

NJMA NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 46-3 MAY-JUNE 2016

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NJMA EVENTS HOTLINE

908-227-0872 for information on
NJMA events or cancellations due to
bad weather. It is NOT for general
inquiries or to contact officers!



Coprinellus micaceus

PHOTO BY JIM BARG

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have always enjoyed the seasonal cycle of NJMA activities. Winter is a time to document last year's collections, enjoy the interesting speakers and fellowship of our monthly meetings and education workshops, and plan for next collecting season. Spring is warm-up time for the forthcoming foray season. Summer and fall are devoted to collecting and identifying.

Spring warm-up continues with three workshops in June. A Shiitake Cultivation workshop has been added thanks to Ray and Gemma Pescevic. They completed a rigorous course on the topic at Cornell University and have been cultivating shiitakes for several years. They are eager to share with other NJMA members what they have learned from their studies and their personal experience cultivating Shiitake mushrooms. If you are interested, please see details on [page 5](#), and sign up for the workshop which will be held on June 4.

A second set of two workshops scheduled for June 5, is an excellent warm-up activity for new members. Patricia McNaught will present an "Introduction to Mushrooms" in the morning. Jim Barg will discuss "Collection and Field Identification of Mushrooms" in the afternoon. I found similar workshops offered 16 years ago enormously valuable in helping me begin to understand how to go about identifying a mushroom. If you are new to NJMA and interested in identifying mushrooms, I hope you will attend these workshops.

Our 2016 foray season starts officially this year on Sunday, May 1st at the Princeton Institute Woods. We usually find an interesting array of spring fungi on this foray, and sometimes, with luck, a Morel or two. Our warm-up continues on June 10th with the Bob Peabody Wild Foods Foray at Deer Path Park. The foray season finally begins in earnest with our foray at Stokes Lake Ocquittunk on Saturday June 18th. Thereafter, we have a foray each weekend through the end of October. Please keep your NJMA name tag with your foray basket. And don't forget to wear it!

I wanted to highlight two particularly interesting new collecting opportunities this season: First, the Victor Gambino Foray on June 24-26 is moving about 30 miles to the south. (See [page 4](#) for details.) For many years, it was held at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) in the northern part of what is now the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Our new location is near the southernmost part of the National Recreation Area, not far from where the Delaware River cuts through the Kittatiny Ridge. The geology and the forests of the two areas are quite different, so it will be interesting to compare their fungi fruiting in late June.

Our lodging at Kirkridge Retreat Center is very close to the Appalachian Trail. In fact, following the AT north from Kirkridge for about two miles brings the hiker to the southeastern boundary of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. This is on a rocky ridge which may not have a lot of fungi fruiting in late June. But, it will be worth having a look and documenting what we find.

We plan to do much of our collecting near Kirkridge, in local parks, and on Pennsylvania State Gamelands near Wind Gap, PA. Also, near the southern boundary of Delaware Water Gap NRA, some moist, lower lying areas with mature hardwood forests look like promising areas for collecting fungi in late June. Except for walks along the Appalachian Trail, most of the walking will be on rolling to fairly flat terrain. So don't be deterred from signing up for Victor Gambino, if walking the Appalachian Trail is not for you. You can enjoy collecting at Kirkridge without hiking. There will be collecting opportunities that offer easier walking and probably more mushrooms. But come prepared to explore an area that is new to all of us.

A second new foray location is the Ted Stiles Preserve at Baldpate Mountain in Mercer County) on July 17th. It is part of the Sourlands, a series of forested ridges in Central New Jersey. The preserve covers 1200 acres with a mix of fields, stands of young hardwoods, and some areas with fairly mature, mixed hardwood forest. A good system of trails links the various sections of the preserve. At 470 feet above sea level, the summit offers good views of the Delaware River and the Trenton sky line. At one spot, Philadelphia is faintly visible on a clear day.

Our family has found a lot of fungi on this ridge over the years we have lived in Hopewell Township. In fact, I owe two of my most vivid mushroom collecting memories to Baldpate Mountain. On a very cold winter day following a brief warm spell, my son Benjamin and I once found some flash-frozen oyster mushrooms on the north slope of Baldpate. They had fruited during a recent warm spell and then were flash frozen when the temperature dropped nearly 40 degrees over a few hours. Still frozen when they hit the frying pan, these were the best oyster mushrooms I have eaten (well, maybe just the most memorable).

(continues on [next page](#))

WELCOME TO THE ONLINE EDITION OF NJMA NEWS

For the great majority of you who are viewing the online PDF of this newsletter, please note that **most web links and email addresses are clickable**. Clicking on a **blue** web or email address will launch your web browser and take you to the specified page or open your email software so you can send an instant email. Just look for the "click finger" when you hover your mouse over these items.

A second memorable mushroom trip to Baldpate was on the eve of Hurricane Sandy. The hard rains preceding Sandy had started, but the high winds were not due for several hours. Curious to see what fungi had fruited with all the recent rain, Nina and I hiked up to look at our favorite spot. We found a stunning display of late fall mycorrhizal fungi – fresh, robust fruit bodies, vivid colors, and a great variety. So we know Baldpate Preserve has a lot of interesting fungi. Please mark your calendar and join us for the foray at Ted Stiles Preserve at Baldpate Mountain on July 17.

We hope to initiate an inventory of the macro-fungi at Baldpate, similar to the one being conducted at Franklin Parker Preserve in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. The Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space (FOHVOS) contacted NJMA last year to request that we conduct an inventory of the fungi at the Ted Stiles Preserve at Baldpate. FOHVOS is a local citizens group dedicated to promoting conservation. They were instrumental in preserving Baldpate Mountain. Patricia McNaught and a committee of interested NJMA members worked with members of FOHVOS to define the project. FOHVOS has secured permissions to carry out the inventory, and NJMA's participation is now in the planning stages.

Please stay tuned for more details about this project in the coming months. It is a wonderful new opportunity for our members to collect, identify and document the fungi of a unique New Jersey place.

– John Burghardt

SIGN UP NOW FOR THE VICTOR GAMBINO MEMORIAL WEEKEND FORAY JUNE 24, 25, and 26

Join us for the Victor Gambino Memorial Weekend Foray which will be held June 24, 25 and 26 at the Kirkridge Retreat Center in the beautiful Kittatinny Mountains. The retreat center is adjacent to the Appalachian Trail and near the southern border of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. If you are a new member, this is an opportunity to increase your understanding of mycology through a weekend fungal immersion with experienced club members. Longtime members will be able to get together with old friends, and foray in beautiful habitats. We are excited to have Dave Wasilewski as our guest mycologist. He will be giving a presentation on the importance of fungi to our ecosystems. Jim Barg, our graphics expert, will be presenting a field workshop on photographing fungi.

To register, please send the registration form (included in this newsletter on [page 4](#), along with your payment, to Igor Safonov.

Email Liz Broderick you have any questions at medhead72@gmail.com.



OH NO! NOT ANOTHER 'POISONING'!

by Michaeline. Reprinted from *Spore Prints*, newsletter of the Puget Sound Mycological Society.

R. reports that after 'fairly severe stomach cramps, diarrhea and headache' three to four hours after eating chicken mushroom (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) that lasted the day into the night, he now has a 'slight' case of mycophobia!

Let's backtrack. R. had found a 'nice, tender, 3 lb. specimen on oak' about ten days before this last meal. He didn't say, but I suspect that he had refrigerated it as 'it looked as fresh as when I picked it' on the day he ate the last of it. He ate a 3" cube for breakfast for five days. The next day he also had a couple of *Strobilomyces* and felt a 'bit upset' but blamed it on the *Strobilomyces*. He didn't eat mushrooms the next day. The following day, he had another meal, and had symptoms as described above. He had been at a wedding the night before, so blamed it on food poisoning. The next day, he had the rest of 'the stash' for breakfast, and 'gradually' got very sick the rest of the day and night, but was feeling better the next day, with a trace of a headache.

Was it too much in too few days? Did he sensitize to it? Why could he eat it for five days without symptoms? I don't have the answers to these questions, but sulphur shelf is a mushroom that causes symptoms in a number of people.

Please use caution when eating edible wild mushrooms. Eat a reasonable portion, and don't eat the same species every day for a stretch.



JAPAN REPORTS BUMPER CROP OF MATSUTAKE MUSHROOMS

reprinted from *Spore Prints*, newsletter of the Puget Sound Mycological Society, November 2015. From *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, October 15, 2015

Thanks to a lot of rainy days in mid-summer and a quick end to late summer, Japan has seen a rich harvest this year of matsutake mushrooms, dubbed "the king of autumn foods." This has pushed the luxury item's price down compared to an average year.

