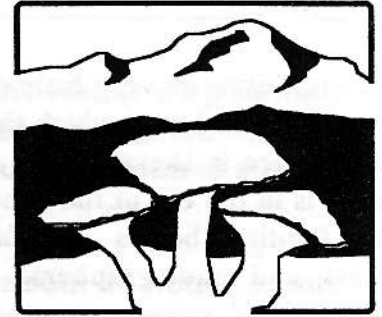


Spore-Addict Times



The Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society

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JULY 1995

NEXT MEETING:

WHEN? MONDAY, JULY 24th

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

WHAT TIME? 7:00 P.M.

OVERNIGHT TRIP

OUR ANNUAL OVERNIGHT TRIP WILL ON THE 12-13TH OF AUGUST. WE WILL ONCE AGAIN BE GOING TO CREEDE, COLORADO WHERE WE HAVE ENJOYED SUCH WONDERFUL SUCCESS IN THE PAST. EACH PERSON SHOULD MAKE THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS. LET'S TALK ABOUT IT AT THE MEETING.

PROGRAM: The Program will be presented by Lee Barzee. She will discuss the various kinds of mushrooms that are found growing next to and sometimes emerging from the receding snow in spring. We can expect to see some unusual photographs as we listen to some fascinating dialogue as a part of her presentation on these most unusual mushrooms.

ANNUAL PICNIC

OUR ANNUAL PICNIC WILL BE AUGUST 26TH IN FOX RUN PARK IN THE BLACK FOREST.

DOCTOR JEKELL AND MR. HYDE????

In response to a worried phone call regarding "BRIGHTLY COLORED GLOBS AND SPREADING!", I found, in a local, handsomely landscaped yard, *Fuligo septica*, and photographed a beautiful mass (my adjective). The unusually wet weather brought on the appearance of this "slime mold" (in the class Myxomycetes). Slime molds (to use that descriptive if derogatory image name) may be slimy or sponge-like (or scrambled egg-like per Gary Lincoff) when they first emerge but change color, shape and texture as they develop.

Their strange life cycle in which an animal-like, creeping, feeding phase alternates with a stationary fungus-fruiting stage has prompted Gary Lincoff to refer to slime molds as Dr. Jekell and Mr. Hyde. Often, also, they may disappear within 24 hours, the fruiting, sporulating, part unobserved.

One fruiting stage example of a commonly encountered Myxomycete is *Lycogala epidendrum*, that little globose lump of "pink bubble gum" look found on dead wood and logs in our Colorado mountains. Who can resist the opportunity to photograph it? Yet one of the most common (and certainly the most conspicuous) of Myxomycetes, *Fuligo septica*, forms massive, pale to deep yellow plasmodia, as I found here. This then was at that food ingestion, "creeping-feeding phase." Its habitat was partly shaded soil, wet, well mulched and bark-topped. It was a fine old settled yard full of nutrients (microscopic bacteria, pollens, spores) of its favorite kind, no doubt. The pretty shrub/flower garden was "safe," happy as its owner, since slime molds are not plant parasites.

These organisms do very little damage to the living vegetation on and near which they are found.

And there is the aesthetic value! Although "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," many slime molds fruiting bodies are favorite subjects of painters and photographers. These mysterious looking "blobs" creeping around in yards (feared to be some sort of invader from outer space) have caused enough panic to bring on the press, resulting in national coverage in newspapers and even Newsweek some years ago. "Had more people been familiar with the Myxomycetes, this crisis might have been avoided," says a biologist at the end of the news article.

In Colorado it is in the subalpine forests above 9000 feet that slimes are most prolific. On a hot day it's fun to study in a cool, relaxing shady spot, strewn with mossy logs. But in the city? -- and less than a mile from my own home -- that was special, 'tho in rain drizzle.

As the late "Sam" Mitchel, M.D., curator of the fungus repository at Denver Botanic Gardens wrote poetically, "To Know Slime Molds Is To Love Them." I agree. But before one can fall in love, one must get acquainted.

My own acquaintance to the Myxos began more than 20 years ago when I was first introduced to the live, in-field specimens. Fascinating, complex, exquisite; they are gems of a unique kind. It was love at first sight!

I worked at the key to orders of the class Myxomycetes (seven), keys to families, and keys to selected genera. So, in the family Physaraceae: #1a. Fructifications aethalioid ---- Fuligo". I'd never forget that one!

This seems to be rare season of opportunity for photographing beauties of nature, ala rain in Colorado. Shall I say, "beyond morels to Myxomycetes?". Let's look and learn, if not love them all.

Lee Barzee

PANACEA OR PLACEBO???

From the late forties to the early fifties an elixir called Hadacol was the hottest thing on the market. The primary purchasers of this product were residents of rural southern states and people who lived in small towns in the south. At that time there were no laws against making all sorts of claims about the curative powers of a product without the necessity to prove it through a scientific testing program. Hadacol claimed to cure virtually everything from ingrown toenails to thinning hair.

