

# Spore-Addict Times



The Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society

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## MONTHLY MEETING:

**WHEN?** Monday, July 27, 2009 – The fourth Monday of the month.

**WHAT TIME?** 6:30 pm; the meeting will come to order at 7:00 pm.

**WHERE?** Pikes Peak National Bank, 2401 W. Colorado Ave. (across from Bancroft Park). Enter at the door on Colorado Ave., just west of the bank door. There you will find stairs and an elevator. You may use either. The room is on the second floor near the head of the stairs.

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.pikespeakmushrooms.com/>

## **PROGRAM:**

The July program will be presented by Ed Lubow, past president of the Colorado Mycological Society in Denver. Subject:

### **Genera of the Tricholomataceae in Colorado**

Goodies after the meeting will be provided by Doris Bennett and Eve Hart.

### **President's Notes:** by Judy Willey

Our club has been on a couple of forays. It appears that mushrooms are following their own rules this year. They are early by all accounts. I found a White King bolete on July 4 on Pikes Peak. Gold Camp road sites revealed more boletes as well. It looks like this could be a good year. I hope that more members can join us on our next adventure. I look forward to our meeting July 27. By then I will have been to Antiques Roadshow in Denver.

### **A Big Thank you!** From Bud Bennett

I have been getting a lot of items for the newsletter from members this year. This has been a big help to me and also has improved our newsletter content. Thanks a bunch to all who have participated. Keep those cards, letters, and emails coming!

## **Ad Hoc Forays:**

Ad Hoc (unscheduled) Forays are ongoing this summer. To lead an ad hoc foray simply call our Foray Coordinator, Esther, and tell her the details. Other interested members who wish to go on an unscheduled foray will call Esther to find out details and be given the name and phone number of the foray leader. It's that simple!

## **FORAY REPORT:**

On Saturday, June 20 nine members met at Red Rock Shopping Center to go up Pikes Peak. We had three cars that had permits. The best spots turned out to be near the reservoirs at Mile marker 8. We found about two dozen morels as well as *Hydnum repandum*, *Suillus* spp., *Leccinum*, a *Rhizopogon* and 2 *Truncocolumella citrina*. The weather was great and the road was great.

On Saturday, July 7 nine members met at the Tennis court (21st and Argus) to go up Stage Road to Upper Gold Camp Road. We made several stops from altitude 9500 to 10000 ft. Mila Essam was our very outstanding hunter - way more *Boletus edulis*, *Morchella angusticeps*, *Sarcodon imbricatus*, *Leccinum insigne* and *Leccinum fibrillosum* than her elders. *Mycena pura*, *Tricholoma saponaceum* and *Tricholoma* spp., *Suillus brevipes*, *Hydnum repandum*, *Pholiota squarrosa* also turned up. No rain on us, but moisture is certainly making 2009 a record year for mushrooms and bad roads.

## **FORAY SCHEDULE**

There are currently no forays scheduled. Members will be alerted to future organized forays via email or phone.



**Photo Gallery:**



**Bob Noyd with Paul Stamets in Vancouver Last Summer.**



**This *Albetrellus confluens* was sent to us via our website from Izaak Rohman, a prospective member.**



**Eva Mattedi sent this photo of a jelly fungus fruiting on a live juniper.**



**Eva Mattedi took this picture of a *Morchella augusticeps***



**This is better than an Easter egg hunt! Word has it that Mila Essam was the most successful hunter at the July 7th foray. It appears that the *Boletus edulis* is early this year. Photo by Frieda Davis.**





Photo By Mike Essam



Lea Barzee, Frieda Davis and Mila Essam at the July 7th foray



Lea Barzee getting some tips on hunting mushrooms from Mila Essam at the July 7th foray



What a haul - Boletes and morels at the same time!



A cort of course... not in the best condition



*Leccinum insigne* from Izaak Rohman

## Bits & Pieces:

### Wild about Mushrooms

18/07/2008

When Russians escape to the countryside they might go fishing, hunting, play badminton and so on. But what really strikes foreigners is the Russian predilection for gathering mushrooms. For Russian people, however, there is nothing strange about going to some woods and gathering mushrooms in the wild for eating. After a heavy rain, during mushroom season, whole families often venture into the nearest forest, picking bucketfuls of mushrooms, which are cooked and eaten for dinner upon return or, alternatively, dried or marinated for later consumption.

One of the most fascinating things about this activity is that even city residents know the most out-of-the-way paths in the forests, the special "mushroom places," and which mushrooms are edible and which could literally kill you. Yes, it is possible to buy fresh, marinated or dried mushrooms in the store, but the aim of mushroom pickers is the joy of harvesting your own delicacies. "This jar contains ones I picked two years ago near Tver," one mushroom hunter told me, turning the jar. "Look how pretty their stripes are and at the caps they have..."

