon failed to materialize. Thanks to those who sent in pictures. Some felt that members should have longer notice. So here it is.

Photography is one of the great ways of preserving and recording mushrooms. At Mingo last fall, I wish I had photographed the Frost's boletes I found, the *Panaeolus* that Deborah Jones found, or any number of the fantastically colored and shaped funi that went unidentified. Who knows when the same species may be found again?

We're hoping for a great show of mushroom images for next year's Myco Luncheon. Thirty-five millimeter slides are requested.

Upcoming MMS Publications

The MMS may publish the original, unpublished 22-page manuscript of 73-year-old Mr. V. V. (Tommy) Thompson wherein he shares his knowledge of "sixty years of hunting the morel in the Missouri River bottoms and surrounding bluffs in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska....where, when and how to locate them." We'd like to know how much interest is out there for the tales of a man who picked 260 pounds of morels in one day and how he, with his son and a friend, collected 1500 pounds during the Dutch elm disease epidemic of 1972!

Another possibility is a book or booklet produced by the Culinary Committee, the collected recipes of our Mycophagist's Luncheons and picks from the Culinary Corner.

We are looking for feedback. What do think?
Book Review:

Edible Wild Mushrooms of North America
A Field-to-Kitchen Guide
by David W. Fischer and Alan Bessette, University of Texas press, 1992, $19.95
—Reviewed by Don Dill

This new book which concentrates on edible mushrooms is a handsome, full-sized paperback and is most notable for its numerous (70 plus) recipes and clear, colorful and attractive photos. To be on the safe side it does cover some 15 of the more dangerous and common toxic varieties as well.

I, for one, am happy to see full size books like this one and Roger Phillips' book. This business of pocket sized, easy to take along stuff is a lot of baloney for my money. All you end up with are wet, mud splattered and sometimes unreadable pages in your favorite guide. My Audubon guide is dog-eared, mud stained and cover loose already from carrying it with me on forays. And this is the one that Gary Lincoff signed, too! No more! I'll wait till I can get to a dry comfortable place where I can sit down to do my identifying without the risk of dropping my books in the mud. Besides, I carry enough other junk with me on forays. I'm looking to lighten the load not add to it.

Barbara Lawton pointed out in her review in the January '93 issue of the Earthstar that we're getting some odd combinations from the University of Texas press. Here's another one. Two guys from New York writing a book published in Texas and printed in Japan. Don't ask me why. I don't have a clue.

This book, which I like, is obviously written with the new pot hunter in mind and, in this respect, is an excellent reference guide. The text is well written and covers ancient history, fungophobia (which the authors note seems to be waning), clear definitions of just what fungi are and the culinary value of mushrooms. The recipe portion of the book is mouth-wateringly illustrated with straight-down photos. I'm no cook but there are a couple in there that are going to get a shot from me. I'm already trying to figure out how to omit sugar or use sugar substitute in a couple of them (diabetic, you know!).

The foray and fundamental methods of mushroom identification are given a thorough going over and the "mycophagist's ten commandments" are a sensible and neat set of rules we should all follow when collecting edibles. I would have liked to see more drawings by Phillipa Brown. She is a talented illustrator and more of her work would have added to the text, especially in the identification area. I guess I'm just allowing my bias to show but sometimes a drawing can communicate far better than words or photographs. Speaking of which, the authors have called on other photographers when needed to flesh out the many species covered. After all, it is pretty difficult for one or two people to get lucky enough not only to run into all the mushrooms you need pictures of, but to get good shots of each. That's tough! The different style by each photographer—i.e. "the natural habitat", "the more the merrier", "isolated perfection" and the "analytical/dissected schools", are interesting even if a little jarring at times, but do offer clear and identifiable examples for the readers to compare to their own finds.

As I noted earlier, the book is aimed at the beginning pot hunter. The authors (it was not always clear to me who was writing what) use a chatty and non-technical style which, I'm sure, was chosen to avoid putting off the newly interested. Their aim, seemed to me, to be on target.

Many Thanks!

Special thank you's for a terrific Mycophagist Luncheon go out to the following people:

Everyone who brought the delicious dishes and warm feelings to share at the fabulous potluck.

Dr. Walter Sundberg for his delightful talk and for his eminent presence.

Ellen Menown for organizing the event and being an exuberant hostess.