At the Kyoto Yaoichi produce corner in the Takashimaya department store in Nihonbashi, Tokyo, an about-300 gram package of four or five matsutake mushrooms from Iwate Prefecture costs 35,000 yen (about \$291), about 30 percent cheaper than usual.

At the Seibu Ikebukuro department store in Tokyo, the prices of domestically produced matsutake are 20 percent to 30 percent lower than last year. Sales are up 20 percent.

According to Tokyo Seika Co., a major wholesaler of vegetables and fruits, the amount of Japanese matsutake it

Join us for NJMA's 2016

VICTOR GAMBINO WEEKEND

June 24, 25 and 26

at the beautiful

KIRKRIDGE RETREAT CENTER
Bangor, PA (just south of the Delaware Water Gap)



Our guest mycologist will be local expert **Dave Wasilewski**.
Jim Barg will give a field presentation on mushroom photography.

We only have openings for 24 participants, so **register early** if you plan to attend.

Register by completing and mailing this form to Igor Safonov with a payment of **\$235.00 per person**.

Accommodations will be comfortable semi-private rooms with shared bathrooms.

NJMA 2016 VICTOR GAMBINO WEEKEND REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ PHONE: _____

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: _____

ROOMMATE PREFERENCE: _____ **Male / Female**
If no preference is indicated you will be assigned a roommate.

ROOMMATE NAME(s): _____

Total number of people attending: _____ x **\$235.00 = \$** _____

Liability waiver: By signing below, I release New Jersey Mycological Association and Kirkridge Retreat Center, and their officers, members, and employees from any and all liability and loss arising from any accident, injury, or illness which may result from activities of the June 24, 25, & 26, 2016 weekend foray.

SIGNATURE: _____

Make your check payable to "NJMA" and send it, along with this completed form, **before June 1**, to:

Igor Safonov, 115 East Kings Highway, #348, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-3478

For more info: Liz Broderick, 609-298-4383 medhead72@gmail.com

(Cancellations must be made before June 3 in order to receive a refund.)



EDITOR'S NOTES

Recently, I have been thinking about the high level of creativity that many of you have: whether taking great photographs, dyeing fabrics with mushroom-based dyes, jewelry making, sketching your finds, etc. I thought that, coupled with the increasing popularity of adult coloring books, now is the perfect time to have NJMA's very first

MUSHROOM COLORING CONTEST!

Using Jeannette Bower's design of *Leccinum* from her *Mushrooms of the World Coloring Book* (Dover Publications, 1984), we are conducting a two-part contest.

Print out the *last page* of this newsletter and then color away! There will be two winners: One for the Best "Natural" Design and one for the Most Creative Design. For the latter category, anything goes! Wild colors, "Photoshop" effects, manipulations – you name it. The two winning designs (chosen by a panel of three judges) will be used on a tee shirt which will be sold at Fungus Fest 2016. The winner in each category will each receive a complimentary tee shirt. All NJMA members (adults and kids alike) are eligible to submit one entry in each category. Scan your completed design to .jpg format and email it to njmaeditor@gmail.com with the subject "Coloring" by July 1st. We will ask that the winners submit their originals for use in printing the shirts. The art will be returned, unharmed, to the artists.

The text which will be added on the tee shirt design will read: "NJMA – More than one way to look at fungi!"

We will still be looking for your foray reports, book reviews, and other articles for the next issue of *NJMA News* (#46-4, July-August 2016) by the June 10th deadline.

Have a great collecting season!

– Jim Richards

Visit the NJMA
Discussion Group



facebook

<http://tinyurl.com/jjualgz>

ATTENTION BEGINNERS!

Register TODAY for our beginners' workshops

Introduction to Mushrooms

Collection & Field Identification of Mushrooms

Sunday, June 5th

www.njmyco.org/education.html

Part of the NJMA Education Workshops series

FUN WITH FUNGUS

Shiitake Mushroom Outdoor Cultivation Workshop

Learn to grow Shiitake Mushrooms!

In this hands-on workshop, we'll inoculate mushroom logs with certified organic mycelium and teach you the steps involved in growing shiitakes. Ray Pesceovich, NJMA Cultivation Chair, along with his wife Gemma, will serve light refreshments, featuring shiitake paté. Everyone will leave with a mushroom log to fruit at home.

June 4th 10:00am-12:00pm

Rain date June 25th

Adults: \$30.00 per person

Children 10-16: \$8.00

Price includes food



Mushroom Growers

Denville, New Jersey

973-986-4800

Directions will be sent to registrants.

Space is limited to 10.

Register now! Visit

www.njmyco.org/education.html

by May 27th

*Please dress for the weather as we'll be outside
for the entire workshop.*

*No skills necessary,
and all ages are welcome!*

UPDATE ON NJMA OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

by John Burghardt

Outreach to the public is one of NJMA's important ongoing activities. People interested in eating mushrooms or collecting them can search on the web and find us. Many of these folks come to our forays or other events once they explore our website. But what about people who might be interested in mushrooms, but have never thought about fungi or their role in the environment?

NJMA's public outreach efforts seek to bring awareness of fungi and their role in the environment to people who might be interested in learning more. We receive invitations each season from diverse organizations interested in some aspect of environmental education to participate in their outreach to the public. Below are brief descriptions of the outreach events we have already attended or currently plan to attend in 2016.

Mercer County Living Local Exposition (March 19) Sponsored by the Mercer County Sustainability Council, the Expo was held at Rider University in Lawrenceville, NJ. Virginia Tomat, Richard Kelly, their daughter Aluen, and members of Aluen's Girl Scout troop attended. Richard piggy-backed a display about fungi with the Girl Scout's display about bats.



Mike Rubin greets a guest at Pequest

Pequest Open House and Sportsmen's Flea Market (April 2 and 3) Sponsored by the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife at the Pequest Fish Hatchery in Warren County, the Open House coincides with the start of fishing season. Jim Richards and Mike Rubin attended both days, since, in past years, this has been an enjoyable event and excellent opportunity to meet folks interested in the outdoors. Unfortunately this year, hard rain on the first day thinned the usually enthusiastic crowds who visit this event; high winds and cold made conditions even worse on the second day.



Kinnelon Public Library Earth Day Celebration (April 17) This event is organized by the local public library. This is the first time NJMA has participated. Ray Pesceovich and John Burghardt represented NJMA.

Bridgewater Township Eco-Blast Fair (May 7) This event draws many residents of all ages from Bridgewater and nearby towns. Melanie Spock and Nancy Addotta will attend this year.

Ocean County Park Bio-Blitz (May 28) This is the first of our 2016 outreach events at which we expect to find fungi. It is also our first visit to this Ocean County Park which formerly was a large summer estate bordering downtown Lakewood. Park staff have requested that we conduct walks for the public, as well as collect and display fungi at our table. John and Nina Burghardt, Melanie Spock, and Liz Broderick have signed up to participate. This is a big park with extensive century-old stands of planted pine forest, so more NJMA members are welcome to participate. See the Ocean County BioBlitz brochure on [the next page](#), and if you need additional information, call 732-506-5122. They will be using the mobile app *iNaturalist* to record the finds, so you can prepare yourself by installing the app before you arrive. (Instructions for downloading and using *iNaturalist* are on [page 8](#).)

Union County Bio Blitz (June 11) This is a large, 24-hour survey of all living things in three Union County parks. As in past years, NJMA members Dorothy Smullen and Marc Grobman are responsible for identifying the fungi collected. Other NJMA members who wish to participate in collecting and/or identifying are urged to sign up as scientists and naturalists at the Union County Bio-Blitz website (ucnj.org/bio-blitz/) before June 1.

New Jersey WILD Outdoor Expo (September 10 and 11) This event is sponsored by the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. It is held at the Colliers Mill Wildlife Management Area in Jackson NJ, at the northern edge of New Jersey's pinelands. It is an opportunity to meet people with diverse interests in New Jersey's wild outdoors. Phil Layton leads this effort.

Additional outreach events may be added as the year progresses. Thanks to all our participating members for their efforts to bring awareness of fungi to New Jersey residents.

Ocean County Park Presents...



24 Hours

**5:00 PM May 27th to
5:00PM May 28th**

At
Ocean County Park
659 Ocean Ave
Lakewood, NJ 08701



For more information or
to inquire about overnight
camping accommodations

Call
732-506-5122

Welcome to Ocean County Park

Ocean County Park was John D. Rockefeller's estate beginning in 1903. His primary interest here was golf. Most of the existing fields were fairways for the course he had on the property.

He also commissioned the planting of the current white pine and Norway spruce forest. Even with the large scale changes to the property, Ocean County Park still retains some areas of native Coastal Maritime Forest / Pine Barrens habitats.



Begin your time with us by signing in at the Basecamp, located at the beach complex. You are then welcome to join our experts for a guided search for the flora and fauna of Ocean County Park.



