

NJMA News

The official newsletter of the New Jersey Mycological Association

Volume 34 # 4

July-August 2004

NJMA Officers

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Individual \$10 - Family \$15

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Bob Peabody

NJMA News

Circulation - Susan Hopkins

Editor-Jim Richards

Deadline-10th of even numbered months. Send ONLY newsletter submissions to the editor.

All other correspondence to NJMA should be sent to the secretary.

Ania Boyd

Website: www.njmyco.org

-Bob Hosh, Jack Barnett, & Steve Gleason

July, August Calendar of Events

- July 11 - NJMA Foray - 10:00 AM - Meadow Woods- John Horvath, leader
- July 14-18 NAMA Foray- University of North Carolina-Ashville, N C
www.namyco.org/events/NAMA04.html
- July 23-25 Eastern Penn Mushroomers Helen Miknis Memorial Foray-Palo Alto, PA
Contact: Bill Miknis
- Aug 1 - NJMA Foray-10:00 AM - Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center
-Bob Hosh, leader
NOTE: Microscope identification session after the walk
- Aug 8 - Mushroom Dyeing Workshop-9:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Ursula Pohl
- Aug 15- NJMA Foray- 10:00 AM - Rancocas Audubon Nature Center
-Sang Park, leader
NOTE: Microscope identification session after the walk
- Aug 21- NJMA Culinary Group Summer Salad Picnic- 2:30 PM
- Aug 25-29 COMA Clark Rogerson Foray - Cane Hill Resort, Moodus ,CT
Co ntact:
- Aug 29- NJMA Foray-10:00 AM- Stephens State Park- Bob Hosh, leader
- Sep 5- NJMA Foray - 10:00AM- Assunpick Wildlife Management Area
Rod Tulloss, leader
NOTE: Microscope identification session after the walk
- Sep 9-12 NEMF Foray-Geneva Point Conference Center, Moultonborough, NH
A great opportunity to meet and work with Sam Ristich, one of the great mycological gurus and this event's namesake.
www.nemf.org/files/2004/2004
- Sep 26 NJMA FUNGUS FEST

Directions to SCEEC (Somerset Co. Environmental Education Center) (908) 766-2489. Route 287 to Exit 30A (N Maple Ave/ Basking Ridge). Follow N. Maple Ave as it bends left and becomes S. Maple Ave in town. Follow S. Maple Ave past Lord Stirling Stables. Go left on Lord Stirling Rd (Great Swamp sign on the right). SCEEC is about a mile in on the left. Park in the lot, NOT in front. Meetings start at 2 p.m. Beverages provided. Please volunteer once in a while to provide snacks (home-baked preferred)

MEA CULPA, MEA CULPA, MEA CULPA

My apologies to all for the lateness of this newsletter: a variety of events and computer glitches conspired against getting this issue out on time. If an issue had to be late (and that should not happen) this is probably the best one-since the information on forays –local and otherwise-as well as registration forms-were all in NJMA News 34-3.

Just a couple of things that I would like to mention-

Please keep the articles and photos coming: and please label the photos with captions rather than just file numbers, it will make things a lot easier.

Also, there is a backlog of newsletters from other clubs-we just have not had the space to put information from them in the last few newsletters (which were already at maximum size).I have been able to use couple of articles in this issue If anyone is interested in reading the newsletters and writing recaps of articles for NJMA News, please email or call me.

Culinary Group Malaysian Dinner

Seventeen members & guests of the NJMA Culinary group met on Saturday, June 12th, for an exotic Malaysian dinner. With light Curry Puffs, Shrimp Fritters, Toasted Coconut slices, and buttery Peanut & Sesame Pancakes for appetizers, many were already nearly full when the main dishes arrived. Yet, the Curry Beef, Mango Chicken and Fish with Black Bean sauce, Cabbage with Shrimp, two different rice dishes, Spicy Eggplant, and Cucumber Salad, were all consumed with glee. But then came the Fried Bananas, Pumpkin in Coconut milk and Tropical Fruit Salad, to make it unclear if anybody would be able to fit through the door to leave. Without the draw of the town's fireworks visible from the parking lot, most would have gladly rested without moving for the rest of the evening

About the NJMA Culinary Group

The NJMA Culinary Group meets several times each year to enjoy great food and great company. These are not potluck events, nor exclusively focused on mushrooms, but rather have a planned menu based on a theme selected by the group. The recipes are distributed in advance to each participant. The costs for ingredients are split equally between all the participants. Participants should bring their own dinnerware, utensils, beverages, as well as a method of serving their prepared dish(es). Each event is limited to a maximum of 30 people.

Culinary Group schedules a Summer Salad Picnic August 21st

The NJMA Culinary Group has scheduled a Summer Salad Picnic for its next dinner-Saturday August 21st at 2:30 PM at Dorothy and Bill Smullen's home in Millington.

