



SPORE-ADDICT TIMES

PIKES PEAK MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

APRIL 1987 NEWSLETTER

Our first meeting of the new '87 season, (the thirteenth) of the Society, will take place Monday evening, April 27th at 7:30 at the usual place, Otero Savings and Loan, corner of highway 115 and Cheyenne Mountain Blvd. Our program for the evening will be a slide show presented by Lee Barzee. Lee will show slides of past events of the club, forays, collections and specimens as well as those from her last class in Montana given by Orson Miller. Refreshments will be provided as usual after the meeting. Dues will remain the same as last year and all who have not previously paid are encouraged to do so at the meeting. Our previous policy of retaining members on the mailing list for only a limited period of time will again be employed this year.

As a new season begins, we look forward not only to good crops of collectables, but also to a year of active participation by members. Our new officers are planning the programs, classes, forays and would very much appreciate our help and most importantly, our participation. Several meetings of officers for planning purposes have already taken place. Perhaps one of the highlights of the coming season will be a class by Marilyn Shaw of the Denver Mycological Society to be given on June 20th and 27th. The class will be at a beginning level or for those with some experience in the identification of mushrooms. The class will stress the use of Marilyn's keys and other field guides, collecting, cooking and toxicology. Marilyn promises to teach the identification of more than 20 common species. The class will be from 9-12 AM at a location as yet to be determined. After bring-your-own lunch, local forays will take place to test out new knowledge with the help of Marilyn's guidance. The fee will be \$25 single, \$40 per couple and will include a year membership in the society. A discount will be given to paid club members. Those interested should contact Dennis Craig as soon as possible to permit planning of appropriate facilities.

TELURIDE CONFERENCE

The Teluride conference this year is scheduled for August 27, 28, 29, 30. If you wish to attend or would like additional information, such as a schedule, costs etc., you can write the Fungophile Inc. at P.O. Box 5503, Denver, CO. 80217-5503.

MUSHTRIVIA

Apropos perhaps of the onset of morel season but not otherwise, the Wisconsin Mycological Society reported in their December 85 newsletter the availability of a rather unique gift in the form of an 18 inch tall, 25 pound concrete replica of the "common" morel. Obtainable from Milwaukee Concrete Studios Ltd. for \$21, it is presumed by some form of mail order. This device suggests all sorts of applications....a paper weight for back issues of newsletters, a do-it-yourself photography kit for the forrest (can you picture the news release, together with photo, "mycophile suffers hernia collecting morel").

Continuing in this same vein...from "The Living Garden"

The weight of earthworms below equals that of cattle and sheep.....

"Earthworms are more numerous in grassland than in cultivated areas. Two or three years after the long-walk had been established there were about 100,000 earthworms in it, weighing in all about 32 pounds, which is quite a considerable biomass. This is understandable when we find that the weight of vegetable growth in the above- and below-ground habitats of a tree's roots tends to be equal to the weight and spread of its branches. The weight of earthworms in a pasture is usually equal to, or a little more, than the weight of cattle or sheep feeding on that pasture.

Darwin calculated that the casts (left on the surface by worms) on an average piece of grassland amounted to 10 tons of earth per acre per annum and they added one fifth of an inch of soil to the surface each year. Modern research confirms this figure, though 11 tons may be nearer the average, but not the increase in depth of soil, which is now thought to be 6-8 inches per century, the rate at which Stonehenge is sinking into the countryside. The pushing up of such large amounts of earth is one of the reasons why old ruins and artifacts get buried. Stones and other solid objects on lawns and pasture gradually sink into the soil as worm-casts accumulate above them. A halfpenny that Mark Barton dropped while inspecting the lawn in 1610 is now 26 inches below the surface.

Worms feed on organic matter in and on the soil, such as non-aromatic leaves, meat, fat, and cattle, horse and sheep droppings. Leaves are drawn into their burrows in a particular way, showing that worms have some intelligent appreciation of circumstances. Darwin, using leaves of different kinds, including some he made himself of colored paper, found that earthworms always seized a leaf by its pointed end, thus making it much easier to get it into a burrow than if it were taken by the broad end or by the side. This was in marked contrast to ants, reputedly so intelligent, which drag objects along the surface haphazardly with no concept of doing it the easiest way. The leaves are taken in at night (by the worms) to be used as food during the day."

This by way of preserving the proper breadth of perspective in considering decomposers....

CULLINARY CORNER

Have any dried Boletus left? Try these Pirogi Edulis....

Soak three tablespoons of dried mushrooms in a cup of hot water for a half hour. Chop the mushrooms coarsely. Brown 4 tablespoons of butter in a pan, add the mushrooms and a cup of sauerkraut which has been rinsed and squeezed dry together with a half cup of bread crumbs. Saute slowly until all moisture has been absorbed and mushrooms are tender. Add a little more butter, salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Make a dough by mixing one beaten egg into one cup of flour, add three to four tablespoons of cold water and knead well. Roll out dough thinly. Cut 3 to four inch circles. Place a heaping teaspoon of the mushroom mix in the center of a circle, wet the edges with a bit of water, fold in half and seal the edges with a fork. Bring a large kettle of salted water to a hard boil and add the pirogi. If all air has been squeezed out before sealing, the pirogi will sink. Boil for about ten minutes or until the pirogi float, cook an additional five minutes. Remove and drain (it helps to puncture with a fork). Pour a bit of browned butter over the pirogi and serve with a good mustard. Don't try this recipe with any other mushrooms! The recipe makes about 20-25 pirogi.

See you all at the opening meeting of the season...Noel