We welcome overnight camping for this event. If you would like to stay overnight, please pre-register by calling 732-506-5122.

In addition to attending scheduled programs, you are also welcome to set out on your own adventure. Use a camera to "capture" live specimens or bring back non-living specimens for identification and cataloging. For those comfortable handling invertebrates or amphibians, you may bring back live specimens to be identified and released. Please make note of where you found each specimen.



Record what you find in the park on the mobile app iNaturalist!

1. Download the app
2. Create an account
3. Open app and tap "My Observations"
4. Select "Projects"
5. Select the "Nearby" tab
6. Select "2016 Bio Blitz Ocean County Park"
7. Tap "Join" in the top right corner
8. Select "Checklist" to add an observation!



Ocean County Parks & Recreation
Brochure printed by the Ocean County
Department of Printing and Graphics



Sponsored by the
Ocean County Board Of
Chosen Freeholders



Schedule Of Events

All programs begin at Basecamp (Beach Complex)

InSeine Activities

Friday, May 27th 5:30pm
Saturday, May 28th 1:00pm & 4:00pm

Join us as we use a big seine net to catch and record aquatic critters we have in the Swimming Lake.

On the Hook

Friday, May 27th 6:00pm
Saturday, May 28th 8:45am & 2:15pm

Join Mike and Debbie Bennett, leaders of our local HOFNOD group, to go fishing in the lake to see what you can get on your hook! Bring your own gear or borrow gear to have a shot at catching your own fish.

Soil Critter Survey

Friday, May 27th 7:00pm
Saturday, May 28th 8:30am

Becky Laboy joins us from Ocean County Soil Conservation District to teach about all the important organisms that hide in the soil beneath our shoes!

Flowers, Shrubs, and Trees Oh My!

Saturday, May 28th 9:30am & 1:15pm

Join a naturalist to learn about the plants we can find in the New Jersey Coastal Plain and New Jersey Pine Barrens habitats.

Bats

Friday, May 27th 7:15pm

Join naturalists as we look for bats and learn how to protect them.

Bonfire

Friday, May 27th 8:00pm

Let's celebrate the first ever Ocean County Park Bio Blitz with a bonfire on the swimming beach! Bring a mug for hot cocoa and marshmallows for toasting.

Invertebrate Investigations

Friday, May 27th 9:00pm

Saturday, May 28th 10:00am & 3:00pm

Spiders, beetles, butterflies, and moths are all around us. Come identify and discover the different ones you can see at night and during the day.

Amphibian and Reptile Hunt

Friday, May 27th 9:15pm

Saturday, May 28th 10:15am

Close your eyes and listen. It's not just the crickets chirping! Come help us find and identify the frogs, salamanders, and turtles.

Beautiful Birds

Friday, May 27th 8:45pm

Saturday, May 28th 5:15am & 7:30am

There are so many different birds to see and hear! Join us to try and find and identify the birds in the sky, trees, and water.

Kayaking for Critters

Saturday, May 28th 7:00am

Dr. Jim Merritt will lead a kayak tour of our lake. Look for little critters from the water that you can't see from land and gain some kayak tips along the way! Registration required and begins at 6:00am. Open to participants 14 years and up.

Fungus Find

Saturday, May 28th 12:00pm & 2:00pm

The Mycological Society joins us to find the fungus hiding all over the park. Fungus is essential as a recycler of organic material, making nutrients available that new plants and animals need to grow!

Closing Ceremony

Saturday, May 28th 4:30pm

Special Thanks to all of our Experts!



Instructions for Downloading and Using iNaturalist for the Ocean County BioBlitz

Record what you find in the park on the mobile app iNaturalist!

1. Download the app:

Scan this code using your **Android**:



Or scan this code using your **iPhone**:



2. Create an account

3. Open app and tap “My Observations”

4. Select “Projects”

5. Select the “Nearby” tab (location settings must be enabled)

6. Select “2016 Bio Blitz Ocean County Park”

7. Tap “Join” in the top right corner

8. Select “Checklist” tab to add an observation!



BYTES, BITS, & BITES

TASTY LITTLE TIDBITS FROM OUR MEMBERS

from the Editor:

Moving art: A recap of “Mushrooms for Bees, Trees, People, and Planet” presentation by Paul Stamets and Louie Schwartzberg at the Directors Guild of America:

<http://tinyurl.com/jngtepv>

from Tasting Table.com:

A method to produce perfectly crisp mushrooms:

We throw them on a wire rack, instead of directly on a sheet pan, which keeps them from sitting in their own juices. Start by trimming and quartering 1 pound of clean cremini mushrooms. In a large bowl, toss the mushrooms in 3 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil, 1 tablespoon of fresh thyme leaves, 1 teaspoon of kosher salt and 2 teaspoons of freshly cracked black pepper. Place a wire cooling rack on top of a half sheet pan and spread the mushrooms. Bake at 375° for 35 to 40 minutes or until the mushrooms are golden brown and crispy.

from The Wall Street Journal:

Blended burgers:

<http://tinyurl.com/jlpfmpu>

from Judy Glattstein:

In *The New York Times* – Morel Hunting:

<http://tinyurl.com/jswhu4r>

from the James Beard Foundation:

From the kitchen cameras in the James Beard House kitchen, a special mushroom event is coming:

<http://tinyurl.com/zqgpjps>

from Judy Glattstein:

Using CRISPR to snip genes in mushrooms:

<http://tinyurl.com/znmc8jn>

from Salvatore Turdo:

A selection of his finds from 2015. “One of the best years for mushrooms, ever”



PHOTO BY SALVATORE TURDO

(more photos from Salvatore Turdo on [page 17](#))

Got a mushroom story to tell?
Share your experience with fellow mushroomers!
tell it here!
Send your articles and photos to njmaeditor@gmail.com

