

earthstar examiner

June 2005

Newsletter of the Missouri Mycological Society



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My first Madness!

by Paul Miller

My first Madness! Let me rephrase that. My first time attending Morel Madness! If I am to go mad, may it be a gentle madness, such as mycomania.

Upon arriving on Friday, giddy mycomaniacs were already popping out of the spring green trees and dogwood blossoms with baskets and boxes full of morels. It looked like a good weekend of mushrooming had begun.

King Steve found a quintet of morels around an oak tree near the swimming pool, and, showing admirable restraint, he graciously left them there for public display and admiration. They stayed unmolested for a surprisingly long time, considering how morals tend to disappear when morels appear.

After a carry-in feast that couldn't be beat, Dr. Michael Kuo (who we all now know is an English teacher) presented an introduction to morels. We learned that morels are mycorrhizal, and sometimes facultative saprophytes. With highbrow words like that, even us non-English teachers can sound like mushroom experts. We learned that there is no conclusive or compelling evidence that harvesting mushrooms endangers the fungal population. By the end of the lecture, I was even less sure than before whether mesh bags are good or plastic bags are bad. It was a good lecture, I thought, and the plastic bag controversy continues.

Then Taylor Lockwood (who looks like Crocodile Dundee's American cousin), photographer

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My first Madness!

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and creator of *Treasures from the Kingdom of Fungi*, showed parts 1 and 2 of his mushroom trilogy (which is a two-ology until he finishes part 3). It was very elementary (as was intended), and very informative on how mushrooms are identified, and fun to watch due to his outstanding photography.

Friday night we were grateful for the palatial cabin accommodations, as a cold rain fell. Should be great for mushrooms, or so I thought.

Saturday, most of us stayed in the park, which is big enough for all of us to get lost in, and some of us did. It seems that the woods had already been picked clean by then, or nearly so. Friday's bounty led to Saturday's paucity. A few foragers had the ambition and wisdom to drive an hour north to Anderson Conservation Area, and returned with hundreds of morels. Perhaps the moral is to hunt morels where I am not. I, for one, had a fine day in the woods just the same, and I found two morels, two deer mushrooms, enough devil's cups to serve a legion of demons, and

several dryad saddles, which I now know taste like watermelon rind. Hmm... I wonder how they are pickled?

Our newly crowned king and queen were Steve Booker and Candy Boyd. Congratulations to both of you for collecting lots of morels, on a not-so-prolific day.

After another carry-in dinner that couldn't be beat, (an exercise in redundant gluttony, but too much of such a good thing is still not enough, I say) Michael Kuo taught us more than anyone needs to know about identifying morel species. His lecture made me glad not to have pursued a career in taxonomy. I now feel no shame in not knowing a *Morchella esculosa* from a *Morchella deliscentia*. It seems that even the mushrooms are not sure what species they are. Taylor Lockwood then treated us to another eye-popping slide show of beautiful, exotic, outrageous fungi. We retired thence to campfire or cots to sleep off our madness. Thankfully, this madness is a gentle one, and I look forward to repeating it.



2005 Madness Royalty: Queen Candy Boyd and King Steve Booker



Presenters Taylor Lockwood and Michael Kuo



*Top left: Determining that size really does matter, a pose by the winners of the largest and smallest morel
Middle: Willie May, Madness Coordinator
Right: Jan and Maxine, excited to begin the hunt
Bottom: Enjoying lunch after a morning of hunting
Cover: A group poses for a picture in the field*

Cover inset: Charlie always likes to have his picture in the Earthstar



MADNESS PHOTOS BY BARB STEPS AND JULIE MCWILLIAMS

morseels

by Maxine Stone

news & notes

Mushroom Cultivation Group

There is a new user group on the internet, the NAMA Mushroom Cultivation Group. The group is hosted by Yahoo Groups. This group is for use by NAMA members and members of affiliated mycological societies. The purpose is to serve as a forum for mushroom cultivators or those who have an interest in mushroom cultivation. It is also intended as a vehicle for posting articles, for asking questions, and sharing helpful hints, new techniques or any other information that would be useful for mushroom cultivators. The URL for the group is: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NAMA_mushroom_cultivation/

Don't forget to register for NAMA '05

The NAMA 2005 Annual Foray will be held on the campus of the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse on July 21-24, 2005. The opportunity to collect in the northern Mississippi River flood plains is very special. It was not scoured by glaciers, thus it became a refuge for fungi and plants that are no longer found in the upper Midwest. Additionally, it boasts an entire 100-acre forest of the American chestnut tree.

