

NJMA NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
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NJMA EVENTS HOTLINE

908-227-0872 for information on
event cancellations due to unduly-
inclement weather. It is **NOT** for gen-
eral inquiries or to contact officers!



Sarcoscypha austriaca
Eastern Scarlet Cup

This striking spring cup fungus is usually
found during morel season on dead
and decaying twigs and limbs.

PHOTO BY JIM BARG

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The big news is NJMA's 40th Fungus Fest will return this year! It will be held on Sunday, September 24, 2023, at Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morris County. This location has been used for the past 14 Fungus Fests (2006-2019).

A big thank you to all our members who have committed to volunteering at this event. Those who have attended this event in the past will see many new faces behind the display tables. For me, this is bittersweet. Several knowledgeable and reliable volunteers have unfortunately passed away in the past few years, including most recently, our beloved children's corner host Betty Wise. Betty may never have wanted a position with a title, but she contributed to our club in many other ways. Fungus Fest was just one of them.

Our volunteers often take on multiple roles. For a newer member, it takes a leap of faith to agree to shoulder club responsibilities, especially knowing you will be compared to those before you – people who may have been involved in fungi longer, and with NJMA in particular. Our editor, Sydney Hilton, was one of those who took that leap in 2022. In 2023, even more members are doing so. And next year in 2024 there will be a new President as I will have reached the two-year limit enshrined in our by-laws. Change can bring new energy.

In 2023, our new Education Chairperson is Brandon Roddy. Many of you already know Brandon from forays and the online Taxonomy Tuesday identification sessions. Brandon is taking the Education chair responsibilities from Trustee Luke Smithson, who has now assumed roles at the national club, NAMA (<https://namyco.org/>). Brandon's first action was to arrange for an in-person microscope class on June 10 at Rutgers. This will be our first fully indoor event since 2019.

In another change, our Vice-president Stephanie Bierman has passed the duties of Cultivation Chair to Ayesha Dolasa. Ayesha, the owner of Noble Mushrooms in Somerset County, quickly arranged not one, but two spring cultivation workshops. Both were quickly sold out.

The first cultivation event was also our first joint event with NOFA-NJ. NOFA-NJ is the Northeast Organic Farming Association (<https://nofanj.org/>). That organization has many educational events for gardeners and farmers that may be of interest to members. NJ may not

be the *Mushroom Capital of the World* like Pennsylvania, but we are the *Garden State*. So, I'd like to encourage everyone to support their local farmers. As mycophiles, we can help make sustainably cultivated mushrooms part of every farmer's market by trying the many edible varieties of mushrooms they have to offer.

Finally, may this foray season bring less heat, more rain, and good health for everyone.

– Sue McClary



EDITOR'S NOTES

Hi everyone! Welcome to spring — the weather is really starting to turn, days are getting longer and longer, and I have my fingers crossed that this year supplies us with a rainy, or at least, humid, summertime. The schedule will be posted in this newsletter, but as a gentle reminder, our first foray is (at the time of me writing this) 65 days away! Our kickoff to mushroom season is in my neck of the woods (and, coincidentally, where most of our members are located), in Monmouth County, specifically Shark River Park. Be there or be square, 10:00AM sharp on June 25th, rain or shine. Bring a basket and a knife (no plastic bags!), of course.

The newsletter is always looking for submissions, in the form of pictures, articles, photos – whatever you can think of – that has any relation to fungi. Send your submissions in to the editor, me, at njmaeditor@njmyco.org, and we'll be sure to run it in the next edition. This edition is fairly light on content as we wait for foraging season to commence, so be sure to send your fungi finds in before the submission date of July 15, 2023. Until then folks, enjoy the lovely weather, and follow us on Facebook and Instagram. See you at the forays!

– Sydney Hilton

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.

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PHOTO BY SUE McCLARY

Joint NOFA and NJMA Mushroom Cultivation Workshop with Jake Tulus, Ayesha Dolasa and Tony Kennette



PHOTO BY SUE McCLARY

Education Chair Brandon Roddy at Atlantic County Utilities Authority Earth Day on April 23



PHOTO BY SUE McCLARY

Long time volunteers Virginia Tomat and Richard Kelly at Wild Earth Fest in Mountainside, NJ during April outreach event

Send in your articles and photos!