Barb O'Brien for previewing spring with the handsome centerpieces.

Phil Roos for keeping track of attendance and accounts.

Erika Roos for the special demonstration of traditional spätzle making.

Leland von Behren for the two gallons of Keller Von Homemade Elderberry Wine.

Journalist Christine Bertelson for the delightful page-three story about the Luncheon (except the part about the slimy honey mushrooms) and photographer Wes Paz for capturing the true proportions of Mushrooms to Man.

Joan Collins for organizing the raffle and all who contributed to the raffle: Don Dill for his matted mushroom prints; Mark D'Angelo for home-brewed beer (I want some), herb vinegars and bottles of wine; Leland von Behren for the bottle of homemade elderberry wine; Dave and Elaine Gerwitz's Two Rivers Garden for the bird feeder and HummerComer; Cindy and Doug Gilberg of Gilberg Perennial Farms for a $25 gift certificate; Don Wolsberger of Hunter's Hollow Bed and Breakfast in Labadie for a gift certificate for a night's stay; and Ellen Menown for the Whoopie Cushion.

Thanks also to everyone who helped and set up at the Towne Hall: Sommelier Larry Douglass, Videographer Leland von Behren, Proprietor Jack Wege, Artisan Barbara O'Brien, Hizzonor Phil and Dutchess Erika Roos, el Presidente Ken Gilberg and Maestro Don Dill and his entourage.

Also thanks again to Joan Collins, this time for keyboarding the handwritten information for this issue of the Earthstar. Thank you Barbara Lawton for proofreading.

A general thank you to all who contributed to make this club a wonderful mix of interesting folk who enjoy mushrooming and all it entails.
Of Slime, Spores And Worm-Eaters — Care For Seconds, Anyone?

By Christine Bertelson
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

MARK D'ANGELO will eat anything, even a stinkhorn.
That puts D'Angelo in select company even among his fellow mushroom collectors, the mycological
equal of Eva Kaevel.

"If you didn't know, it's a fly-like fungus that
begins life as a puffball-like egg. The egg sprouts a finger-
like stalk with spore slime coating the top, whose rotten
smell draws flies like carrion."

The stinkhorn's name comes from the smell, described by
David Arora in his 955-page classic, "Mushrooms
Demystified," as "foul, foul, evil, eden, churning, in-
danger, putrid, nauseating, disgusting, repulsive, in-
conceivable, filthy, vile, disgusting, stinking and gar-
deous. He also said the smell was "like the damp earthy
smell we meet with in some of our churches on Sundays"
and most aptly characterized of all, "indiscreet."

Not long ago, D'Angelo was preparing stinkhorns for
some of his friends.
"Half the people in the room said 'GAAAAAUGHHH'
Let's get the hell out of here," said D'Angelo, who
repairs electronic equipment for AT&T but would rather
pick mushrooms and make beer. "The other half were
going, 'Ah, that's great.' I eat a lot of mushrooms that
aren't exactly poisonous, but that most people won't eat."

The irrepressible spirit of D'Angelo filled the Labadie
Towne Hall on Sunday afternoon, where 80 members of
the Missouri Mycological Society gathered for their
fourth annual winter luncheon.

It was not your typical potluck.
For starters, there were Ozie cups full of Leeland Von
Behehn's 1982 Blackberry wine, a snail's pace red potent
even to relax and embolden timid eaters without dulling
the palate. "I wanted to make a dish, but I gave all my mushrooms
away," said Von Behehn, a mushroom picker from East Alton.

There weren't any stinkhorns on the buffet. But
there were plenty of exotic mushroom dishes, with at least
that unstrung nose as compelling, if not
indiscreet.

Walter Sundberg, a mycology professor at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, showing mushroom slides at the annual meeting of the Missouri Mycological Society on Sunday.

The rings in honey mushrooms and quail sate a
warming label: "Armillaria tabescens causes gastro-intesti-
nal upset in susceptible individuals." The warning was
softened somewhat by chef Tom Thacher's assurance that
he had eaten some three days ago and hadn't gotten sick.

There was Christine Doerr's earthy porcini fettucini,
Pie Lentz's oyster mushrooms and chicken, and wild
rice and mushroom pancakes, mushroom-stuffed mush-
rooms and four-mushroom lasagna.