Our dear friend, Dr. Andrew Methven, will be Principal Mycologist and Dr. Tom Volk will serve as Host Mycologist.

There are many forays planned and also several workshops for those who enjoy hands-on experience. And of course, there will be many fascinating lectures and presentations.

Many MOMS members are already planning to attend this excellent weekend. Maybe you'd like to come too! You can check out the following web sites for more information: www.TomVolkFungi.net or www.NAMYCO.org

Incurable Epicureans

On April 9, thirty members attended the second Incurable Epicureans event for 2005. Following this year's theme of Food in America, we enjoyed Low Country & Cajun

cuisine at George and Linda Rolby's home. Louisiana Scorpion cocktails started the evening off with a sizzle. Crawfish etouffee, crabcakes, gumbo, blackened catfish, red beans and rice, bread pudding and pralines were just some of the fabulous foods we experienced. *Les bon temps* definitely did *rouler*!!

The next event for the Incurable Epicureans will be held June 11 at Craig Brewer and Diana Garland's home. Menu items will encompass Food of the Islands, highlighting the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii.

—Linda Rolby

Left at Madness

2 blue pie plates, 1 stainless steel spatula, 2 towels. E-mail VeryMaxine@aol.com if any of these belongs to you!

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Agroforestry at Ozark Forest Mushrooms

by Chris Ricci

When I arrived at the Sinks, I could hardly believe my eyes. It was an aquaculture dreamscape. Sinking Creek, a quintessential, clear, healthy, spring-fed Ozark creek, used to flow around the ridge, like most creeks. Now it flows under the ridge, through a cave. You can actually canoe under the ridge and pop out on the other side. Even more amazing is that where the creek used to flow around the ridge, there's a series of huge man-made lakes, not too deep, spring fed and full of all kinds of life. I was in heaven.

The workshop had two parts, sustainable forestry and shiitake culture. Bob Cavender, an employee of Ozark Forest Mushrooms (owned by MOMS members Nicola McPherson and Dan Hellmuth) took us to a couple of different patches of forest that he had logged in the last ten years and showed us how he selects trees first by the three D's – dead, dying, diseased. He also talked about using the smaller logs (tree tops) for mushroom logs.

We had an amazing lunch of Asian-style food with lots of mushrooms. It was fun to observe the heartland country folk eating (or not eating) this yummy, foreign, and vegetarian cuisine.

After lunch we talked shiitakes. Most of Nicola and Dan's inoculated logs are placed under a pine overstory. Pines provide year-round shade and harbor fewer contaminants than a deciduous forest. Some of their logs are placed under a shade tent and others go in the newly-built greenhouse. Topics covered at the workshop included mushroom strains, inoculation, force fruiting, log species, pests and more. I also met some academic folks from Mizzou, one of which is attempting truffle cultivation in Missouri, and another who said he took a weekend workshop with permaculture guru William Mollison in Kentucky years ago.

I made some new friends, learned a ton, and set my eyes on a holy, holy land.

I hope to make it back to the Sinks soon. As some of you know, the Sinks is just a bit upstream from Camp Zoe, an old summer camp, now a "camphitheater" hosting Schwagstock and other music festivals. I'll be the house d.j. at Schwagstock this summer. Those in MOMS will be hearing the music (for better or worse) at our Hellmuth Shiitake Farm Foray. I encourage folks to come to at least one of the four Schwagstock festivals (www.theschwag.com) this summer, swim in Sinking Creek, go spelunking, or just camp and enjoy. Its great family Ozark fun.