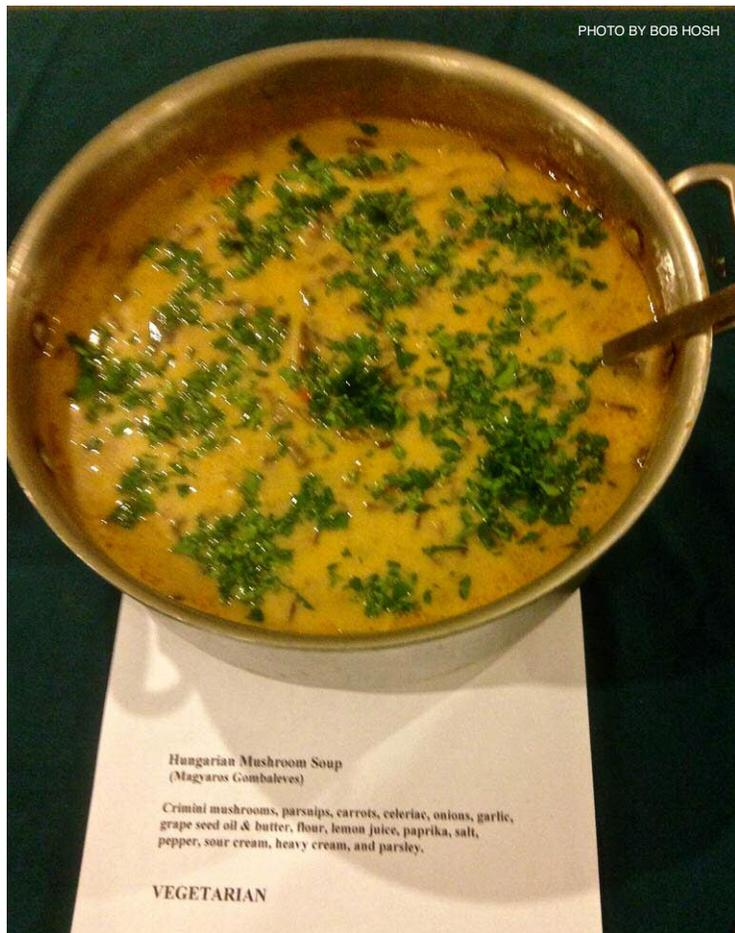
CULINARY GROUP MUSHROOM SOUP SAMPLER

reported by Faith Perrin

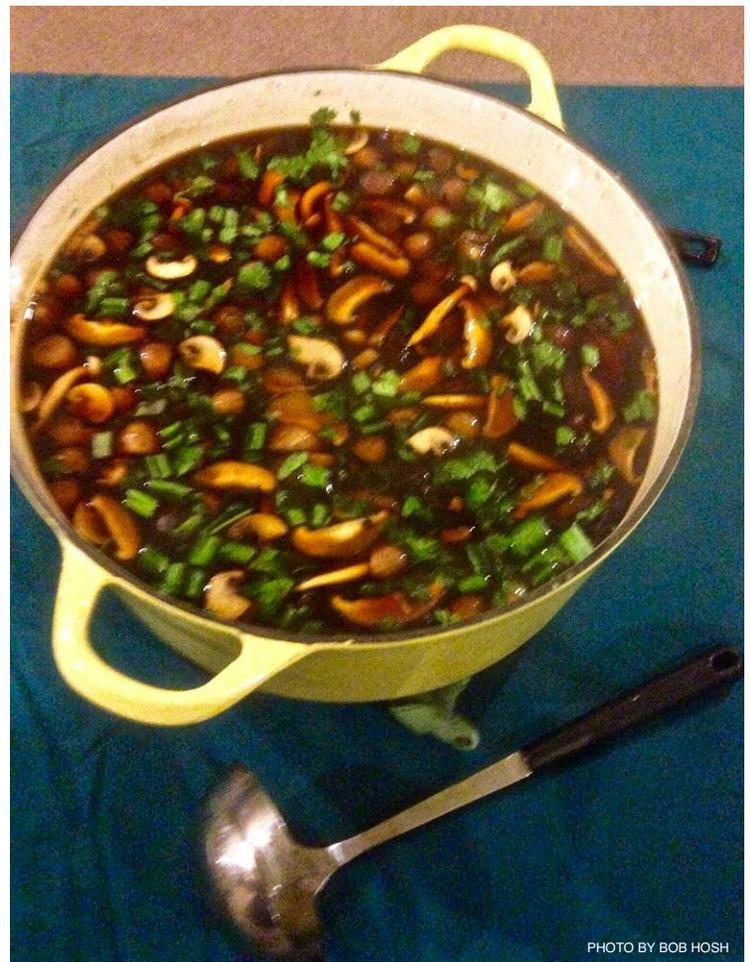
The NJMA Culinary Group met Saturday, March 12 for their most recent dinner event entitled “A Mushroom Soup Sampler”. Twenty-eight participants, including seven new guests, enjoyed a selection of mushroom-based soups accompanied by assorted breads, appetizers, salads and desserts.

The meal began when the eager diners were presented with various appetizers, which included Mushroom Croustades with Morels, Anchovy and Red Pepper Antipasto, and Kalamata Olive and Goat Cheese Tapenade.

Next came the first of two rounds of soup. Hungarian Mushroom Soup, Mushroom and Barley Soup, and a Tofu Mushroom Broth were set alongside a presentation of delicious bread: “Balthazar” Sourdough Rye, Herbed Whole Wheat, and two flavors of homemade crackers.



The salad course followed with a large fresh Garden Salad and a delightfully creative Potato Salad with Chicken, which was decorated with “mushrooms” hand-crafted from different vegetables. The salad course ushered in the next round of three soups: Mushroom Soup Gratinee, Indian Mushroom and Potato Soup, and Polish Porcini Soup.



Mushroom broth with Tofu

The fortunate members who had left room for dessert were treated to the final table of culinary creations: a Fruit Platter, Baked Rice Pudding, Pecan Candy Cap Cookies, New Orleans Bourbon Bread Pudding, and Neiman Marcus \$250 Cookies. Dessert was accompanied by a selection of fine teas and coffee.

All guests enjoyed conversing with old and new friends, and look forward to the next culinary dinner – a cookout at Harry Dunham Park in Basking Ridge from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm on Saturday, August 13th. The planning committee is working on the theme. To register, contact Marja (pamarjavo@gmail.com). 

SONG OF THE MUSHROOM KING

from *The Sporeprint*, Los Angeles Mycological Society

I am the Cep – the Mushroom King.
My praises mushroom pickers sing.

I am so easy to discover.

I look like me – not any other.

I'm very tasty fresh or dry

To you and to the mushroom fly.

So pick me when I'm firm and young.

Just finding me is HALF THE FUN!

— Joe Lenart

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- Saturday, June 4**
10:00am - 12:00pm
SHIITAKE MUSHROOM OUTDOOR CULTIVATION WORKSHOP
with Ray & Gemma Pescevic
Details and registration are on [page 5](#).
-
- Sunday, June 12**
10:00am
BOB PEABODY WILD FOODS FORAY AND PICNIC
Deer Path Park, Readington, NJ
Randi Eckel, Leader Randi owns Toadshade Wildflower farm in Frenchtown, NJ. She grows and propagates her own plants. As an entomologist, she is especially interested in native plant and insect interactions.
Members only! – Bring food to share and your picnic gear.
-
- Saturday, June 18**
10:00am
FORAY: LAKE OCQUITTUNK FAMILY CAMPING AREA
Stokes State Forest
Leader: Jim Barg
-
- June 24 - 26**
NJMA VICTOR GAMBINO FORAY WEEKEND
Kirkridge Retreat Center, Bangor, PA
Registration required. See details [page 4](#) for info and registration form.
-
- Saturday, July 10**
10:00am
FORAY: RANCOCAS NATURE CENTER AND STATE PARK
-
- Saturday, July 17**
10:00am
FORAY: BALDPATE MOUNTAIN – TED STILES PRESERVE
Leaders: Nina Burghardt and Patricia McNaught
-
- July 28 - 31**
NEMF SAMUEL RISTICH FORAY
FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY, Fitchburg, MA
To register, visit www.nemf.org.
-
- Saturday, August 13**
1:00pm - 5:00pm
CULINARY GROUP COOKOUT (*Theme to be decided*)
Harry Dunham Park, Basking Ridge
To register, contact Marja Von Ouwerkerk (pamarjavo@gmail.com)
-
- September 8 - 11**
NAMA SHENANDOAH FORAY 2016
Front Royal, VA
Registration for this foray is on the NAMA website. Go to www.nama.org for info.
-
- Sunday, September 25**
10:00am - 4:00pm
NJMA FUNGUS FEST 2016
Liz Broderick, chair
-

DON'T FORGET TO
SIGN UP FOR THE
**NJMA VICTOR GAMBINO
WEEKEND FORAY**

JUNE 24-26

Go back to [page 4](#) for details
and registration form!

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WHO'S IN A NAME?

Leccinum snellii

by John Dawson (fifty-fourth in a series)

Leccinum snellii is an edible bolete, one of the first boletes to appear in the spring. Its specific epithet, like that of *Tylopilus snellii*, pays tribute to Walter Henry Snell, whose books *A Glossary of Mycology* and *The Boleti of Northeastern North America*, both co-authored with Esther Dick, are mycological classics.

Snell, however, was more than just a mycologist; he was, “as far as can be ascertained, ... the only major league baseball player who was also a college professor”¹ (and a very distinguished one: He was the Stephen T. Olney Professor of Natural History at Brown University from 1942 until his retirement in 1959). For, in 1913, Snell played in six games for the Boston Red Sox, as a pinch hitter and reserve catcher;² and had it not been for an injury that he suffered on the day he graduated from college, his athletic career might have been an illustrious one and his mycological career non-existent. Even so, he played minor league baseball during the summers of 1914 and 1915 and served as varsity baseball coach at Brown from 1922–26, as freshman baseball coach from 1936–39, as assistant football coach from 1921–39, and as Brown’s Athletic Director during the war years 1943–46.

Snell was born 19 May 1889 in West Bridgewater, Massachusetts and died at age 91 on 23 July 1980 in Providence, Rhode Island. The eldest of the five children of Alton Snell, a butcher, and his wife Clara, he grew up in Brockton, Massachusetts, attended public schools there and graduated in 1907 from Brockton High School, where he played football and was captain of the baseball and basketball teams. After two further preparatory years at Phillips Andover Academy, he chose to enroll at Brown University, “based on the opportunity...to be a catcher on the[ir] baseball team.”³ There, too, he excelled in both athletics and academics, graduating in 1913 with a bachelor’s degree with honors in biology, romance literature and history and as an All-American catcher with an offer to play professional baseball with the Philadelphia Athletics. Alas, however,

while playing in an alumni game on commencement day, his thumb was broken by a foul tip. The injury permanently damaged his thumb and caused the Athletics to trade him to the Boston Red Sox.

Consequently, in the fall of 1913, Snell returned to Brown, intending to earn a Master’s degree in bacteriology. (That October, he also married Adelaide Scott, who bore him three sons during the first eight years of their 62-year marriage.) Why he enrolled in a botany course in graduate school is unclear, but in 1914, he was offered a position as assistant in botany, and under the influence of Harlan York, a forest pathologist at Brown, he developed an interest in fungi. He received his A.M. in botany the next year, but stayed on as an assistant at Brown one more year before embarking on doctoral studies in plant pathology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.



Walter H Snell

While working toward his doctorate, Snell was employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, working first on white pine blister rust and later, at the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, on agents causing decay in structural timbers. His doctoral dissertation, “Studies of certain fungi of economic importance in the decay of building timbers, with special reference to the

factors which favor their development and dissemination”, completed in 1920 and published two years later as U.S.D.A. Bulletin 1053, was based on the latter work.

