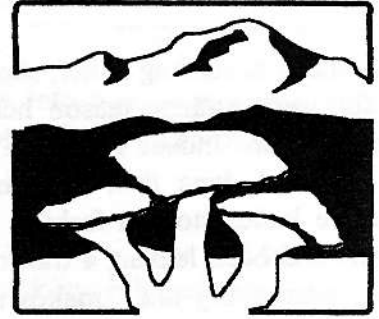


Spore-Addict Times



The Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society

VOL. XIX

ISSUE 3

JUNE 1995

NEXT MEETING:

WHEN? MONDAY, JUNE 26th

WHERE? UMB BANK BUILDING ON THE
CORNER OF CHEYENNE MT. BLVD.
AND NEVADA.

WHAT TIME? 7:00 P.M.

PROGRAM:

Dennis Craig will present the "mushroom of the month" for June. Which mushroom he has chosen is a secret, but given his exceptional qualifications his presentation is sure to be both informative and entertaining.

Dr. and Mrs. Salzman will present a combination travel and mushroom program on their trip to the former Soviet Union.

ANNUAL PICNIC: Our annual picnic will be on the 26th of August in Fox Run Park in the Black Forest. More information in our next newsletter, if necessary.

OVERNIGHT TRIP: Our annual overnight trip will be on the 12-13th of August. The destination has not been determined but these trips are always lots of fun. So mark your calendars now and plan to attend.

FORAY TO THE RAMPART RANGE WAS A "DOOZIE"

On Saturday, the 10th of June, about 26 stout hearted members of the PPMS headed for the hills along the Rampart Range in search of the coveted black morel, also known as the Morchella elata group. This foray promised to be one of the most interesting and challenging in recent memory.

To say the weather has been a bit unusual this spring would be a gross understatement. This was our first foray into the mountains this year. Usually by the 10th of June we would be on our second if not our third foray into the hills. Mother nature welcomed us by putting on a show the likes of which we are seldom exposed to in an entire year. The elements served up were like an elaborate antipasto dish or smorgasbord of everything. We were rained on, snowed on, sleeted on, and hailed on. Not just once by each of these forms of precipitation; we were pelted repeatedly by them all and in no particular order. In between the sun would glare forth as if to assess the damage and make sure that we were still alive and well enough to appreciate another serving of the same. While the sun was out, the hills would steam so much they seemed to be on fire. The sun, with uncanny precision, would disappear before we were dry and give way to another pelting of the same. Sharp stabs of lightening and the accompanying crack of thunder was a common event. The earth shaking rumble and roll of distant thunder was a welcome intermission from the main event.

One of our brave forayers, having collected an impressive number of morels (which she showed to all of us repeatedly) headed into the woods once

more where, according to her, she found several more. But for some strange reason her bag seemed to be getting lighter. Indeed it was! The rain, snow, sleet, and hail had done their job on her bag (from an exclusive ladies store, a fashion statement no doubt) and she had been leaving a trail of morels behind. A morel, even a big one, makes no noise as it drops through a gaping hole in your sack. They are even harder to see laying on the ground than standing proudly erect.

A good collection of nice mushrooms were gathered by virtually everyone. Some seekers of the elusive morel are better able to become "finders of morels" than others. One member of the foray was having a hard time finding any mushrooms and another member offered to help him.

"Here's one over here" he called out.
 "Where? I don't see it" the hapless forayer responded.
 "Look in a 3 foot circle here" his benefactor said, pointing to a spot near his feet.

When the forayer was still unable to see it, his benefactor reduced the circle to 2 feet.

"I see it now" said the forayer excitedly and promptly reached down and picked up a pine cone!

Our thanks to Jack Richardson, Foray Coordinator and to George Singer who assisted him for leading us to the right places. In spite of all the bad weather, I didn't hear anyone complain and no one bailed out and quit early. A bunch of wet but happy forayers went home that afternoon.

CORRECTION: The mushroom for the month of May presented by Lee Barzee was identified incorrectly in last month's newsletter. The correct identification is *Volvariella volvacea*.

NOTICE: IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR DUES, PLEASE DO SO AT THE JUNE MEETING. IF YOU WILL NOT BE ATTENDING THE MEETING, YOU MAY MAIL YOUR DUES TO THE TREASURER, CAREN LACY (ADDRESS IS ON PAGE 4). TO REMAIN ON THE ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP LIST AND RECEIVE A NEWSLETTER CAREN MUST RECEIVE YOUR PAYMENT BEFORE THE 19TH OF JULY.

SMUT AT THE PPMS APRIL MEETING

by Lori Ligon (Phone 635-2213)

During our first meeting I learned that our members will eat almost anything! Esther Price served us a skillet full of corn smut as a dip on tortilla chips. She brought the cans of fungus home with her from a trip to Mexico. The following article excerpted from the NAMA newsletter "The Mycophile" made me have no regrets about deciding to abstain from eating this delicacy.