Thousands of years ago, Egyptian Pharaohs declared mushrooms sacred and reserved them for their own, godly, use. The Romans called them "food for the gods." The tradition of collecting mushrooms used to exist in a number of countries, but today Russia is one of last. During the long history of gathering mushrooms Russians have acquired lots of different legends and superstitions. Russian peasants considered any welcome surplus of mushrooms to betoken a similarly welcome surplus of bread. If you see a mushroom in your sleep, then Russians say it is a sign of tears to come. Whenever there are more mushrooms than you can deal with, it is a sign of war. In 1940, there were lots and lots of mushrooms, and the next year World War II broke out.

Each true 'mushroomer' has his own secrets and certain words "to attract" mushrooms. Approaching the forest, they often say "Mother-soil, excuse me! Trees and leaves, relieve me." Are you ready to adopt this little Russian tradition?

### Smut of a Different Sort

by Chris Dunn, The Houston Chronicle

I've always considered myself an adventurous eater — not in the shock sense, like Andrew Zimmern nibbling a lamb's eyeball on *Bizarre Foods* — but because I have a genuine curiosity about the diverse foods and cultures of our world. I admit I have my limits. A potential candidate for my consumption must not be an endangered species or one dispatched cruelly. I also try to avoid dishes with names like Death by Chocolate. (I waver somewhat on that last caveat).

So when my friend Miriam Name Almanza from Mexico offered me huitlacoche, "a mushroom that grows on corn" as she described it, I thought it sounded innocent enough. After all, it's just a mushroom ... isn't it?

My first taste of huitlacoche was ensconced in a golden fried corn empanada. Inside was crumbled queso fresco and a dollop of the blackest goop I have ever encountered on a dinner plate. Happily, it tasted creamy, earthy and slightly sweet, with woody, mushroom overtones. It was delicious.

A few months later on a trip to Mexico, I encountered huitlacoche again, this time in a crepe cloaked with a delicate cream sauce. The server described it as Mexican caviar. I noted the contradictory description but loved it anyway. When I returned from my trip, I had several cans of the stuff in my suitcase (the only way you can bring it into this country) and a desire to learn more about this enigmatic food.

I discovered that huitlacoche, also spelled cuitlacoche, is actually a fungus, *Ustilago maydis*, that grows on corn plants, causing the kernels to swell and become filled with a thick black substance that is the key to huitlacoche's success.

It only appears when conditions are right, during intervals of warm, wet weather; but when it does, it increases the dollar value of an ear of corn by as much as 20 to 50 times. Therefore, farmers in Mexico, like their Aztec ancestors, consider it a delicacy and pray for its arrival.

American corn farmers, on the other hand, pray (and spray) to prevent sacred huitlacoche from appearing. In fact, they refer to it by an entirely different name — corn smut. Yes, corn smut. And therein lay my dilemma.



If I'd only known it by its ancient, mystical sounding name, huitlacoche, I'd have been fine. But its name in the States conjures up images of dirt, nastiness and things people don't want in their neighborhoods, much less their kitchens. Even *Botrytis cinerea*, the fungus that transforms grapes into such rarities as sauternes and eiswein, is referred to as Noble Rot; but huitlacoche got stuck with a moniker that is the vegetable equivalent of "A Boy Named Sue."

To make matters worse, I learned that the original Nahuatl Indian word for huitlacoche, cuitlacochin, translates loosely as "Excrement of the Gods," which albeit descriptive, did nothing to ease my mind — or stomach.

The James Beard House in New York City tried to overcome this obvious marketing drawback by dubbing huitlacoche Mexican Truffle when it was introduced at a special dinner there in September 1989. Guests loved the taste, but deep down, I'm guessing everybody was thinking "smut."

I became leery of a food whose true nature people kept trying to hide by giving it fanciful names; so, I avoided "smutlacoche" for awhile. Then, it occurred to me that people tinker with the names of food all the time, like substituting caviar for fish eggs or mountain oysters for ... perhaps in order to make the taste sound better.

Mario Batali's Bacco Restaurant in New York couldn't give away a pork fat delicacy called lardo in Italy until they renamed it white prosciutto; then, it became a hit.

So having thought about it, I have decided to enjoy my *Ustilago maydis* no matter what it is called; because, after all, huitlacoche by any other name would taste as sweet.

## Morel Destruction in Michigan

– by Jim Provcí

Our ex-president's Cousin has White morels growing in his yard. This is true because I saw it with my own eyes. **He mows them down with a riding lawn mower.** He hates them & considers them a weed. Michigan people are weird sometimes. I am generally "up north" when they fruit, but I did see them chopped up. Also the guy is "Polish" and my wife could not believe that a Polish person would hate mushrooms.

So maybe you will get lucky and someone will have boletes growing in their yard and wishes to have them destroyed.

## Don't Get Lost – by Bud Bennett

"Mushroomer" is a dirty word in the Search & Rescue community. I am treasurer of the Custer County Search & Rescue (CCSAR) – so I know a bit about these things. Every year CCSAR is called to find a few mushroom hunters that have lost their way. Please don't become one of them.

PPMS publishes articles about surviving a night in the wilderness nearly every year – that's important, but we never print anything about not getting lost in the first place or the cost of rescue if you are lost. Here's the scoop about the impact of getting lost.