Fortuitously, Snell’s mentor at Brown, Dr. York, left Brown halfway through the 1919–20 academic year, at which point Snell was invited to return to Brown as instructor in botany. Upon receipt of his doctorate, he was then promoted to assistant professor (and head of the department, a position he held until his retirement 38 years later!).

The work that culminated in the *Glossary of Mycology* grew out of Snell’s realization that no suitable reference on mycological terms was available to his students. A typescript preliminary version, *Three Thousand Mycological Terms*, was prepared in 1936 by his long-time assistant (later co-author and second wife⁴) Esther Dick, and that same year, the Rhode Island Botanical Club published Snell’s *Tentative Keys to the Boletaceae*

¹ According to the glowing obituary tribute to him by David J. McLaughlin in *Mycologia* 75:6 (Dec. 1983), pp. 941–948, the source for most of the information in this profile and for the accompanying photograph of Snell.

² For more details on Snell’s brief career as a major league baseball player, see the article about him by Charlie Bevis on the website of the Society for American Baseball Research (<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/a8e3cebc>).

³ McLaughlin, *op.cit.*, p. 941.

⁴ Snell married Dick in 1975, when he was 86, shortly after the death of his first wife.

of the United States and Canada. (The *Glossary* itself was published in 1957, with illustrations by Snell's good friend H.A.C. Jackson, profiled earlier in this series.)

Snell had begun studying boletes (a term he is said to have "popularized, and perhaps introduced") in 1925, and "by the mid 1930s, was recognized as the North American authority" on the Boletaceae. "His magnum opus, *The Boleti of Northeastern North America*," illustrated with 400 of his own life-sized watercolor paintings of those fungi, was published in 1970.⁵

Snell also contributed to the taxonomy of hydnums, on which he contributed a series of six articles to the journal *Lloydia* (out of a total of 72 items in the bibliography of Snell's publications given in McLaughlin's obituary memoir of him).

Snell was a charter member of the Mycological Society of America, served as president of the Rhode Island Audubon Society for thirteen years, and was also a president of the Rhode Island Horticultural Society.

Snell donated his extensive mycological library to Brown University, and his specimens of boletes and hydnums, together with his notebooks and paintings, now reside in the National Fungus Collection. 

⁵ Quotations are from McLaughlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 944–945.

AMADOU (FOMES FOMENTARIUS) MUSINGS

reprinted from *Mainely Mushrooms*, newsletter of the Maine Mycological Association, April-June 2016

While spending time standing around, waiting, in a beech woods, I noticed quite a lot of *Fomes fomentarius* on a beech log.

I began to wonder how often one could be found that was large enough, and of the proper shape, to make the hat that Paul Stamets often wears.

If you further researched Elizabeth Noyes' article in the last [MMS] newsletter, you would know that the best collections are made in the autumn and are first year fruiting bodies. What would happen if, finding a tree beginning to fruit in the spring, the tree was felled to have the fruiting body on the underside, making it develop the proper bell shape? What if all but one of the others was removed? Would that concentrate growth in the one remaining?

Would it grow large enough in one season to be worked into a hat? 

WELCOME TO ALL OF OUR NEW NJMA MEMBERS!

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to the following members who joined us between February 15, 2016 and April 24, 2016. We look forward to seeing you at lectures, forays, and other NJMA events. Happy 'shrooming!

Jillian Anderson	Sussex, NJ
Kevin Blythe	Frenchtown, NJ
Tyler Branham	Pennington, NJ
Heather Ciociola	Lawrenceville, NJ
Amanda DeAngelis	Millville, NJ
Eric Duch	Andover, NJ
Daniel Feldman	Roselle, NJ
Anita & Frank Gerath	Cream Ridge, NJ
Sharon Hill	Flanders, NJ
Justina Jackson	Williamstown, NJ
GraceMarie Keaton-Stasi	Minneapolis, MN
Cyrille Labourel	Skillman, NJ
Barbara Lee	Annandale, NJ
Jay Mann	Ship Bottom, NJ
Gary & Shelley Michel	Washington, NJ
Maricel Patino	Lumberton, NJ
Kimberly Ramos	Fanwood, NJ
Jessica Ruland	Iselin, NJ
David Scarinci	Pittstown, NJ
Felicia Sonsini	Tabernacle, NJ
Michelle Wallace	Philadelphia, PA
Ryan Wesley	Clark, NJ
Aneatra Williams	Trenton, NJ

HAVE YOU BEEN DRAWING MUSHROOMS?

We are always interested in receiving accurate hand drawings, sketches, or artwork in any variety of media to grace our pages. While we cannot guarantee that your work will be published, we do file each submission and consider it for use either in conjunction with specific articles or for use as backgrounds or supplemental art when needed. You retain your copyrights and you'll be credited in all cases.

Contact our Art Director Jim Barg at jimbarg@bssmedia.com for more information or to submit your work.

MYCOPHAGY 2016 WITH GUEST CHEF JAY CHAI

reported by Liz Broderick

Fifty-seven hungry NJMA members gathered on February 21 at the Unitarian Society for our eagerly-anticipated mycophagy event. Jim Richards began this tradition back in the mid 1970s so club members could move beyond butter and garlic, and get some innovative ideas on how to prepare fungi from a professional chef. This year, our guest chef was Jay Chai, the owner and chef of the Pandan Room and TOPO in Hackettstown. Jay demonstrated some of his Thai- and Indonesian-inspired specialties, and treated us to some new tastes. He was born in Burma, and learned his cooking skills from his mother and other family members while growing up. Traditional Indonesian food incorporates a great variety of nutritious local fungi into its recipes, so it was a terrific choice for our demonstration.

Several folks had signed up as assistants to help our chef prepare the food for our members to sample. Jay arrived with some of his vegetables already chopped, but everything else was prepared fresh. He was extremely organized, and quickly had us prepping the fresh mushrooms and other ingredients. Although Mark K. and Marja, our vegetarian volunteers, pointed out that the major meat groups (including crab, chicken, beef and pork) were all represented, the animal protein was just a small component of each dish. Beautiful fresh mushrooms, vegetables and rice were the primary ingredients in the food we prepared. After the chopping and mixing were done, Jay *patiently* taught us how to form dumplings and bean-curd-skin-wrapped delicacies that he said his Mother continues to prepare in his restaurant kitchen. Once the prep work was done, I was amazed at how quickly his recipes came together. Jay prepared the curry mixture and instructed us to sequentially add the veggies and chicken so everything was perfectly done at one time. Most of the things we prepared could be done with one burner and a pot. We didn't sauté the mushrooms first as is commonly done in Western cooking, but added them at the last minute to stew in the delicious sauces. Jay said he made "friendly" curry for us, but provided some spicy chili sauce for those who wanted to amp up the heat. Other than the bean curd wrappers, most of the ingredients used in these recipes could be purchased at any decent supermarket – or some of them can even found in the woods. This tasty,

nutrient-packed cuisine could easily be adapted to vegan or gluten-free diets.

A shout out (and maybe a Golden Sponge) goes to Mike Rubin for doing the dishes for 10 years in a row. Another special thank you goes to Igor Safonov who drove to Kennett Square to pick up the beautiful fungi that Phillips Mushroom Farms donated to our event. A very special thanks to Jim Richards for arranging our mycophagy programs over the years. Thanks also to Chef Jay for expertly

preparing four wonderful dishes for 57 people in a little over 2 ½ hours with a bit of help from Luke Smithson, Mike Rubin, Marja van Ouwerkerk, Mark Kubinak, Nina Marra, Mark Streitman and Liz Broderick.

Recipes are posted at www.njmyco.org/recipes.html.

If you are near Hackettstown, you may want to visit The Pandan Room at 100 E. Moore Street to sample Jay's made-to-order Indonesian and Thai food.



PHOTO BY STEVE STERLING

Crab-stuffed cremini, one of the treats demoed by Chef Jay Chai

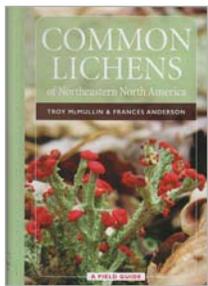


PHOTO BY STEVE STERLING

BOOK REVIEWS

COMMON LICHENS OF NORTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA

a book review by Luke Smithson



Common Lichens of Northeastern North America

by Troy McMullin and Frances Anderson

Published by The New York Botanical Garden, 2014.