This kind of smut is a class basidiomycetes that causes infections in plants. *Ustilago maydis* (corn smut) is one of 900 species of smut that infect grains, fruits, vegetables and grasses. The word is derived from the fact that the external evidence of the infection is an ugly, black excrescence. It is found in various kinds of cuisine and is called Huitlacoche. The stuff is as ugly as it sounds. If it is ready to sporulate, it will contain a dusty, sooty spore mass (or mess) looking like a tumor exploding out of an ear of corn.

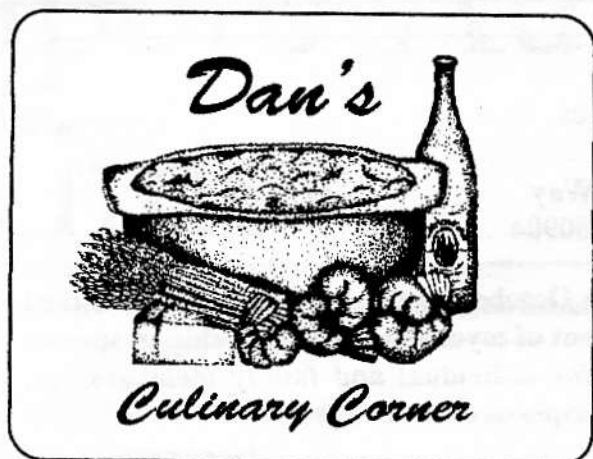
Once cooked it will give any dish an appetite inhibiting black color.

Although harvested and sold in food shops in Mexico, don't expect it to show up in any store under U.S. of A. jurisdiction, since it has the potential of being a highly ineffective plant pathogen. You will just have to ferret out your own smut.

Call me (Lori) if you want a recipe for the smut with tortillas and you will not have to go to Mexico for it. Any gardener at the Bear Creek Gardens will be happy to give you some. The recipe will advise that a few Margaritas beforehand might make the black contents appear almost appetizing.

Editors note: In Missouri, farmers along the Mississippi will gladly pay you to gather that stuff and remove it from their corn fields.

Dan has graciously allowed Frieda and me to bring you the following mushroom preservation technique in the space reserved for him. Thanks Dan.



PRESERVING MUSHROOMS:

There are many ways to preserve boletes to be enjoyed at a future time. No particular skill is required in this climate to dry boletes. And we are all well versed in the culinary art of sautéing them by tossing slices into a skillet with copious amounts of butter, then adding water well laced with chicken bullion and watching them bubble away until they are nearly dry. We take great pride in the "Boy, these sure are good, how did you do that?" response we dutifully give each other at gatherings when we get the chance to share.

People have been pickling mushrooms for eons I am sure, but it is not something we have addressed in this club for a long time, if ever. Now comes Christa Howard with a wonderful method for pickling boletes, just in time for the anticipated bumper crop that we expect every year and sometimes get. I have eaten these pickled morsels and they are wonderful.

PICKLED SWEET AND SOUR BOLETES:

- 4 cups water
- 1 cup SURIG ESSIG ESSENCE (concentrated vinegar)
- 6 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons pickling salt
- 2 teaspoons American pickling spice
- 3 teaspoons German pickling spice
- 3 teaspoons mustard seed
- 2 medium onions, cut into chunks
- 2 strainers chopped boletes (enough to fill canning jars loosely)
- 8 one pint canning jars

Clean and cut boletes into one to two inch chunks. Boil water in large pot and add mushrooms. Boil one to two minutes, drain and rinse.

In a one gallon pot combine vinegar and water. Heat to boiling point, add pickling salt and sugar.

Combine pickling spices and mustard seed. Put onions and spice mix into jars. Add mushrooms. Pour hot brine into jars leaving 1/2 inch head space. Seal and adjust lids. Process in hot water bath 15 to 20 minutes.

Note: Christa uses young, small boletes. She prefers a mixture of German and American pickling spice (German pickling spice is milder). The German pickling spice and the German-brand vinegar are available at the *Zugspitze* (International Food store).

The above are approximate amounts. Like any good cook, Christa uses her own instinct. She sometimes adds more vinegar after opening a jar.

HEALTH NOTES:

Watch out for ticks. Department of Wildlife advises that they are numerous this year. You should do a complete check of your body after each foray. Snakes are also in abundant supply this year. An article in the G.T. gives the following advice:

- ♦ wear high top shoes
- ♦ wear long pants
- ♦ don't leap over rocks or logs without looking (even if you do see a big fat morel or bolete)

IF YOU SHOULD BE BITTEN:

Seek emergency medical assistance as quickly as possible but no later than 3-5 hours after the bite.

- ♦ keep the bite lower than the heart
- ♦ remove all jewelry before swelling begins sharp stabs
- ♦ wash the area with cold water

DO NOT:

- ♦ suck on the wound in an attempt to remove poison
- ♦ cut it
- ♦ cover it with ice
- ♦ use a tourniquet
- ♦ take any drugs to control the pain
- ♦ drink any alcohol

Spore-Addict Times
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NOTICE:
PLEASE