

Spore-Addict Times

The Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society September 1992

Romancing the 'shroom

by David Watson

For years cooking with mushrooms to me meant sautéing them or throwing them in a pot of spaghetti sauce. Over the past year, however, my idea of mushroom cuisine has become much more refined.

Last year, PPMS member Noel Damon introduced the Society to a book called *A Passion for Mushrooms* by Antonio Carluccio. I was struck at first glance by the

Polenta with Mushrooms

12 oz. fresh ceps or cultivated champignons plus 1 oz. dried ceps
1 small onion, chopped
3 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp butter
1 small can of peeled plum tomatoes
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Clean and slice mushrooms; soak dried ceps for 10 minutes. Fry chopped onion in oil and butter. Add the mushrooms and cook over a high flame for 10 minutes. Add the liquidized tomatoes and cook for another 20 minutes so that the water from the tomatoes evaporates. When done, add salt and pepper. Cook 1 pkg of 5-minute polenta. Stir in 2 tbsp butter and 1/4 cup freshly-grated Parmesan cheese. Serve in bowls. Pour some mushroom sauce into the middle of each and sprinkle more cheese over the top. [Condensed from *A Passion for Mushrooms*, Salem House Publishers, 1989.]

book's prominent photographs and by the its scope; it has preservation and field guide sections in addition to gourmet recipes. So I bought my own copy and began a new romance with mushroom cuisine.

Carluccio, an Italian chef, has an infectious passion for his craft and for mushrooms that is evident in his writing. Anecdotes of his childhood, of mushroom hunting, or of cooking accompany each recipe and are a delight to read. And they provide charming glimpses of the myriad European cultures where he has lived and worked. His descriptions of truffles will convince anyone that truffles represent the pinnacle of gustatory ecstasy.

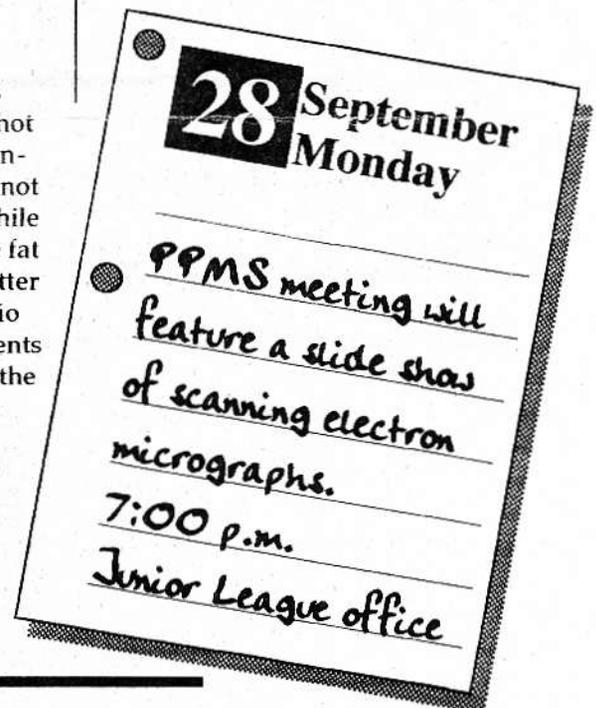
As one might expect from an Italian cookbook, many recipes begin with chopped onions in hot olive oil and butter. What a wonderful smell! But clearly this is not a low-fat dieter's cookbook. While I have successfully reduced the fat in some of the recipes, I use butter and olive oil wherever Carluccio specifies because these ingredients are essential to the flavors that the recipes achieve

I have included here one of my favorite recipes: polenta with mushrooms. It is also one of the simplest, and you will be amazed that such simplicity can be so flavorful.

Meeting News

If you haven't had a chance lately to pursue your scientific interest in mushrooms (perhaps because you've been busy cooking chanterelles), then you're in for a real treat. This month the program will be a narrated slide show of scanning electron micrographs of spores and other microscopic mushroom structures. These spectacular photographs show our familiar subjects of study magnified thousands of times. Don't miss it!

Once again, the meeting will be at the Junior League office at 2914 Beacon Street and will begin at 7:00 p.m.



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P.O. Box 1961
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Spore-Addict Times is published monthly from April through October by the Pikes Peak Mycological Society. Submissions of articles, book reviews, letters, artwork, recipes, and ideas are encouraged.

The Pikes Peak Mycological Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing interest in, and understanding of, the

field of mycology. Membership is open to all persons interested in mycology. Annual dues are \$10 for individual and family memberships.

President.....Mike Chladek.....(719) 380-9199
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Newsletter Editor.....David Watson.....(719) 593-9912

Stems & Pieces

Books, cheap

The Los Angeles Mycological Society has an extensive selection of new books and posters for sale at a discount of twenty or forty percent. For a complete list of the items and prices, contact Barry Silver

1416 Rock Glen Avenue
Glendale, CA 91205-2019
(810) 240-6631

or look for it at the next PPMS meeting.

Parlez-vous français?

PPMS has recently begun corresponding with the Cercle des Mycologues de Montréal, a forty-

one-year-old, 700-member mycological society in Montréal, Québec. Their somewhat lengthy quarterly newsletter, *Le Mycologue*, is available from the PPMS library. It is, of course, written entirely in French.

Larry Lonik's Offerings

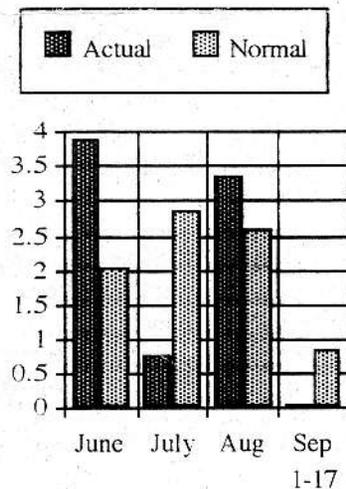
If you liked Larry Lonik's video on morel hunting, you might want to try his morel cooking video. The videos are available along with his books, *The Curious Morel* and *The Healthy Taste of Honey*, from

RKT Publishing
P.O. Box 103
Royal Oak, MI 48068



Rain Report

Colorado Springs
Monthly Rainfall (inches)



Totals as of 17 September:
Normal year-to-date: 13.51 in.
Actual year-to-date: 13.31 in.
(101 percent of normal)

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