192 pages

ISBN 13: 978-0893275112

ISBN-10: 0893275115

Before I start with the review of this book, let me answer a couple of quick questions. #1) Why is a mushroom club publishing a review of a book about lichens? Well, the quick answer is that lichens are symbiotic organisms composed of two distinct life forms; a fungus (hence the mushroom angle) and either an algae or cyanobacterium, living together as a single unit. The fungi are almost always ascomycetes, and often produce fruiting bodies reminiscent of little “mushrooms”. Recall that many people’s favorite mushroom, the morel, is also an ascomycete. #2) Why would I want to try to identify them? Well, they are around all year long, and are quite beautiful in the late winter and early spring before the “real” mushrooms come along. In other words, they are a great reason to get out in the woods!

So here is a recent (2014) book: *Common Lichens of Northeastern North America*. It is a lovely volume that contains descriptions and photos of 138 lichen species. It is a field guide, not a comprehensive survey of northeastern lichens, and it’s meant to be used outdoors. It is small, so it is not a burden in your backpack. It is also spiral bound, which helps keep the page open to where you need it, and printed on heavy paper that appears to be water resistant (I didn’t actually test this part out). But I did take it for a test drive in the Pinelands of New Jersey and was able to use it to make a couple of identifications without too much difficulty. I was also stumped on more than a few specimens... I didn’t say this book was going to make it easy! One note that did catch my attention is that the authors are based in Nova Scotia, a bit north of our region. While we likely share many of the same species, the authors state that they focused on field-identifiable species common to the Maritimes and surrounding regions. I cannot say with any certainty how many Mid-Atlantic lichens will be represented in this book, although I can say that at least nine species of lichen that are found in the Pinelands are in this book. (I base this statement on a quick cross-reference of a recent Pinelands species list and the species list in the book).

The book does not contain keys *per se*, but is organized into sections that keep narrowing down what a specimen may be, using the following questions:

- What is the lichen growing on?
- What is its growth form (these are clearly explained in the introduction)?
- What is the main color of the upper surface?

Technical terms are kept to a minimum, but there are some that you cannot escape. A fairly in-depth introduction and a glossary help sort out the differences between insidia, soredia, apothecia and the like.

Being a compact book, the color photos are small, but clear. There are some simple line drawings and detailed, black and white magnification drawings of pertinent details. One thing that quickly becomes obvious when trying to identify lichens is the need for a hand lens; many of the details are extremely small!

Like most well-written guides, it lists all of the details in a standardized format: scientific name, common name, name origin, substrate, color, etc. It includes some “distinctive features” that serve to quickly tell you whether you are the right path or not. Some detailed notes are also included with each species that may include lookalikes, interesting facts, abnormalities that you may come across, etc. Lastly, the final pages of the book contain some recommended materials and websites for further reading.

At \$39.00 (from Amazon.com), it is not a cheap book. But it is well written, durable and not overly complex, making it useful both as a field guide and as an introduction for anybody who is interesting in learning more about the local lichen flora. As a lichen enthusiast, I feel that I’m allowed to say that I’m “lichen” this book! (Sorry!). I will most likely be adding a copy to my library.

Editor’s note: This book and others reviewed in *NJMA News* are added to NJMA’s Robert Peabody Library and are available for club members to use. Contact Igor Safonov (njmycomember@gmail.com) to arrange to borrow this and other books in our collection. 

RADICAL MYCOLOGY: A TREATISE ON SEEING AND WORKING WITH FUNGUS

a book review by Liz Broderick

Radical Mycology: A Treatise on Seeing and Working With Fungus

by Peter McCoy

Published by Chthaeus Press, 2016.

672 pages.

Book art: Black and white illustrations with a 16-pg color insert

Radical Mycology is a fantastic compendium of information about how fungi enrich and detoxify all living systems in our world. This 672-page paperback was written by Peter McCoy, a self trained mycologist, who

(continues on [next page](#))

together with a circle of friends pioneered the Radical Mycology movement that originated in 2006 in the fungally infused Olympia, Washington area. This philosophical framework blends science, politics, art, theology and ecology based on the growth patterns of mycelium, and the premise that all life is interconnected. “Fungi challenge us to look beneath the surface, live on the edge, explore the unknown, adapt, respect imperfections and differences, and to always look for another way forward.”

Peter’s enthusiasm is contagious, yet the book is well-researched and has many practical applications for those interested in mycorrhizal relationships, the history of mycology and taxonomy, cultivation, mycophagy, responsible stewardship, historical and religious applications. It is not a field guide, although there is a 50-page species profile in the back of the book. As most university departments become more focused on genetic analysis, they lose sight of whole-organism mycology and how it interrelates to the ecosystem that it is an integral part of. Citizen scientists are becoming increasingly important because they tend to see not just the mushroom, but the ecosystem it is part of. He points out that unlike most sciences, mycology is one of the fields that a citizen scientist can actively contribute to. Unfortunately for many of us, much scientific research is inaccessibly housed in university libraries or published in costly journals. One of this book’s strong points is how it presents current scientific research in an understandable format. Arbuscular (Endo) mycorrhizas, ectomycorrhizas and other mutualistic relationships are clearly explained and illustrated with some terrific black and white electron microscopy photos. The life cycles of basidiomycetes and ascomycetes are covered, as well as how hyphal growth of the mycelium occurs. Ethnomycology traditions are also covered along with the history of mycology. Instead of the Kingdom of Fungi, Peter describes the Queendom of Fungi, since most of the earliest knowledge about the fungal world was discovered and passed on by women who gathered fungi for food and medicine to help their families survive, and by the alewives who were the original brew masters.

The section on Mycoswag discusses the equipment needed to start foraging and collecting fungi, and includes a section on noting nuances in appearance. The appendix contains useful ID tags for recording field information for various species. Microscopy and plans for a \$10.00 DIY microscope are included.

The chapter on Radical Lichenology clearly presented the symbiotic microbiont relationship between a fungus and an algae or a photosynthesizing bacteria. Different types of lichens and their habitat and life cycles are included in this section of the book.

The Pharmycopeia section covers the history of medicinal fungi dating back to Otzi, the Iceman who carried

Amadou and the Birch Polypore to treat his intestinal parasites. He discusses how some compounds that make up fungi stimulate our immune system helping our bodies to overcome disease. Although some plants have been credited with medicinal properties, he points out that the therapeutic effects are sometimes found to be a result of the endophytic fungi that are part of their makeup. Scientists studying Taxol, which is derived from Pacific Yew bark, found that it was actually produced by *Taxomyces andreanae*, an endophytic fungi within the tree. An overview of notable medicinal species and their uses are included along with explicit instructions for making cold soak extracts, tinctures and decoctions for those who wish to make their own fungal medicines.

“Working with Fungi” is one of the most valuable and extensive chapters for anyone who is interested in cultivation or mycoremediation. Peter enthusiastically provides in depth, clearly presented directions for cultivation and spore propagation. The appendix encompasses cultivation parameters for different species and online resources for home cultivation. How to start and maintain outdoor mushroom beds, and how to enrich compost are also covered.

Mycoremediation is also discussed as a way to break down toxic chemical and oil spills, and the plastic that is clogging our landfills. A few projects that his group has been involved in are covered.

There is even a short section on cooking and fermenting with fungi including a few interesting recipes like Black Trumpet Nettle Quiche or for mycotonics like Kombucha and Kefir. Myco-brew recipes for Heather Mead and Reishi Ginger Turmeric Pale Ale look interesting.

Mushroom-related crafts like myco-pigment dyes and papermaking are also incorporated into this treatise. Activities for children, like a fungal scavenger hunt, teach about mushrooms and spur their interest in the fungal Queendom. There even is a format for a mushroom board game called Salv-age that gets you to think like a fungus long after the collapse of civilization in order to heal the world.

Just in case things were getting too serious, the book ends with a page of myco-jokes: “What did the Reishi mushroom say to Turkey Tail? Do you want to take a selfie?”

Peter McCoy’s *Radical Mycology* would be a great addition to a citizen mycologist’s library. As he points out: We have much to learn from the Queendom of Fungi as “teachers and allies in a more just and equal world.”

Editor’s note: This book and others reviewed in NJMA News are added to NJMA’s Robert Peabody Library and are available for club members to use. Contact Igor Safonov (njmycomember@gmail.com) to arrange to borrow this and other books in our collection).