Sweat 'n Chanterelles 2005

by David Yates

*Sunday July 17th at Babler
State Park – 10:00AM*

Come join your favorite mushroom huntin' buddies for the MOMS annual Sweat 'n Chanterelles Foray!

Much fun was had in past years at Meramec State Park, but very few chanterelles were found. So, this year we've decided to try something different. In the hopes of better hunting, we've made it a one-day event and moved the foray to beautiful Babler State Park in Wildwood!

Meet at the Alta Shelter at 9:45 A.M. We'll discuss proper chanterelle picking etiquette, types of chanterelles and other mushrooms you're likely to find and current abundance. Some *Lactarius* varieties will be out, and are deemed some of the better summer edibles along with chanterelles.

Dress appropriately... It'll be HOT, but long pants and a hat are recommended, as well as sturdy walking shoes (the terrain at Babler is varied, but most of the walking is moderately hilly). Along with mushrooms come ticks and some prickly underbrush. Bug and tick repellants are a must. Bring a stick to knock down spider webs too... Boy, with all the "nasties" in the woods, I wonder why we do this!

After hunting for a while, we'll adjourn back to the shelter to compare our finds. Unlike the somewhat competitive nature of Morel Madness, there are no prizes, titles or crowns given out at Sweat 'n Chanterelles. Instead we'll just "ooh" & "ahh" over each others' baskets, thinking of the ways to cook our golden bounty.

Lunch is served! After identifying our finds, we'll break for lunch. Lay out your picnic lunch and bring something to share. The shelter has a couple of grills if you'd like to bring something for the barbie. We'll also bring skillets, foil, oil, butter, garlic, salt and pepper, spices and other kitchen stuff to cook up and sample our haul. Yum!

After lunch, we can continue hunting other places in the park or just spend some time relaxing & swimming in the park's public swimming pool (\$2.50 – adults, \$1.50 – kids).

If you have any questions (or answers) call me at 314.368.0586 or email me at dyates@bondwolfe.com. See you there!

Mingo 2005

by Charlie Raiser

Thursday, September 22 through Sunday, September 25

The Missouri Mycological Society Fall Foray is set for Thursday, September 22 through Sunday, September 25. Mark your calendars for our primary event of the year! Here is a description of how it will unfold.

On Thursday, early-bird scouts will arrive at Camp Latonka, the Girl Scout facility that is exclusively ours for the event. Some will sweep out the screened cabins that we will use for the weekend, others will ensure that the kitchen with its convection ovens and professional-quality gas stoves is ready for us, still others will set up the display tables that by Sunday should be filled with hundreds of identified specimens. Preparatory scouting will already be underway at nearby Mingo National Wildlife Refuge. Our advance party will explore areas of the refuge closed to the general public but open to MOMS for mycological research and collection. Best foray areas will be noted and mapped, and Saturday routes developed. Thursday evening will feature friends sharing wine and food they have brought, and setting of plans for the weekend.

Friday will provide time for some relaxed nature activities. After we enjoy a breakfast provided by MOMS volunteers, there will be a variety of forays/field trips to nearby natural areas or sites of interest. Some will choose to remain in camp, or to canoe or fish in Lake Wappapello. More participants will arrive by late afternoon, having beaten the traffic out of St. Louis to enjoy the "decompression" from four-lane to two-lane to single-lane roads and the return to nature. On Friday evening, we'll share a potluck dinner that we can expect to be extraordinary.

On Saturday, the pace of our weekend will pick up. After breakfast in the dining hall, we will gather for a quick group photo, then venture with our groups into the Mingo refuge. Each foray group of 15 or so will have a leader knowledgeable of the area and a mycologist eager to share mushroom knowledge and to help identify collected specimens. These forays provide a great opportunity for beginners to learn the basics of collecting and identification. Groups will have lunch in the refuge and, following afternoon forays, will return with specimens for the display tables. As collected specimens flow in, mycologists will assist in identification and participate in discussion of the forays, the genera, and the species. We'll have an informal cocktail hour before dinner. Newcomers, novices, old-timers and professional mycologists will chat, mingle and enjoy each other's company. After dinner, we'll have another talk about mushrooms, and then end the day with a campfire.