SUBMISSION DEADLINES for NJMA NEWS

NJMA News is a quarterly publication timed roughly to correspond with the middle of each season. The new issue dates and deadlines for the coming year are as follow:

SUMMER (August) issue: Deadline is 7/15/2023

FALL (November) issue: Deadline is 10/15/2023

WINTER (February) issue: Deadline is 1/15/2024

SPRING (May) issue: Deadline is 4/15/2024

Join us this and every Tuesday!

TAXONOMY TUESDAYS

Online every Tuesday evening at 7:00PM on ZOOM!

Download the ZOOM app to your phone, computer, or tablet and have digital photos of your mushrooms ready to present to the group.

Watch your email for details!

2023 MYCO-DYEING WORKSHOP

by Sydney Hilton

On Sunday, May 14th, a handful of NJMA members met up in Egg Harbor City. The group didn't meet up to go looking for mushrooms — they met up to dye with them. Long-term club member and expert volunteer Ursula Pohl spearheaded the workshop of eight people. Using her dried samples of fungi, Ursula and her protégés worked their magic at a process lovingly referred to as 'myco-dyeing', a fascinating and often time-consuming process that involves boiling mushrooms to extract their color.

The group used wool yarn, silk scarves, and some undyed items that people brought from home. White wool was turned a deep, blood red through the extracted color of *Cortinarius semisanguineus* (sanguine — it's in the name, people!). When pH was altered, the *C. semisanguineus* turned into a beautiful coral pink color! *Phaeolus schwenitzii* (or Dyer's Polypore) transformed the fabric a honey-mustard yellow.

There are several species of fungi found in the state of New Jersey that can be used for dyeing purposes. If you'd like to know more, our website has a whole page dedicated to the process of myco-dyeing at <https://www.njmyco.org/mycocrafts.html>. If you'd like something travel-sized, the book *Mushrooms for Color* by Miriam Rice is a handy resource that gets into the nitty-gritty of mushroom dyeing.



A copy of *Mushrooms for Color* by Miriam Rice and a sample of Ursula Pohl's previous mushroom dyeing attempts



The workshop was held outside while working with chemicals like ammonia

A word of warning to those with an interest in dyeing: Some of the chemicals involved are toxic. Don't dye with a pot that you cook food in. To be safe, certain steps in this process, specifically mordanting and dyeing, should be done outside or in a well-ventilated area. *With gloves.*

Safe dyeing!



Pholiota squarrosa in a pot



PHOTO BY SYDNEY HILTON

IN MEMORIAM

BETTY WISE (1957-2023)

by Virginia Tomat

It is with great sadness that we inform you Betty (Miller) Wise passed away, on March 3 of this year. She was a member of NJMA for over a decade. She was a private person, but very much involved with many NJMA activities. She would regularly attend meetings, lectures, mycophagy events, and holiday dinners, to which she always would come bearing a creative gluten-free entree and dessert. She would attend most forays wearing a bright smile (which she didn't like to have photographed).

Betty regularly participated in the annual holiday dinner and photography competition. She was so happy when she won first prize in the Pictorial category in 2015.

During Fungus Fests before the pandemic, you would see Betty doing fun fungi activities with kids, as she oversaw the Children's Corner. In recent years, Betty led the Thompson Park forays, taking advantage of the familiarity she gained with the park through her many visits.



Back row left is Betty Wise and Virginia Tomat at Thompson Park Foray – August 2022

Betty loved nature and visiting parks and places of historical significance in New Jersey. Many times, after the classification session of forays, she would invite fellow mushroom hunters Richard and Virginia Tomat to explore those areas with her.

Betty was crazy for Maitakes. Like many foragers, she had her favorite hunting grounds to which she would return each year.