OYSTER MUSHROOM CULTIVATION WORKSHOP

(with full apologies to Will)

by J. Pisciotta

*Bubble bubble substrate crumble;
Oysters spawn, mycelium double.*

*Round about the bucket go;
In the hardwood pellets throw.--
Measur'd water, ready got,
Boil thou first, then i' the pot!
Hours to wait, ten, twelve or so
Help a tasty fungus grow.
Sawdust twill the wood become
Round about, mix it some.*

*Bubble bubble substrate crumble;
Oysters spawn, mycelium double.*

*To bag of plastic, polypro
In the side ear spawn will go.
Oyster white, be good to eat
Ostreatus; sawdust soon to meet.
Wood dust ready, scoop it in
12 in number, then bag to spin.
Twist it clos'd with air inside
give room to churn, now mix and slide*

*Bubble bubble substrate crumble
Oysters spawn, mycelium double.*

*Mixing done, tis time to form
A dense block easy to keep warm.
Press out air, compress with zeal
Twist and close, 2 ties to seal!
On each side, a hole to prick,
In number 5, t'will do the trick.
At home, a place of warm and dark
Is where to bring your block to park.*

*Mist it, turn it when you should
Then the shroom is firm and good.*

But I'm getting ahead of myself. The New Jersey Mycological Association's banner warmly beckoned the participants of the Oyster Cultivation Workshop on a Sunday in March. On entering upstairs at the hut, seeing our instructor, Frank Kushnir, for the first time, the witches' scene of Macbeth immediately came to mind, with a plastic bucket substituting for the caldron and the Warming Hut at Pleasant Valley Park substituting for a dark cave. There was Frank peering down and vigorously stirring a large somewhat steamy bucket of "something," just like one of the three witches. Which is exactly what myself and about 20 other NJMA members and guests were there to find out about.

Frank is a member of NJMA and of GroupGrowing, and is really passionate about growing mushrooms. His enthusiasm really came through as he took us through the process of turning hardwood pellets normally used as fuel to produce heat, into sawdust that we would then inoculate with oyster mushroom spawn.

After everyone had assembled and had a chance to chat over coffee and cookies, we all sat down at a set of long tables with several plastic buckets spaced out along the length of the tables. Frank was set up at one end with his bucket, several implements and many jars full of sterilized grain that had been fully colonized with various oyster mycelium. We went around the room and introduced ourselves. Then Frank began to take us through the steps we were there to learn.

He gave us a jump start on the process, as normally after boiling water is added to a bucket containing the hardwood fuel pellets, it takes at least 12 hours for the pellets to break apart into the sawdust. This becomes the growing medium for the mushrooms. For our workshop, Frank had done this ahead of time and our sawdust was ready for us in the buckets spaced out on the tables in front of us. We worked in teams of about four to a bucket. Next, Frank explained how 70% isopropyl alcohol is used to sterilize anything that comes into contact with the growing medium: the stainless steel mixing implements, a skewer for poking holes, and us! One brave member of each team rolled up their sleeves and misted their arms with the alcohol and let them air dry. I say brave because it was, after all, a chilly day in March and not what you'd call toasty in the somewhat misnamed "Warming Hut."

After arms were dry, it was time then to spray the spoon with alcohol before it could be used to touch the sawdust.

Then we each got a sterile, clean polypropylene plastic bag which we dated and labeled with the name of the mycelium that we were about to introduce: *Pleurotus ostreatus*. The particular strain that we used Frank

(continues on [next page](#))



PHOTO BY FRANK KUSHNIR

explained was “Chief Niwot.” Each of the plastic bags carefully got about a pint of spawn that had been growing in a jar of sterilized grain. This is more than we would use at home, as our current workspace with the large number of students was likely more contaminated than what would occur in a more controlled area at home. Since this was advertised as a “hands on” workshop, now was the time we got to use our hands as we massaged the bags to break up the grain as much as possible into individual kernels. This would facilitate a good distribution of the inoculated grains into the growing medium. Then our slightly chilled, but sterilized, team member, opened the bucket at our table and began spooning out sawdust into the plastic bags that we had prepared. Once the sawdust was added, we twisted the tops of the bags closed being careful to trap some air also. This makes it easier to mix the spawn and sawdust together. The goal is to get the grain distributed evenly throughout the sawdust so the mycelium will fully colonize the bag, leading to the fruiting (and eating mushrooms!) stage. This really was a “hands on” workshop because our hands were working very hard now to mix the sawdust and grain together.

When the mixing was done, Frank instructed us to form the bags into dense uniform blocks with firm pressure getting as much air out as possible. Then we sealed the bags closed with twist ties as tight as possible. Then a poking tool was sterilized with the alcohol and holes were poked into the plastic. These holes will eventually become the places where the mycelium will, if we are lucky, push out a fruit and (Ta Da!) yummy oyster mushrooms to eat!

Frank was super at answering all our questions during the workshop and at demonstrating proper mixing techniques. He sent us home with instructions on how to care for the blocks and what to expect over the next few months of growing. We all got a written set of instructions emailed to us. And a few participants have been sharing photos of how their blocks are progressing at home. My own mycelia are colonizing nicely and I look forward to seeing (and eating) my first homegrown oyster! Hmm, I should have asked Frank what the odds were of finding any with a pearl...



MATSUTAKE BUMPER CROP *(continued from page 3)*

handled in September rose 13 percent. The per-kilogram price for matsutake grown in Iwate Prefecture was about 24,000 yen — about 10 percent lower than last year.

“We had sufficient rainfall in August, then it quickly became cooler. Those were good conditions for the healthy growth of matsutake,” said a spokesperson at Naganoken Rengo Seika Co., a vegetable and fruits wholesaler headquartered in Ueda, Nagano Prefecture.

Kyoto and other areas are also expected to enjoy a rich harvest of the mushrooms this autumn, according to Fumihiko Yoshimura, a representative of the Kyoto-based citizens group Matsutakeyama Fukkatsu Sase-tai (Matsutake Forest Revival Troop).



PHOTO BY FRANK KUSHNIR

*The completed bag of *Pleurotus ostreatus* (Oysters) in fruit.*

BYTES, BITS, & BITES *(continued from page 8)*



PHOTOS BY SALVATORE TURDO

WHO OWNS THE 'SHROOMS?

by Susan Goldhor

reprinted from the *Boston Mycological Club Bulletin*, Vol. 69-2,
June 2014

Put it down to my having arrived at mycology late in life. Or maybe it's because I've been a solitary collector until recently. On the other hand, it could be due to my having pot-hunted mostly on trails that don't see a lot of use. And then again, maybe I'm just dense. Whatever it is, it's only recently that I've become aware of the tendency of my fellow mushroom hunters to believe (and we're talking pretty deep level belief here) that they own or somehow have a right to certain 'shrooms.

I first heard it from Ken, who makes his living selling the things. He claimed that someone had stolen his Hen of the Woods that he'd left to grow larger. Stolen? His? Pardon me? Is this like a fisherman cussing out the guy who catches the cod he let go last year because it was under-sized? Then my pal Larry did the same thing. There we were, collecting on Concord conservation land, not too far from Walden Pond, and Larry was not happy because someone had come in since he was last there and taken his mushrooms. Another pal, Sarah, chimed in that she had had her eye on some nice little Hens but someone had taken them before she judged them mature. But Sarah didn't say they were hers. (Is this a male/female thing?) Meanwhile, we were trawling the woods in a no-mushroom-left-behind foray, taking every edible for miles, including some delicious young sulphur shelves that some poor clod had probably left to grow larger.

And then Larry introduced me to a further riff on this subject. He announced that his mushrooms had been stolen by Russians. This sounded to me like something left over from the Cold War. "How do you know?" I asked him. "Because they took all the boletes and all the Russulas. And they left the Entolomas and the Sulphureus. That's what Russians do." I liked this idea – the concept of a mushroom detective. A 'shrooming Sherlock. This person could ID not only the fungi (by their crumbs and stumps) but their takers. Ethnicity alone would not be enough. A really good FI (Fungal Investigator) would be able to pin down the individual. "Aha! look at how this stem has been cut! This is the work of Boris; I recognize the nick in his knife blade!"

The problem is, once we knew who took it, what could we do about it? Could we confront Boris and demand our Russulas back? (They'd probably be eaten by that time anyway.) Could we sue for damages? Or mental cruelty? Of course not. We're all collecting off the same public land. And, for those of us who live in megapolitan sprawl, there's a lot of foot traffic on anything resembling a trail through the woods.

Thoreau thought that he was living in an era when wilderness was being destroyed. In fact, he was. But he was able to get away from civilization and its discon-

tents by moving two miles out of Concord to Walden Pond. By 1935, as many as 25,000 people a day were visiting Walden Pond. Forty years later, when DEM took over management, they put a limit on the number of people visiting (I suppose to maintain our sense of solitude and wilderness). The number they chose was 1,000 at any one time. Since folks cycle in and out, the number of annual visitors is actually about half a million; most during prime mushrooming season. And mind you, Walden Pond Reservation is no Yosemite. It's tiny. So – taking all of this into consideration – I have two suggestions.

The first is that I suppose we should be thankful that we get any mushrooms. When I think about the number of people tramping through the woods hereabouts, I can't believe that I filled my basket as full as I did, or that we got eight species of edibles. It's true that we didn't get many of most of those species. It's true that only four of those species were choice. It's true that I live in constant envy of those mycophiles in the Pacific Northwest who get giant baskets of chanterelles or those in Michigan who get hundreds of morels. I also live in envy of people who are Olympic skiers or Nobel laureates. Big deal. If, as I learned in high school, the primary characteristic of protoplasm is irritability, the primary characteristic of sentient life is probably envy. You know – "I think, therefore I envy"?