Ken Gilberg, president of the club, prepared a
elegant hors d'oeuvre of pickled honey mushrooms served
with cubes of cheese "to cut the sliminess." Betty Greiss
brought mushroom loaf with walnuts. Claudia Joyce
prepared a tongue-tasting garnish, sliced cumin, an Indian rice
dish with chicken-chipotle mushrooms.

Last year, John Ward wove the club with his raccoon
stuffing with sweet potatoes. This year, Ward's wild game
was venison steamed for six hours in white wine and
sloshered with shiitake mushrooms.

Ward and his wife, Sharon, live in the Tower Grove
East neighborhood with their two bengals and a red
parrot. They had the mushroom club as a compromise.
He likes to hunt; she likes to hike. Mushrooming requires
both.

If they didn't have mushrooms in them, several des-
erts had mushroom motifs. John and Kelli Nobe of
Belleview made mushroom-shaped fruit tarts. Larry Kram-
ich brought a cake topped with icing mushrooms that
matched his wooden billy buckle.

Once the food had disappeared, the lights
dimmed and Walter Sundberg launched into a slide lec-
ture of "Unusual Fungi." Sundberg has a Ph.D. in mycology
and is a professor at Southern Illinois University at
Carbondale.

It was a dazzling show of mushrooms that oozed blue
"milk," lime-green mushrooms, glow-to-the-dark mush-
rooms, mushrooms that thrive in snow, sand and bath-
room rugs.

But the show-stoppers were Sundberg's slices of edible
oyster mushrooms that trap, and eat, worms with their
thickly ground up bodies. Like the Venus flytrap, the
mushrooms are merely in search of life-sustaining nitro-
gen. Others have a taste for the bodies of beetle larvae.

The professor left his audience with a solemn, post-
prandial thought: "The next time you eat a mushroom, think about what
it has been eating." Sundberg said.

Or don't.
Some Morel Recipes to Inspire You in Quest of This Most Succulent of Fungi

Morels with Steak, Black and Blue

1 steak, New York cut, 1 1/2" thick, about 1 1/2 pounds
(at room temperature)
1 T peppercorns or equivalent in dried or frozen
3 cloves garlic
1 T butter
1 scallion
1 jigger of brandy

1 cup dry red wine
1 room morels (about 2 cups of halved, medium size fresh morels)
1 medium tomato
1 T chopped parsley
1 loaf French bread

This is the way to eat steak. It is utterly decadent and befitting of a gustatorial orgy. You probably will have to talk to your butcher about the steak. Tell him or her exactly what you want. The butcher will be glad to be given a chance to show off and will most likely trim your steak perfectly.

 Crush the 2 tablespoons of peppercorns with a mortar and pestle or with the bottom of a heavy skillet.

 Dredge the steak in the crushed pepper, completely covering the steak, pushing the pepper into the fabric of the meat with your fingers. Don't worry about the amount of pepper, use it all.

 Now heat a good-sized cast-iron skillet over high heat. Add the oil. Let it get hot. Add the three cloves of garlic and swim them around for about 30 seconds (they will be brown). Skim them out and set them aside.

 Lay the steak in the pan, reduce the heat to medium high after one minute. There will be some smoke with this recipe so use your range hood, disconnect your smoke alarm temporarily, and warn your neighbors not to call the fire department. Cook the steak for three more minutes on this side then turn and cook four minutes on the second side. Stand on edge to sear and brown the fat for two minutes and do the same with the other edge. Lay the steak back down and turn it once a minute while it cooks for another five minutes. Remove to a warm platter.

 Pour off the fat and the loose peppercorns from the skillet, add one tablespoon of butter and the chopped scallion. The heat should still be at medium high. Stir the butter around a bit to remove any bits of steak and pepper from the skillet bottom. Add the brandy and the wine, toss in the morels and let everything reduce for about four minutes. Whisk in two tablespoons of butter and stir for one minute. Pour the entire mixture over the steak...place the skillet back on the burner, halve the tomato and place in skillet face down.

 Sprinkle the steak with chopped parsley, cut a few 1/2 inch thick slices from the steak. With a spatula, place the tomatoes on the platter at each end of the steak, tuck a loaf of French bread under your arm, grab the platter and start running. the steak will feed two people. The other person will find you. The bread is used to sop up the morel and steak gravy.