Betty enjoyed amusing practical jokes and laughing at others' jokes. One of the most memorable instances of her playfulness was during a Princeton Institute Woods foray - the morel foray. No one was having any luck. To lift spirits, Betty affixed a sweet gumball on a stick and joyfully announced that she had found a morel. Only upon closer inspection did John Burghardt and others realize they had been duped, causing Betty's bright smile and twinkle in her eyes to appear.


Betty will be sorely missed by all her friends in the club.

From Virginia Tomat:

The last time I heard from Betty was in relation to a NJMA Zoom meeting, which she reminded me to attend. None of my messages after that were answered, which worried me as that was not characteristic behavior as she would always respond shortly after my initial call. Later I learned she was in the hospital.

I met Betty in a foray at the Schiff Nature Center. She approached me and since then we were friends and always searched each other out at all NJMA events. I will miss her a lot, especially her company during forays and mushroom classification sessions.

From Sue McClary:

I met Betty at the forays when I first joined NJMA in the summer of 2015, but I was still really surprised that I actually knew one of the Photo Contest Winners. I do not think I ever saw her taking photographs. Betty's creative side really expressed itself in "Chocolates, Anyone?" - *Strobilomyces floccopus* in NJMA News, January 2016, on page 7 (<https://tinyurl.com/44sk8jev>). 



Janeen Piaciotto Betty Wise and Virginia Tomat at 2018 NJMA Holiday Dinner



Betty Wise at 2018 Fungus Fest

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, June 10 10:00am - 1:30pm	MICROSCOPE WORKSHOP RUTGERS UNIVERSITY Wait for email on pre registration and additional \$10 fee payment. New Brunswick, <i>Middlesex County</i>
Sunday, June 25	FORAY: SHARK RIVER PARK Wall Township, NJ, <i>Monmouth County</i>
Sunday, July 9	FORAY: MEADOWOOD PARK Mendham, <i>Morris County</i>
Sunday, July 16 10:00am	FORAY: HACKLEBARNEY STATE PARK Long Valley, <i>Morris County</i>
Sunday, July 23 10:00am	FORAY: HORSESHOE BEND - SOUTH Kingwood Township, <i>Hunterdon County</i>
Saturday, July 29 10:00am	FORAY: THOMPSON/HELMETTA PARK Monroe Township, <i>Middlesex County</i>
Sunday, August 6 10:00am	FORAY: TEETERTOWN RAVINE Lebanon Township, <i>Hunterdon County</i>
Saturday, August 12 10:00am	FORAY: GREEN TURTLE POND West Milford Township, <i>Passaic County</i>
Sunday, August 20 10:00am	GRETE TURCHICK FORAY AND PICNIC Stokes State Forest, Kittle Field Sandyston, <i>Sussex County</i>
Thursday – Sunday August 24 – 27	APPALACHIA NAMA 2023 - 62nd ANNUAL FORAY Hendersonville, NC Register at namyco.org
Sunday, August 27 10:00am	FORAY: SCOTLAND RUN PARK Clayton, NJ, <i>Gloucester County</i>
Saturday, September 9 10:00am	FORAY: KITTATINNY VALLEY STATE PARK Andover Township, <i>Sussex County</i>
Thursday – Sunday September 14 – 17	NEMF FORAY 2023 Soyuzifka Ukrainian Retreat Center Kerhonkson, NY Register at nemf.org
Sunday, September 17 10:00am	FORAY: WAWAYANDA STATE PARK Hewitt (West Milford) <i>Passaic/Sussex Counties</i>
Sunday, September 24 10:30am – 4:00pm	NJMA'S FUNGUS FEST 2023 Frelinghuysen Arboretum Morris Township, <i>Morris County</i>
Sunday, October 1 10:00am	FORAY AND PICNIC - SMITHVILLE PARK Smith's Woods Area Eastampton Township, <i>Burlington County</i>

...and plenty more to come!

WHO'S IN A NAME?