The second is that when I examine the cause of our discontent, it's really that there are too many mushroom collectors out there. (In fact, there are too many people out there, but that's another issue.) There probably was some pre-lapsarian time when the Iron Curtain held entire nations of mycophiles at bay, and local collectors were few and far between. If you were lucky enough to be pot-hunting then, you really could wait for your Hens to grow without anxiety, and regard all flushes as yours. Those days are gone. But, fellow mycophiles, let me ask you a tough question. Every mushroom club in America (probably in the world) is working hard to create new collectors. We hold classes. We invite any and all to become members. We lead forays over our entire region in our self-defeating attempt to show everyone every possible collecting area. We push mushrooming! What is wrong with us? Don't we see the connection between the burgeoning of our memberships and the emptiness of our baskets?

There is only one solution. Dissolve the clubs. Take the mycosites off the Web. Compost the books (except for those we own, of course). Or burn them, if you think that will add to the morel population next spring. Stop talking publically about the joys of 'shrooming. Do you realize that Larry – that same Larry who mourned the disappearance of his mushrooms – told me that he was offering a lecture on fungi and a walk in the very woods in which the disappearance had occurred? Doesn't he see the cause and effect?

Friends, we must take our cue from the fungi we love so well. We must go underground. No more loose lips. No more club PR. No more exhibiting at the garden show or holding mushroom fairs. No more proselytizing everyone we meet in the woods. If you must talk about mushrooms, you might wish to discuss the variety of symptoms caused by the toxic ones. Liver transplants are always a good topic. Let's bring back the fine old expression, "toadstool," with all of its unsavory connotations. And for goodness sake, stop using those open baskets where everyone can see what you're doing. In short, no more self-destructive, masochistic behavior. A decade or more of this and the tide will have turned. We will own the 'shrooms!



Matsutakes from the NJ Pine Barrens

EXPLORING THE FRAGRANT MATSUTAKE

by Constance Green

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This legendary mushroom is probably the greatest barely explored ingredient in the kitchens of western culture. In terms of preciousness, dollars, and demand; only Italian white and Perigord truffles surpass it in the world. The face of any Japanese person to whom I've handed a matsutake always looks much like ours when we got our first bicycle. Every single time, with glowing face, they hold the matsutake with great care, lift it to their nose, and inhale deeply with closed eyes. Nothing in the world smells like matsutake.

Three things have unnecessarily slowed the progress of this great mushroom into western kitchens. The first is simply money. Historically, matsutake have commanded knee-buckling prices. This is no longer the case, owing both to the weakening Japanese economy and to the increasing numbers of countries harvesting matsutake for export to Japan. Even now, over 95% of

these mushrooms are shipped to Japan. In years like 2003, Korea, China, and Mexico have had huge crops of the brown matsutake preferred by Japan. This has left the white matsutake of Canada and the U.S.A. as bargains in a more and more flooded marketplace. Even in years of high prices, however, the open-capped (#3—#5 grade quality) are affordable for Americans. Since prices are based on Japanese auction prices, they can vary significantly based on demand and the important Japanese holiday schedule. These variants are now diminishing to the point that price should no longer be a major barricade to our kitchens.

The insidious second reason is cooking technique. A horribly boring date could be had with the sexiest and most fascinating person if you chose to take them bowling, for instance. Likewise, chefs have sauteed matsutake and wondered what the hoopla is about. This technique is not the path to the marvelous matsutake.

A final obstacle is the unique character of this mushroom. It is not for the faint-hearted chef. Its flavor is so unlike most familiar western mushrooms that it demands a different cooking vocabulary.

It is eagerly sought by my customers who are chefs of great imagination (Thomas Keller, Daniel Boulud, Traci des Jardin, Kory Lee, etc.), but it remains puzzling to most others. This is a terrible shame.



Mycelium

A poem reprinted from Mainly Mushrooms, Maine Mycological Association, April-June 2016

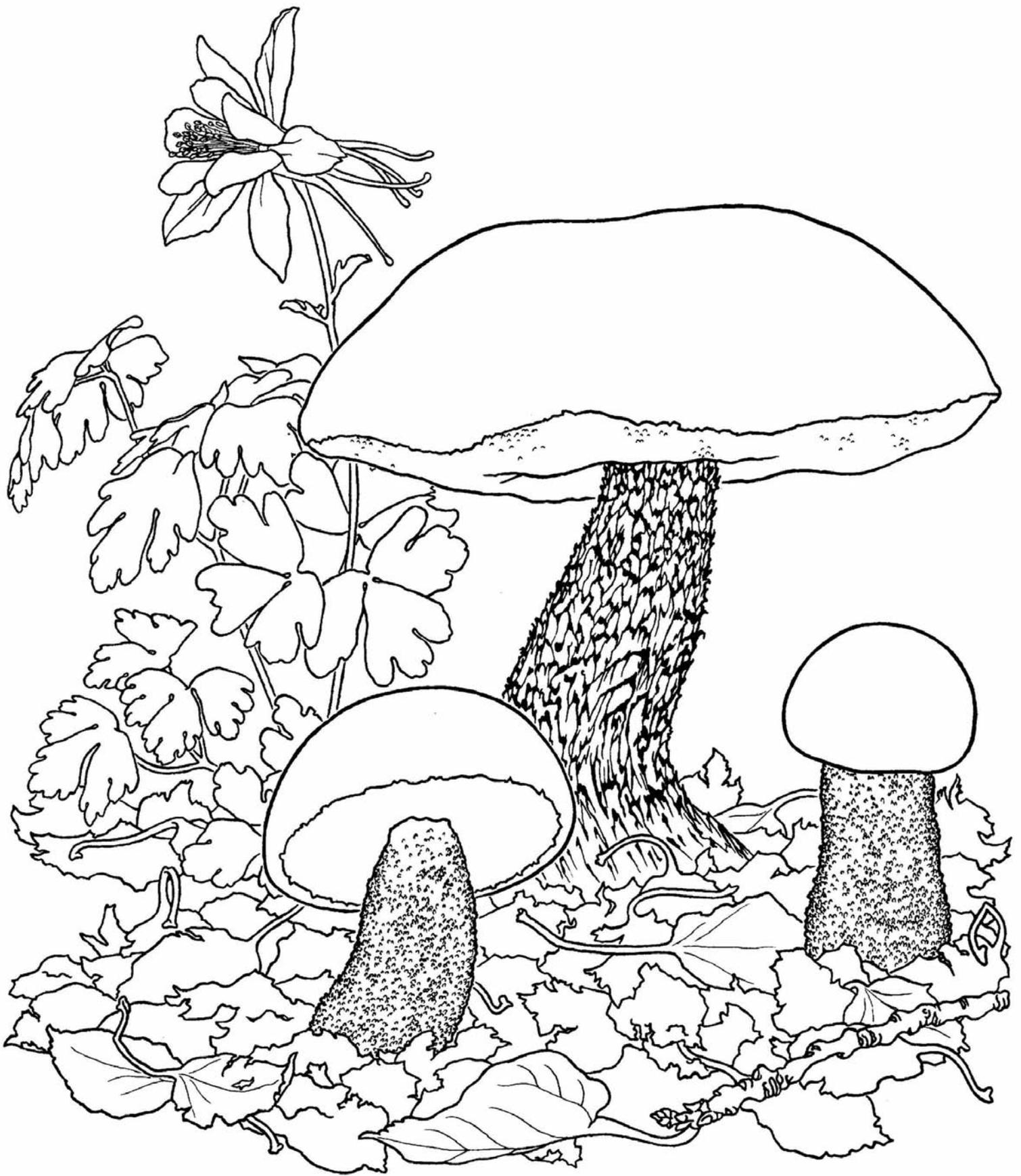
The mole has it at her fingertips, the slug finds it delicious, the chipmunk is a connoisseur of its networks, under the deer's sharp hooves, it is broken and healed.

It is a blanket woven in the bed of the earth.

It is patient as the desert, willing to wait a month or a season for the engorgement of rain, the carnal urgency of fruit, the ethereal casting of spores.

Some believe they know about the longings of trees, their reachings for the sky, their intimacy with the air, but a tree meets its true lover in a secret tryst under the earth, in the clasping of root tips the sheathing, the enfolding, the flowing back and forth, the quenches and bodily gifts of the mycorrhizal embrace.

— Kathie Fiveash, author, *Island Naturalist*



NJMA Coloring Contest artwork

Print out this page and "get to it!"

(See contest details in the Editor's Notes on [page 5](#))