



PIKES PEAK MYCOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

----- APRIL, 1983 -----

MEETING:

MONDAY, April 25th at 7:00 p.m. at Rastall Center, Colorado College, we will hold our Annual Meeting. Since there is a lot of business to conduct, we are asking that you come at 7:00. This meeting will be a pot luck. This is not a wild mushroom tasting meeting. Members whose last name begins with A through F could bring a main dish; members whose names are G through S could bring salad and names from T through W could bring dessert. There will be coffee and lemonaid furnished by the club, compliments of the Gervais'. If you wish anything else to drink, you might bring that along. If for any reason you do not feel you could do what your category calls for, you could choose another. The club does have some paper plates and plastic flatware, but you could bring your own if you like.

ANNUAL MEETING. The nominating committee has a slate of officers. They are:

- |                  |   |                            |
|------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Dennis Craig     | - | President                  |
| Lee Barzee       | - | Vice President             |
| Pat Gustavson    | - | Treasurer                  |
| (Unannounced)    | - | Secretary                  |
| Foray CoChairmen | - | Don Berrigan<br>Noel Damon |

If there will be any further nominations from the floor, please obtain the approval of said candidate before the nomination. There will be several other committee chairmen sought. If you have any special talent you would like to offer, please do. Everyone is asked to participate, and we do not wish to leave anyone out that is simply waiting to be asked. Bill & Valarie Gervais accepted the Refreshment Chair.

WE WILL EAT FIRST, THEN HAVE THE BUSINESS MEETING.

FORAY

The first of the year. With the cottonwoods at the Hanna Ranch, we still feel there is a chance for a bumper crop of Plurotus. May 7th, Saturday, we will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Four Seasons' Parking Lot. Hanna Ranch is 7 miles south on I-25. Please wear high top boots. There could be water and/or critters. A picnic lunch is always in order for those who wish to stay and identify.

DUES

Though the Annual Meeting is April, the dues are for the calendar year. They are \$5.00 per family (the best bargain in town). If you have not yet paid yours, please contact Viola Garrett, or plan to bring it to the meeting, or send it to one of the officers. The May Newsletter could be the last you receive without renewing your membership. With all the exciting things going on this coming year, we know you will take the time to do this. Only members are invited to the NAMA Foray.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

## POISONOUS SPECIES IN THE GENUS AGARICUS

Scattered reports of indigestibility are attributed to species in various sections of the genus Agaricus, but only in the section Xanthodermati do we find a series of species containing a potent gastrointestinal irritant. As the saying goes, they won't kill you, but you may wish you were dead for a while.

The poisonous species all have an odor like creosote, phenol or ink, but not everyone can smell it so the odor shouldn't be relied upon. There is another characteristic though: many species in the Xanthodermati stain yellow when cut or bruised, especially on the cap surface and within the base of the stem. The yellow soon fades to a reddish or purplish brown, and its presence should be confirmed by testing with a basic solution.

Try using 1 tsp. of caustic soda (or Draino) in 1/4 cup water--remembering to discard any material used in the test--and apply to any part of the specimen. Poisonous Agaricus will turn bright yellow.

The edible species in the Arvenses section also turn yellow, but they have a distinct odor, identified as either almond or anise. If you're not sure of the odor, avoid these until you can identify them using keys, a microscope or tests more sophisticated than the one mentioned here.

Even though you may be excluding edible and choice species, the advantage of the Draino test is that you know the other edible Agaricus species will not turn yellow, including the most commonly sought A. campestris.

There are a number of poisonous Agaricus species in coastal California, and the following is only a partial list:

A. californicus resembles the Meadow Mushroom, and grows in lawns or under trees. It has a pale cap, 2" to 3" across, usually with a smokey-brown disc, and may be smooth or minutely cracked and scaly. The stem is slender, about 2" to 4" long, but seldom more than 1/2" wide, with a slight basal bulb and a pendant, rubbery, thick-margined ring. It has a phenol odor and a barely noticeable yellow stain, so use the Draino test on this one.

A. meleagris is a species of many forms and is often found under trees--especially redwoods. The cap is usually 3" to 7" across, flat at maturity and covered with dark grey-black squamules (brown in some varieties). The stem is 3" to 8" long and 1/2" to 1" wide, and the base stains deep yellow when cut. The ring is pendant and rubbery, with a very thick margin. A. placomyces is a similar species found in the eastern U.S.

A. xanthodermus is almost always found under planted trees, usually conifers. The cap is 3" to 6" across, often wavy, of white color (or sometimes pale brown) though the variety griseus is darker and rather like A. californicus in appearance. The stem is 2" to 5" long by 1/2" to 3/4" wide, with a large, slightly rubbery ring that tends to split apart at the margin. All parts of this mushroom stain yellow when handled.

A. hondensis, a forest-loving species, is often found in California. The extended cap is about 6" to 8" across and is covered with pale cream to slightly purplish-brown scales. If the cap has a deep reddish-brown color when young it is A. subrufescentoides, incorrectly called A. silvaticus by many. Both are tall, with stems commonly 6" to 10" long and 1/2" to 1-1/4" wide. The ring is slightly stiff and felty, rather than rubbery. When cut both only stain yellow at the base of the stem, and the odor of phenol there is strong. We rarely find A. subrufescentoides in our area, though.

There are species which don't fit any of these descriptions, but which have a phenolic odor that gets stronger when the specimen is cooked. Many can't force themselves to eat these "stinkers" -- though there are reports of others who have eaten them with no effect.

I would be interested in hearing from anyone who has eaten any of the questionable species--but, as might be expected, I have no desire to try them myself and advise you to avoid them.

Rick Kerrigan



## LAND'S END WALK CONTINUES

About six years ago Larry Stickney began his weekly mushroom foray at Land's End, meeting with local mushroomers at 9 AM on Sunday morning on the steps of the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco to comb Lincoln Park for edible fungi. Thanks to fog drip and golf course sprinklers, growing conditions are good, allowing collecting from October through May.

A common find is the shaggy parasol (Lepiota rachodes) -- an excellent edible species often listed as rare, but abundant here.

Other species often found at Land's End are the blewit (Clitocybe nuda), the shaggy mane (Coprinus comatus), the fairy ring mushroom (Marasmius oreades) and the Rodman agaricus (A. rodmani).