Trichophyton benhamiae

by John Dawson (ninetieth in a series)

Trichophyton is a genus of anamorphic dematophytes, asexual fungi that cause dermatologic infections, such as ringworm, athlete's foot and jock itch, in humans and other animals. One species, *Trichophyton benhamiae*, is an emerging¹ zoonotic pathogen that is transmitted to humans primarily by guinea pigs. Its specific epithet, *benhamiae*, honors the pioneer medical mycologist Rhoda Williams Benham.

Benham was born 5 December 1894 in Cedarhurst, New York, a village on Long Island, where she received her primary and secondary schooling and maintained a permanent residence throughout her life. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in botany from Barnard College of Columbia University in 1917 and remained there for subsequent graduate study until 1925, during which time she served as a teaching assistant, received a master's degree in botany, and began doctoral work in mycology under the direction of Professor Herbert M. Richards.

For her dissertation, she originally embarked upon a study of metal nutrition in the mold *Aspergillus niger*. Before completing that endeavor, however, she was recruited by Professor J. Gardner Hopkins of Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons, to join a laboratory he was founding devoted to the study of pathogenic fungi. She had been recommended to him by his friend Dr. B. O. Dodge, a mycologist who had been one of Benham's teachers at Barnard and had been impressed by Benham's talents and work ethic. Hopkins, in turn, was so impressed by her work that he invited her to become an Assistant in Dermatology. She spent the rest of her career at the College of Physicians and Surgeons (later the College of Medicine), where she not only pursued research in mycology that resulted in 43 scholarly publications², but was also a dedicated teacher. In 1935, together with Professors Hopkins and Dodge, she organized the first

course in medical mycology in the United States, a graduate-level offering sponsored jointly by the Departments of Microbiology and Dermatology.

Four years earlier, Benham had received her Ph.D. in botany from Barnard for a pathbreaking dissertation on "medical *Monilias*," as species of *Candida* were then known. Entitled "Certain *Monilias* parasitic on man, their identification by morphology and by agglutination," it was the first application of immunologic techniques in the taxonomic study of fungal pathogens. Using such techniques she was able to show that samples of yeast-like pathogenic fungi isolated from human lesions, previously identified as belonging to four different fungal genera, were in fact all specimens of *Candida albicans*. She also gave criteria for distinguishing *Candida albicans* from other species of *Candida* and advocated the use of corn meal infusion agar as a culture medium for it, a medium that "remains unsurpassed for the rapid induction of diagnostic chlamydospores" in that species.³



Rhoda W. Benham

Subsequently, Dr. Benham conducted studies of fungal parasites in several other genera, including *Cryptococcus*, *Phoma*, *Pityrosporum*, *Allescheria*, and *Beauveria*. An avid amateur photographer, she enjoyed not only "photographing her fungi at work,"

but "photographing flowers, trees and members of her family and friends at play."⁴ She used her photos of fungi in preparing lantern slides for her classes and left a large collection of photos of fungal cultures, histologic sections, and patients' lesions to the Department of Dermatology.⁵

Benham held membership in many scientific societies, including Sigma Xi, the New York Academy of Medicine, New York Academy of Sciences, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Mycological Society of America. She was also a founding co-editor of the journal *Mycopathologia*.

In 1948, Benham suffered a heart attack for which she was hospitalized. After nearly a year's absence from

(continues on [next page](#))


¹ According to a 2019 article in *Medical Mycology Case Reports* (available online at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6290094/>), infections by *T. benhamiae* increased worldwide during the previous 15 years.

² A list of all of them is included at the end of the obituary memoir of Benham by Margarita Silva and Elizabeth Hazen published in *Mycologia* (vol. 49:4, July–August 1957, pp. 596–603). That memoir is the source both of the information about Benham recounted in this profile and the accompanying portrait of her.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 600.

