Note from the Editor

By Israel Tockman

Hello fungi-loving friends. I hope this version of the Earthstar finds you all healthy, safe and sheltered in the midst of these strange and stressful days. It has been a real rollercoaster. One moment, being sequestered in my South St. Louis apartment seems doable. I’ve caught up with my reading and watched the first season of “Cheers” on Hulu. I’ve made scrapple out of a hog’s head and my first batch of kombucha with a starter shared by our neighbors. We’ve been baking bread and swamping-out the dusty corners. Most importantly, we’ve been catching up with friends and family via video chat so that, in many ways, we feel even closer than before this crisis. The windows are open. Fruit trees, spring beauties and magnolias are blooming in riot throughout the neighborhood. Then I get reports from my brother at Covid-ground-zero in New York City. I read about the struggles of health care workers, grocery store employees, delivery technicians and those in the country’s restaurant and bar industry. I feel the awkward tension as I walk in Tower Grove Park, wanting to shake my neighbors’ hands rather than nod from a respectful distance. When I think about how this virus will impact all of our lives, whether by sickening loved-ones, or cutting-off sources of income or camaraderie, it’s easy to get down and spin off into doomsday scenarios familiar from so many sci-fi films.

It’s hard to see MOMS events, talks and classes cancelled. Many of us look forward to these opportunities to meet up with fellow mycophiles to foray together in the greening woods, to share food and recipes and glean fungal knowledge from the experts. I hope that you have had the opportunity to get outside on your own or with family members to explore the natural world in recent weeks. The times I have gone out have offered hope and refreshment. It does the heart good to see the birds going about their...

ANNOUNCEMENT:

All MOMS events (including classes, talks and forays) at all chapters have been canceled until further notice due to the Covid-19 virus. Please check the MOMS website and Facebook page for updates on this evolving situation.

Thank you and please be safe!

Name that Fungi!

We are introducing a new feature in this month’s issue. MOMS member Angela Mele has offered to share her fungi illustrations with readers. This issue’s specimen proved tricky to ID. Can you guess the genus? (Answer in the back)
business, the rivers coursing with fresh rainwater and the plants bursting from their winter dormancy. Things keep moving; that seems to me a valuable reminder in the midst of so much uncertainty. The effects of this crisis have been devastating for many, and many more will be impacted before it has subsided. It’s hard to find the good here. If nothing else, I think it has encouraged me to slow down, to take stock of what’s most important. For me, it’s relationships with far-flung friends and family members—sharing our experiences and swapping coping strategies—that are keeping me going.

I’d like to share one moment of fungal joy from this past week. We’ve been holed-up with our 18-year-old calico, Willa Cathair, who is suffering from kidney disease and also from being cooped-up in a new environment. For the first 17 years of her life in Montana she had unlimited access to the outdoors. Since we moved to St. Louis, her excursions have been much more limited. I was following her as she was motoring down the back alley a few days ago when she suddenly decided to stop and sit at the edge of a tangle of ivy. I waited a couple of minutes, and when she failed to get moving again, I crouched to pet her. There they were, right at her feet: three happy, perfect little morels! My cat’s a better forager than me! Wondrous things are happening beneath our very noses.

Take care, friends, and be well. I hope to see you in the woods after we’ve weathered this storm.

Greetings from our new President

By Stephanie Keil

WOW, who knew I’d begin my MOMS presidency in the midst of such trying times. I’m still excited and hopeful for my position as president of the Missouri Mycological Society. We just have to take this long pause before we can get back to meeting and foraging together. In the meantime, get out there and enjoy nature as much as you can! Share photos, ideas and questions on the Facebook group and through emails. Even though everything is canceled until further notice, we look forward to meeting new members and seeing familiar faces when we can resume. Stay safe everyone!
Creamy Goat Cheese Grits with Mushrooms

Recipe by Kirstie Harris from Edible Nashville

SERVINGS: 6-8 SERVING(S)

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE GRITS
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 cup grits
- 2 ounces goat cheese
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper

FOR THE MUSHROOMS
- 1 1/2 pounds mushrooms, such as cremini, shiitake, or oyster, cleaned and cut
- 2 tablespoons avocado or vegetable oil
- 1 shallot, diced
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped
- salt and pepper to taste
- honey
- white truffle oil

1. To prepare grits, bring milk, butter, water, and cream to a boil in medium saucepan.

2. Add grits and reduce heat to low. Simmer 20 – 25 minutes, stirring frequently, until grits are done. Add goat cheese, salt, and pepper. Stir well.

3. Meanwhile prepare the mushrooms. Heat a heavy skillet coated with oil over medium-high until hot. Add mushrooms and saute until brown, about 5 minutes.

4. Add shallot and herbs. Season with salt and pepper.

5. To serve, top grits with mushrooms and drizzle with honey and white truffle oil.

Edible Nashville: https://ediblenashville.ediblecommunities.com/recipes/creamy-goat-cheese-grits-mushrooms
Sweat ‘N Chanterelles Cancelled
By Cici Tompkins

There won’t be a Sweat ‘N Chanterelles event this year due to the virus. I am sorry to disappoint but for everyone’s safety I don’t feel it will be safe for us to meet as a group. I hope you can all continue to hunt for mushrooms at a safe distance and in small groups. Be well!

Answer to Name that Fungi:
_Hymenochaete s. l._

IDing this crust fungi proved quite a challenge. We were aided immensely by MOMS board member Judi Thomas. Judi was kind enough to submit images of the source specimen to a crust fungi/polypore Facebook page she frequents and a couple of experts responded. With their help and through consulting a paper on the unsettled taxonomy of this fungal complex, Judi was able to narrow the ID down to the above genus. There is so much to learn about the world of fungi!

Calendar:

To see the full calendar of event please click here: https://momyco.org/calendar.csh.html

To see events for a specific chapter you may click on it below:

St. Louis Chapter Events
Mid-MO Chapter Events
Springfield Chapter Events
Kansas City Chapter Events
SEMO Chapter Events

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Discover the Amanitas of North America! Amanitas are among the most recognized and fascinating of all mushrooms. *Amanita* species are mostly big and showy, and ubiquitous over most of the planet wherever terrestrial plants grow. These mushrooms have been the subject of lore, make the news headlines with regularity, and Amanitas have even changed the course of world history. Many *Amanita* species are highly prized as choice edibles and commercially available in markets around the world. Others are infamous for annually causing death to careless pickers—indeed 90% of mushroom-related fatalities are due to *Amanita* species.

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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!

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