On Sunday, we'll clean our cabins, pack our bags and wish that Mingo 2005 were not nearing its end. There will be time for more conversation over the specimen tables before we have the opportunity to enjoy a brunch featuring the edible fungi that we have collected. After brunch we'll vacate Latonka with newfound knowledge and happy memories.

The Mingo registration form will be in the August Earthstar Examiner. The fees aren't yet set, but are sure to be a great bargain. Last year, registration for members was just \$35, plus \$6 per night for a cabin. Save the dates for friends, food, and fungi! You are sure to have a great time. See you at Mingo!



Update

Recent Forays & Events

Edward D. and Pat Jones Confluence State Park

by Chuck Yates

The Edward D. and Pat Jones Confluence State Park was the site of our Sunday, April 3rd foray. This is our newest State Park. The superintendent, Dusty Reed, has asked for MOMS assistance in identifying the fungi. The park is also doing flora and fauna lists.

On our foray, we found seven varieties of mushrooms:

Ganoderma applanatum – artist's conk

Ganoderma lucidum – ling chih

Gyromitra caroliniana – big red

Lycoperdon pyriforme – pear-shaped puffball (last year's remnants)

Pleurotus ostreatus – oyster mushroom

Schizophyllum commune – common split-gill

Trichaptum bififormis – violet-toothed polypore

We needed some rain the week prior to our foray. Everything was very dry.

The confluence point is a beautiful area. Watching the Missouri River enter the Mississippi River is an awesome sight. American Bald Eagles put on a flying exhibition for us and it was a glorious day, even without a lot of mushrooms.

Lunch was a shared experience and our 15 MOMS members who attended all plan to return. In addition to this foray, we have also scheduled forays on June 12 and on October 9.

Daniel Boone Home and Village

by Maxine Stone

Pam Jensen, who is Site Manager at the Village, invited MOMS members to hunt on the Daniel Boone property on April 30. There are acres and acres of land and though the finds were not abundant, we sure had a good time. I was lucky enough to have my daughter and granddaughter visiting from Florida. Along with them and my other granddaughter, about eight or nine of us hiked across streams (more like rivers, after the rains), up and down hills, through forests, across streams again, and had a wonderful time.

We picnicked on the grounds and Pam was generous enough to give everyone tickets into the Village. We were very lucky to be there for their Music and Fiber Arts Festival. It was a lovely day and Pam suggested that this could be an annual event. Thanks, Pam.

Calling all morel hunters

by Brad Bomanz

It was a cool, rainy, April night at the Missouri Department of Conservation Henges Shooting Range in Eureka, Missouri, but that didn't stop 30 Missouri residents from showing up to learn some facts and tips on morel hunting. Some of the folks were avid hunters, some just beginners, some never even had been out before, but most had hunted before but never could find enough and wanted to find MORE! The great part was the kids! I never even thought about that aspect. WOW! Were they GREAT!

I was fortunate enough to be contacted by Charlie Trokey from the Department, who was also lecturing that evening on cultivating shiitake mushrooms. Charlie is a friendly fellow with a great sense of humor and asked if I would give a lecture on "Morels and Other Common Missouri Mushrooms." I was very flattered and immediately accepted the invitation. Charlie was looking for an hour-long lecture that would compliment his hour-long lecture on shiitake cultivation that would finalize the evening.

I assembled around 25 slides on the sub-

ject and was hoping it would last 30 to maybe 45 minutes. If no one asked any questions I was afraid it would be over in about 20 minutes. But after Charlie introduced me and the presentation began, it became apparent that those in attendance were really interested and had tons of questions! After a little over an hour I was kind of embarrassed because I had only gotten through about 15 of the slides and was going to stop so Charlie could start his presentation. Charlie, in his great easy-going manner, indicated to go ahead and continue because the folks were still enthusiastic and were getting just what they came for. Well, after an hour and a half, I finally made it to my last slide that said "Question?" I immediately wrapped it up and turned it over to Charlie, who barely had time to present one tenth of the information he was ready to give. But Charlie, again with his wonderful approach, indicated where an abundance of information could be obtained from the internet and told everyone that another presentation will be forthcoming that would involve more time on shiitake cultivation.