⁵ *Loc.cit*

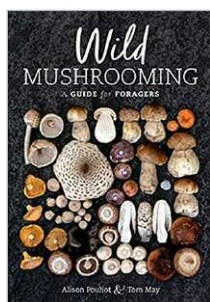
work, she resumed her studies of *Beauveria* and dermatophytes, and from 1948 through 1953, she assisted the New York State Department of Health as a consultant on mycology. Further health problems in the summer of 1955 forced her to retire from the laboratory as Associate Professor of Dermatology, though she continued to prepare manuscripts for two more papers, the last of which was published posthumously. For the final year and a half of her life, she lived at her home in Cedarhurst. She died at age 62 on 17 January 1957, and was buried in the Episcopalian cemetery of her home parish in Hewlett, New York. Her personal papers and manuscripts form part of the Margarita Silva-Hutner Medical Mycology Laboratory Collection, housed in the archives and special collections division of the Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library at Columbia University's Irving Medical Center.⁶ 

⁶ See <https://www.library-archives.cumc.columbia.edu/finding-aid-subjects/benham-rhoda-williams-1894>

BOOK REVIEW

WILD MUSHROOMING: A GUIDE FOR FORAGERS

a review by Sue McClary



Wild Mushrooming: A Guide for Foragers

by Alison Pouliot and Tom May

CSIRO Publishing (May 15, 2021)
320 pages

ISBN-10: 1486311733
ISBN-13: 978-1486311736


This ecological-oriented foraging book covers ten edible and eight poisonous mushroom species, which are mostly associated with exotic trees like oak and pine. Exotic? In this case, yes, because this book is written for the Australian forager.

It may be that the species selected were based on prevalence or reliability on edibility information, I do not know. But I know you will feel right at home in this book. According to the authors, Australians are a bit further behind than other countries in discovering their fungi (about 5000 species, see <https://fungimap.org.au/>). But now, with 29% percent of Australians born in other countries, interest in fungi foraging is growing.

The fungal knowledge once derived from the Australian Indigenous people was mostly lost due to the Europeans arrival and its disruption of their culture. To find dessert truffles (such as *Elderia* sp.), Indigenous Australians would push a stick into the ground, and then smell the end of it. To keep away flies, they would use the spores of their stalked puffball (*Podaxis* sp.).

The book starts with a few introductory chapters on fungi. The reader is walked through how to examine a fungus based on morphology, color, texture, smell, taste, spore print and chemical tests. But where the book really shines is in presenting a full page of between 13-20 pictures for each profiled mushroom species at various ages from button stage to maturity, complete with closeups and with different coloration appearances.

It introduces the forager first to the poisonous species (e.g., *Agaricus xanthodermus*, yellow stainer), explains what they can do to you, and not just the typical digestive symptoms or organ damage, but other reactions like purple urine (from *Hapalopilus rutilans*), *Paxillus* syndrome, and Shiitake dermatitis. Then the edible species are profiled, followed by recipes contributed by a wide range of people. The 29 recipes do not really tie into the species in the book and many use commercially available mushrooms. So, even if you never forage, you will still have a useful cookbook.

Only some native Australian species are mentioned, not profiled, in the book such as Beech Orange (*Cyttaria* sp.), which is eaten in Chile, and Native Bread (*Laccoccephalum mylittae*). They also have native morels and 'vegetable caterpillars' (*Ophiocordyceps* sp.). Fungi have a short season in Australia, so before you pack your bags for an August foraging trip, you may want to add to your gear list, salt for leeches, and 70% methylated spirits to clean your boots to prevent introducing pathogens into new areas. And please, if you forage with latex gloves, do not create litter with them. Apparently, that is a problem Down Under that we don't have here. 



BYTES, BITS, & BITES TASTY LITTLE TIDBITS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Have you read something interesting concerning mushrooms or foraging?
Send it to njmaeditor@njmyco.org and share with the rest of our members!

from Jim Richards:

I Went to Mushroom Camp and Came Home with
These Incredible Fungi Facts:

<https://tinyurl.com/yc7zepmw>

from Jim Richards:

Perfect for novice foragers, these mushrooms are delicious, easy to find, and are not easily confused with toxic species:

<https://tinyurl.com/5ed9295t>

from Sue McClary:

French pharmacies identify mushrooms:

<https://tinyurl.com/4k842wrt>

from Sue McClary:

Mushrooms are everywhere. Here's how to forage, eat and grow the mighty fungi in Los Angeles:

<https://tinyurl.com/5buupvtz>