Baked Stuffed Morels, a recipe by Arleen Rainis Bessette from Edible Wild Mushrooms of North America (reviewed in this issue on page 3).

Baked Stuffed Morels
from Edible Wild Mushrooms of North America (reviewed in this issue on page 3).

1 dozen large Yellow Morels (caps 2-3" long)
1 cup grated Gruyère
2 T flour
1/2 t salt
Butter
2 eggs, beaten
4 slices bacon
4 wild leeks (ramps), whites only, minced, or 2 T minced onion

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Cut stems from morels. Arrange caps, stalk side up, in a buttered baking dish, using aluminum foil to stabilize caps as needed. Cook bacon until crisp; drain and crumble. Sauté leeks in bacon fat, and remove with slotted spoon. Combine leeks, crumbled bacon, and remaining ingredients. Fill morel caps with mixture. Bake until firm (15-20 minutes).

Serves 2-4.

A Note on Drying Morels

Drying is a great way to preserve morels, enhancing flavor and reducing toxicity. Don't wash morels to be dried. Cut away any dirt at base. Because stems do not reconstitute as well as caps, some people dry just the caps and eat the stems when fresh. Dehydrate thoroughly and store in loosely covered glass jars in a light, but not bright, area of your house. Add a few peppercorns to the jar to deter bugs from eating them before you do.
Schedule of Forays and Events
(All Previously Unlisted)
Forays are held rain or shine, hot or cold. Additional forays will be added by the next newsletter. Foray Coordinator: Don Dill

Saturday, April 17, 1993 (Friday-Sunday extensions) - Morel Madness at Meramec State Park (See details on page 1)

Thursday, May 20 - 7-9 p.m. The Beauty and the Mystery of Fungi, slide lecture by Don Dill at the Missouri Botanical Garden. $5 for MBG members, $7 for non-members. In a classroom in the Ridgeway Center. Call MBG for reservations 577-5100.

Sunday, May 9 - 10:00 a.m. Foray at Emmenegger Park. Leader: Barbara O'Brien

Saturday or Sunday May 22 or 23, 1993 - (Saturday or Sunday) 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Introduction to Mushrooming lecture and foray at Shaw Arboretum. Conducted by Ken Gilberg. Enrollment through Shaw Arboretum Education Dept. (314) 742-0850. Limited classes.

Friday thru Sunday, May 28-30 - Campout at Hellmuth Shiitake Farm near Round Spring. (See details on page 1)

Sunday, June 13 - 10:00 a.m. Foray at Pere Marquette State Park. Leader: L. von Behren

Saturday, June 26 - 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Beginning Mushroom Identification at Rock Bridge State Park (near Jefferson City) Bring a lunch. Leaders: Phil and Erika Roos

Sunday, July 11 - 10:00 a.m. Foray at Pere Marquette State Park. Leader: L. von Behren

Saturday, July 17 - 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Beginning Mushroom Identification at Rock Bridge State Park (near Jefferson City) Bring a lunch. Leaders: Phil and Erika Roos

Saturday, July 31 - 2:00 p.m. Sweat n' Chanterelles at Babler State Park. Pre-foray lecture on chanterelles in Visitors Center foray, swim, picnic at Babler then on to Stovall's Grove for beer and dancing. Leader (not for dancing): Ken Gilberg

Saturday, August 7 - 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Beginning Mushroom Identification at Rock Bridge State Park (near Jefferson City) Bring a lunch. Leaders: Phil and Erika Roos

Saturday, August 28 - 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Beginning Mushroom Identification at Rock Bridge State Park (near Jefferson City) Bring a lunch. Leaders: Phil and Erika Roos

Sunday, September 12 - 10:00 a.m. Foray at Emmenegger Park. Leader: Barbara O'Brien

Sept. 18-19 - MMS Fall Campout at Mingo (tentative dates)

Saturday, October 9 - 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Beginning Mushroom Identification at Rock Bridge State Park (near Jefferson City) Bring a lunch. Leaders: Phil and Erika Roos

Saturday, October 30 - 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Beginning Mushroom Identification at Rock Bridge State Park (near Jefferson City) Bring a lunch. Leaders: Phil and Erika Roos


Sunday, November 14 - 10:00 a.m. Foray at Gillespie Lake State Park. Leader: L. Von Behren

Great Things to Come—Mark Your Calendar!

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