The earlier-than-usual start time will give us time to enjoy some *bocce* and horseshoes.

The menu will explore many of the vast range of salad possibilities, with emphasis on using seasonal produce .

For additional information and to sign up for the dinner please contact Jim Richards at

PEEC 2004-

Report by Dorothy Smullen

18 NJMA members had a spectacular time at PEEC 2004. Friday night featured an intro by PEEC intern Slava followed by a Key Workshop led by Dorothy Smullen where members had to solve unknowns in small groups. The Strawberry Shortcake Social was next, deliciously prepared by Margot and Louis Rivera. Saturday morning's bird walk was a hit with sightings of Indigo Bunting and Scarlet Tanager. The foray to Indian Ladders was led by Bill Olson. Club members delighted in his expertise on ferns, mosses, flowering plants, birds and other aspects of the walk. Mushrooms, of course, were collected to be identified later in the afternoon. Many members took part in this sharing event. After an outdoor dinner session of grilled chicken, corn, salad and watermelon, the evening's program was given by Bill Olson. Slides of the Delaware Water Gap Area through the seasons were a feast to the eyes. Members joined in to sing Happy Birthday to Marisa Olson and helped her eat her beautiful surprise birthday cake.

The delicious wine and cheese party with a Greek theme was hosted by Bob Saunders and Rhoda S. Everybody had a great time where fellowship, friendship and learning were enjoyed and shared.

JOIN US NEXT YEAR.....DON'T MISS OUT ON THE FUN.

Additional comments by Lou Rivera

PEEC was exceptional in that the weather was great. The field trips were made extremely interesting and worthwhile due to the incredible expertise and breadth of knowledge shared by Bill Olsen. He is a walking encyclopedia of things botanical. Dorothy Smullen's lecture on the use of taxonomic keys for identification was, as with all her lectures, clear, precise and very useful. This was all new to me and I'm glad that I attended. Not to be overlooked; the Greek wine and cheese party finished off a very nice day.

That's about it in a nut shell. I'm sure that I've forgotten something or someone, but it's not intentional.

Boyd-Peabody Foray

Ania and I were the winning bid for a day of pot-hunting with Bob Peabody at the NJMA auction 2 years ago. We cashed in our ticket on Saturday, May 8th and spent a long day searching for morels with Bob. The most productive spot was one Bob had never used for morel hunting, but that had promising geology/topography. By the end of the day, we had 67 morels – definitely a record for us. Almost all of them were black morels near Tulip trees. The few *esculenta* were young and very fresh (we also got 3-4 *semi-libras*).

Needless to say, we were very happy with our “How to find morels” lesson. The day would have been very nice even without morels (pleasant company, beautiful woods, and a fine dinner) – but the morels made it even better! Should Bob decide to donate his time at another NJMA auction, we can definitely recommend his “class.”

Bob Peabody Wild Foods Foray by Jim Richards

On June 13th, about 20 NJMA members gathered at the Round Mountain Section of Deer Path Park for the annual Bob Peabody Wild Foods Foray. As usual the two Bobs- Hosh and Peabody- shared their knowledge of wild flora with an eager group of foragers interested in learning what new foods and medicinal plants could be found in June in New Jersey. After a walk across fields and through woods, the group gathered at one of the Park Pavilions to share a potluck picnic featuring foods, wild and otherwise. Susan Hopkins and I chatted while on the walk about how things have changed since the first Wild Foods Forays at Sundance Stable outside of Hackettstown where we had to "circle" the cars to keep the horses away from the food..(See Gertrude Espenscheid's drawing below)

Additional comments by Lou Parisi:

The wild foods foray was excellent. Bob Hosh was very knowledgeable about a wide variety of plants that may be eaten as well as those that should be avoided. All the members were very generous in bringing food to share. Of special note was the Cavatelli with mushrooms. Unfortunately I can't remember the man who provided this. (It was John Horvath-JWR) All in all a very good day.

*Tina Marasmius
Nobody in His Right Mind*



The one thing we all have in common is a fungus infection.