Here's an example. In June, five males ranging in age from 11 to 42 decided to tube Grape Creek from just below DeWeese dam to Canon City, which was running nearly over its banks at the time. This was a 16.5 mile trip. Their equipment: swimsuits, t-shirts, water bottle, and inner tube. They did not arrive at their destination at the appointed time and CCSAR was called to find them the following morning. Four teams of horses were dispatched, two teams of "ground pounders", and a radio relay team was implemented due to the poor communications in the creek valley (12 CCSAR members roused out of bed at 5:00am on Sunday). In addition, a Flight For Life Helicopter was called into play due to the difficult terrain. The helicopter located the tubers in about 5 minutes – 12.5 miles below the dam. The tubers had no shoes so they couldn't walk out if they wanted to. So the horse teams had to carry them across the raging creek to safety.

Total cost of this 5 hour operation: over \$1000.00 - \$500 of which went to pay for the helicopter which was in the air less than 1 hour. None of the tubers had paid any Search and Rescue fee (fishing/hunting license, boat registration, ATV registration or CORSAR card) that would have compensated CCSAR.

Last fall a much bigger operation was mounted to find a missing mushroomer in the Wet Mountains. After finding the mushroomer safe and sound it was learned that this was the second time the CCSAR had been called to find this particular person. CCSAR has never charged a fee for its services, but there was some talk about changing that policy for repeat offenders.

So... purchasing a \$60 GPS receiver (as described in the April newsletter) and a FRS radio to prevent this from happening to you seems to be a pretty reasonable expense. Yes?

## Website Developments

Nothing to report...

## PPMS Logo Contest Ongoing

There have been no new logo designs submitted for consideration as of press time. Remember – there is a \$25 award for the winning entry! So put your thinking caps on and send in those cards, letters or emails.

## Mushroom Woman's 3am Plinth Stint

- BBC News



A Cardiff University scientist has spent her hour as a living monument in London's Trafalgar Square dressed as a mushroom and defending fungi.

Martha Crockatt, a research associate in Cardiff School of Biosciences, took her turn on the fourth plinth. There was a crowd of only 15 watching her from 3-4am, but she called her unusual art experience "wonderful".

The 28-year-old, who is originally from Norwich but has been in Cardiff since arriving to study in 1999, said: "My time on the plinth was a celebration of an often overlooked section of life which is of vital importance to our planet.

"Many people think of fungi in a negative light but, in fact, human beings could not survive without them. For example, over 85% of plants obtain their nutrients and water from soil through fungi."

"Fungi are the main garbage disposal agents and nutrient recyclers of the natural world and are important in producing human food. Perhaps, most surprisingly, fungi are even essential for chocolate production as they actually produce its characteristic flavour."

Dr Crockatt added: "Penicillin is also produced by a fungus, as are many of the 'wonder drugs' of the 21st Century, including medicines for

controlling cholesterol and preventing transplant tissue rejection.

"Clearly this vast kingdom, though often hidden from sight and unappreciated, is crucial to our very existence."

(Editor's note: I'll bet everybody in the club would like a hat like that!)

## What's Cookin'

### MUSHROOM MICROWAVE RISOTTO

Serves 4

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

½ cup finely chopped onion

1 cup chopped mushrooms (wild, of course!)

1 clove garlic, minced

1 cup uncooked Arborio rice

¾ cups hot low-fat, low-salt chicken broth, divided

¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Freshly ground black pepper, optional

1. Put olive oil in microwave-safe 2-quart dish. Add chopped onion, mushrooms, and garlic and stir to coat with olive oil.

2. Cook uncovered on high, about 2 minutes, until mushrooms and onion begin to soften. Add uncooked rice and stir to coat grains well.

3. Cook on high 1 minute, or until grains appear translucent.

4. Pour in 3 cups hot broth and cook uncovered on high for 9 minutes. Stir well and continue to cook on high for 9 more minutes, or until rice is cooked through but still a bit chewy.

5. Remove dish from microwave and let stand, covered, 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Uncover and add Parmesan cheese and remaining broth, if needed. Season to taste with pepper.

The Pikes Peak Mycological Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of mycology, publishes Spore-Addict Times monthly from April-October. Membership is open to anyone wanting to study mycology. Annual dues are \$15 for individual and family memberships. **Submission of ideas, articles, reviews, letters, artwork and recipes are welcome.**

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June's Mystery Mushroom was *Hydnum repandum* aka  
*Dentinum repandum*.

## MYSTERY MUSHROOM

by Bob Noyd

If your foray takes you to upper montane and subalpine habitats in July, August or September, then we may get a chance to meet. I am a fairly robust mushroom that sometimes grows in clumps in the soil around my favorite trees –spruce and pines. If the conditions are favorable, I produce a fruiting body with a nearly flat cap with tufts of reddish-brown fibrils, or hairs radiating out from the center. My cap is about 1-3” wide, dry and scaly with inrolled margins, along with remnants of a cottony partial veil. When you cut off my cap to make a spore print, you will notice that my stalk is white, soft, fleshy and fibrous turning a reddish-brown color with age. My attached gills are not thick or waxy but do show a small notch (called sinuate). Be sure to place my cap on dark paper, because my spore print will be white.

Who am I?

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