After the session was over, the enthusiasm of the folks didn't stop! I was still answering questions by both the adults and the kids! This went on until the Department needed to close up and let their staff go home. What a night! What great folks! I hope I have such a wonderful experience again soon. I want to give special credit to Bob Campbell who is the Resource Assistant at the Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center, located at 1100 Antire Road in High Ridge, Missouri. Bob has assembled numerous presentations like ours for the folks here in St. Louis and surrounding areas. Without Bob's dedication and relentless enthusiasm, the Department wouldn't be able to reach out to so many people and provide such a high quality educational program. Thank you Bob and the Missouri Department of Conservation.

If you are interested in joining the Speaker's Group, please give me a call at 636-225-0555 or drop me an email at brad_bomanz@yahoo.com and let me know. We will provide everything you require.

MOMS 2005 Calendar

- Sun. 6/12** 10:00AM, **Foray, Confluence State Park.** Contact Chuck for meeting place. Chuck Yates 314-843-5580; cwysky@worldnet.att.net
- Sat. 6/18** 10:00AM, **Beginning Mushroom Identification: Early Summer Mushrooms.** Rockwoods Reservation. Brad Bomanz 636-225-0555; brad_bomanz@yahoo.com or Don Dill 314-647-3307; drwjedill@yahoo.com
- Sat. 6/25** 8:00AM, **Foray, Forest 44.** Meet in parking lot. Pat Lennon 314-918-1524; myco99@yahoo.com
- Sun. 6/26** 12 NOON, **Foray, Tyson Research Center.** Charlie Raiser 314-821-6768; charlieraiser@aol.com
- Sat. 7/9** 10:00AM, **Foray, Cuivre River State Park.** Elaine Fix 636-462-3025; efix@earthlink.net
- Sun. 7/17** 10:00- 3:00, **Sweat 'n Chanterelles, Babler State Park.** (one day only) Meet at Alta Shelter. Dave Yates 314-368-0586; dbuty2002@yahoo.com
- Sat. 7/30** 10:00AM, **Foray, Forest 44.** Meet in parking lot. Maxine Stone 314-963-0280; verymaxine@aol.com
- Sat. 9/3** 10:00AM, **Foray, Babler State Park.** Joe Walsh 636-343-6875; joe41641walsh@hotmail.com
- 9/22-9/25** **MOMS Annual Foray. Mingo National Wildlife Refuge**
- Sun. 10/9** 10:00AM, **Foray, Confluence Park.** Chuck Yates 314-843-5580; cwysky@worldnet.att.net
- 10/21-10/23** **The Hawnting.** Hawn State Park.

MOMS members will need to notify the leader of the foray they wish to attend *before the evening prior to the foray at the very latest.* Please meet at the visitor's center, unless otherwise specified, 15 minutes prior to the time listed.

Thanks where thanks is due

Members are always generous with their praise of the *Earthstar* and go out of their way to thank me for the work I do. But there are many folks behind the scene that help make the *Earthstar* the fine newsletter that it is.

Maxine Stone is the driving force behind the newsletter, assigning and writing stories and reviewing the final layout. Maxine has her finger on the pulse of MOMS and she makes sure we cover all important items and events.

Ken Gilberg does copyediting, often within a few hours time. Ken was the original editor of the *Earthstar* and he generously shares his writing and editing skills.

Barb Steps has become my premier source of great photos. Barb has a fantastic eye and goes out of her way to be sure I get copies of the photos she takes.

Lisa Bailey and Brad Bomanz always step up to do proofing, often with little time for the job. Eagle-eye Lisa has kept me from printing some boneheaded mistakes. Brad keeps those mushroom names correct.

Finally, thanks to all who generously contribute their time and talents writing our very entertaining stories. Without you all this newsletter wouldn't be possible.

—Julie McWilliams, editor

Missouri Mycological Society

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