PEEC Weekend 2004

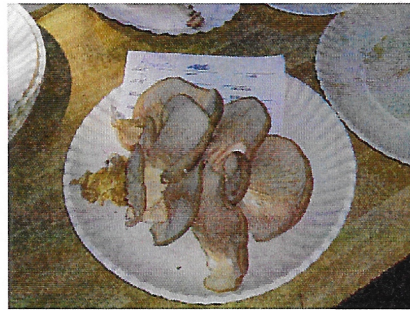


Photos by Lu
Rivera and
Dorothy Smullen

Meadow Woods Foray



Photos by Lou Rivera



NJMA Culinary Group Malaysian Dinner



Photos by Susan Hopkins and Jim Richards



Princeton Foray



Susan Hopkins, RW Fatto and Gene Varney

D.Smullen Photo



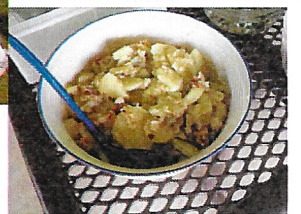
Morel Basket

Boyd-Peabody Foray



The June crew of workers stand behind cups where *Russula* species are developing spore prints. Over 50 species were identified this month for the Ray Fatto Herbarium of the Paul Brandwein Institute at the Rutgers Creek site in Greenville, NY.

Bob Peabody Wild Foods Foray



Photos by Lou Rivera, Susan Hopkins, and Jim Richards

Mushrooms Take a Bath

—Robert L. Wolke

Reprinted from *Prairie States Mushroom Club Newsletter*, March 2000, which found it in the January 26, 2000 issue of *The Washington Post*, p. F06. Robert L. Wolke is professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh and the author of *What Einstein Didn't Know—Scientific Answers to Everyday Questions*. Copyright 2000 The Washington Post Company.)

Q: Many cookbooks say that one should never wash mushrooms because they soak up water like a sponge and that we should give them only a quick rinse or simply wipe them off. But aren't they grown in manure?

A: Soak up water? Not true. Those books are wrong. Grown in manure? I'm afraid so. First, the manure.

The common white or brown button mushrooms in the supermarkets (*Agaricus bisporus*) are cultivated in beds, or so-called substrate mixtures, that can include anything from hay and crushed corn cobs to chicken manure and used straw bedding from horses' stables.

That knowledge bothered me for many years. Repeatedly warned against waterlogging my mushrooms by giving them a bath, however, I resorted to a soft-bristled mushroom brush that presumably whisked away the nasties from dry mushrooms without bruising them. It didn't do much. I sometimes even peeled my mushrooms, a time-consuming pain in the neck.

But as the hymn "Amazing Grace" would have it, "I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see." I know now that the mushroom growers compost their substrate material for 15 to 20 days, which raises its temperature to a sterilizing level. The compost, regardless of its origin, is germ-free before it is "planted" with the mushroom spores.

Nevertheless, I can't help thinking that there is more to manure than germs. So I still clean my mushrooms. And yes, I wash them in water, because they don't absorb more than a tiny bit, as I'll show below. Moreover, I seriously doubt that a water wash removes flavor, as some books claim. After all, even if the mushrooms did soak up water, it would come out in cooking, along with any flavor components it had dissolved.

I was always suspicious of the sponge model of mushroom flesh, because it never appeared to me to be the least bit porous, even under a microscope. When I read Harold McGee's book, *The Curious Cook* (North Point Press, 1990), I was vindicated. An equally suspicious type, McGee weighed a batch of mushrooms, soaked them in water for five minutes—about 10 times longer than any washing would take—wiped them off and weighed them again. He found that their weight had increased very little.

I have repeated McGee's experiment with two 12-ounce packages of white *Agaricus* mushrooms (a total of 40 mushrooms) and a 10-ounce package of brown ones (16 mushrooms). I weighed each batch carefully on a laboratory scale, soaked them in cold water with occasional stirring for McGee's five minutes, threw off most of the water in a salad spinner, rolled them around in a towel and weighed them again.

The white mushrooms, which were all tightly closed buttons, had absorbed only 2.7 percent of their weight in water. That's less than three teaspoons of water per pound of mushrooms, in agreement with McGee's result. The brown mushrooms retained more water: 4.9 percent of their weight or five teaspoons per pound. That's probably because their caps were slightly separated from the stems and water was trapped in the gill spaces, not because their flesh is any more absorbent. Many other irregularly shaped vegetables would mechanically trap small amounts of water. And the timid "quick rinse" recommended for mushrooms by many cookbooks would trap just as much as my five-minute soak did.

So go ahead and wash your mushrooms to your heart's content—at least the common supermarket kind; I haven't tested any of the more exotic varieties. But bear in mind that any brown dirt you see isn't manure; it's probably sterilized peat moss, with which the growers cover the composted substrate and through which the mushrooms actually poke their little heads.

And by the way, if you find your mushrooms giving off a lot of water in the saute pan and steaming instead of browning, it's not because you've washed them. It's because the mushrooms themselves are almost entirely water and you've crowded them so much in the pan that the expelled steam can't escape. Saute them in smaller batches or use a bigger pan.

Editor's Note:

This article is taken from Earthstar Examiner#65 which clearly had reprinted it..It is one of many articles on washing that appeared in various mushroom publications over a span of a couple of years.

Recently, there was a follow-up to these articles in Cook's Illustrated's Best Recipes for Grilling and Barbecuing in which the authors repeated the test with broccoli—an obviously hard-surfaced vegetable which would not absorb water easily. The results were virtually identical: the water is not absorbed but is on the surface. So, washing mushrooms is fine—just do not let them sit around for any length of time after washing. Wet mushrooms will turn dark and slimy after exposure to air for more than 4 to 5 minutes.

Mushroom Preservation

(Vol. 28, No.2) just reprinted John Rahart's article "Preserving Harvested Mushrooms," which appeared in *The Mycophile*, in the fall of 1999. This article is very thorough and full of helpful hints; I will cover only four of the seven methods he describes (I'm omitting salting, pickling and canning).

1. Blanch and freeze: wash mushrooms in cold water, Bring water to a boil, add mushrooms. Leave for one to two minutes after water re-boils; then remove with sieve or colander and plunge into cold water to stop the cooking process. Once cool, drain and place in plastic freezer containers. At end, cool blanching water and pour over mushrooms, leaving enough headspace so containers won't crack. John suggests 8-oz. yogurt containers.

Advantages: allows for thorough washing, very efficient way to process large amounts, convenient for use in soups or stews (plop whole into pot; don't thaw), texture is okay and flavor is exceptional. Use of liquid in pack prevents freezer burn, so good shelf life.

Disadvantages: not ideal for uses requiring frying, sauteing, or crisping.

2. Steam and freeze: similar to blanching except uses steam instead of liquid immersion. Steam for about two minutes. Cool and pack in plastic containers or place on oil-sprayed cookie sheet in a single layer and freeze. Take off cookie sheet and store in freezer bags. When using, do not thaw first, even for stir fries or sautes. Add a little at a time and keep pan hot. John says that these are also great for tempura, used frozen right from the bag and fried quickly.

Advantages: excellent taste and texture preservation. Disadvantages: more time-consuming and complicated than blanching, and does not clean as well. Best for high quality, clean specimens. Use asap.

3. Saute and freeze: recommended for *Agaricus*, *Chanterelles*. Lobster mushrooms and other dry types. Prepare pieces as preferred. Fry in butter, olive oil, etc. stopping process slightly before normal. Cool by spreading out and, when cool, portion mushrooms into small freezer containers and freeze. Use without thawing, just popping it out into the pan with more of whatever oil was used. Advantages: best taste and texture for sauted dishes. Easy to do. Disadvantages: usually more air exposure inside freezer container and hence more chance of freezer burn. John suggests compressing mushrooms and then covering with plastic wrap before covering. I suggest using a small Ziploc bag and squeezing out as much air as possible, or filling the freezer container as full as you can, compressing the mass of mushrooms, and pouring in more melted butter or oil to cover the mushrooms. You can always take off that top layer of fat prior to cooking.

4. Dry: home dehydrators, especially the high-end ones with temperature control, are preferred but, in a pinch, use your oven at temperatures of about 125° F. Dry to as low a moisture level as you can, place in airtight plastic bags or jars, and store. Reconstitute by covering with warm or hot water 15 minutes to several hours ahead of time (depends on species), until plumped up and soft. The soak water itself will be full of flavor; if the current recipe can't use it, put it in a container and freeze it for future soups, sauces, etc. David Arora mentions that *Bolete* pore masses can be dried separately, and reconstituted — not for themselves as they will be terminally slimy, but for the soak water which will be delicious.

Advantages: long preservation times, intensification of flavor in many species, easy to store (will survive a power outage!). Disadvantages: process can toughen or change texture, some species won't fry or saute after drying, volatile flavors and aromas may be lost.

Mushroom Dyeing Workshop Sunday August 8th

9:00am to 2:00pm- bring your own lunch NJMA will hold a hands-on mushroom dyeing workshop on Aug. 8 at the home of Ursula Pohl in Flemington, rain or shine. We will be using a variety of mushrooms and talk about what colors each makes. Dried mushroom will mainly be used unless fresh ones are found to experiment with. Mordants and pH changes will be discussed. The cost is \$5.00 per person and checks should be made out to NJMA and sent to Ursula Pohl

. Pre-registration is required.

Meadow Woods Report

Lou Rivera reports that the Meadow Woods foray was a disappointment due to the dry spell we have been having but that Susan Hopkins had an interesting find for dyers. According to Dorothy Smullen it was *Hydnellum spongiosipes*. See the photo on the color pages.



Photo by Lou Rivera

NJMA News

c/o Susan Hopkins

First Class Mail

In This Issue:

Calendar of Events

Reports on: PEEC

Wild Foods

Malaysian Dinner

Meadow Woods

Mushroom Preservation

To wash - or not - to wash