Much has been written about Kombucha, or Manchurian Tea. However, unlike Hadacol, Kombucha does not officially claim to cure anything. To do so would draw the attention of the FDA and all that that implies. To my knowledge, no controlled scientific tests have ever been performed to substantiate any claims this product would like to make. Hadacol tasted very good and was about 40% alcohol (80 proof). Two or three tablespoons taken whenever you felt the need was enough to keep a lot of teetotalers with a buzz on all day. I have tasted Manchurian Tea and in that regard it can't hold a candle to good ole Hadacol.

There may very well be many undiscovered natural cures for specific ailments just waiting to be found, tested, and marketed to the benefit of mankind. I feel virtually certain there will never be a "cure-all" found because, in all probability, one does not exist. According to Dr. Weil, (Ph.D., M.D., Harvard now at the University of Arizona) in his book "Spontaneous Healing" one sure way to get the scientific community to look askance at any new treatment is to claim it cures or prevents virtually everything. The closest thing to a panacea that Dr. Weil speaks highly of is the mushroom *Grifola frondosa*, commonly called "hen of the woods" in this country. (See *Mushrooms Demystified*, page 564). The Japanese have used this mushroom for ages as a stimulant to the immune system which is itself a panacea against disease. They call it Maitake, which means "dancing mushrooms". It can weigh up to 100 lbs.

Annette Campbell has drawn my attention to an article in *Chemical and Engineering News* about a still unidentified fungus isolated from juniper twigs in Texas. Broth from this fungus has produced two

compounds that "...are promising leads to drugs for lowering serum cholesterol and treating cancer". I don't know what if anything is special about the Texas junipers; it just makes the point that somewhere in the world of mushrooms, knowledge about which we have only scratched the surface, many answers may be waiting to be found. A road sign might say "Proceed with extreme caution, but keep an open mind."

George Davis



Porcini and Sausage for Pasta

We have all anticipated a bumper crop of *Boletus edulis* this year and it appears that we won't be disappointed. Club members are reporting gatherings of large numbers of these delicious edibles and the season is just starting! Here's an Italian recipe a club member suggested. It's easy and delicious.

Sauté together one pound of sweet Italian sausage (bulk, or with casings removed) with two tablespoons of chopped garlic. Cook until the sausage is cooked through. Add to the mixture three 14 ounce cans of diced, peeled tomatoes, 1/2 cup red Italian wine, three bay leaves and a 'roon of sliced boletes.

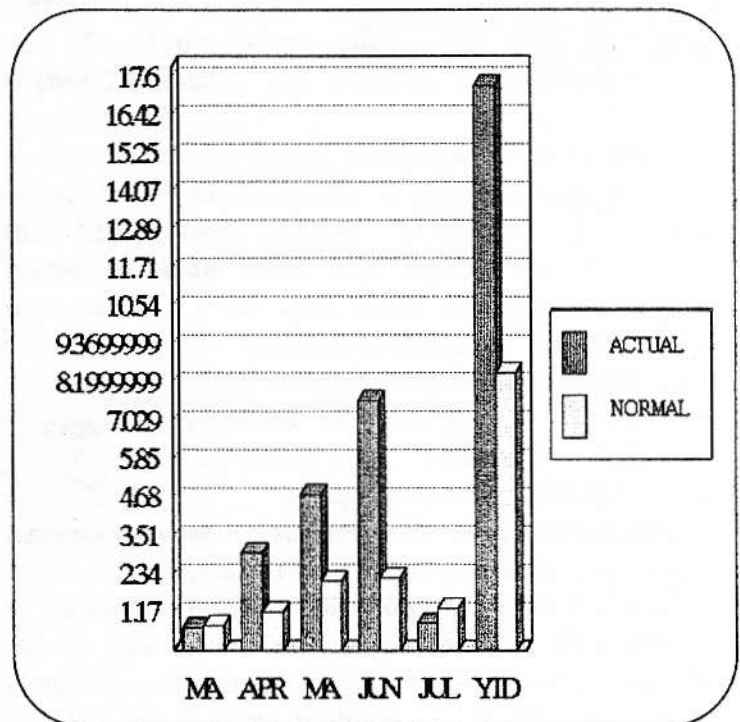
How much is a roon? About 1/2 pound of fresh mushrooms or the reconstituted equivalent from your dried Bolete supply. More is better.

Cover and simmer about an hour, or until the sauce thickens. Season with salt and pepper, discard the bay leaves. Serve over prepared pasta (or polenta) with grated Parmesan cheese, Italian bread, Italian wine and a salad with Italian dressing. Yum! Incidentally, "Porcini" is the Italian word for "pigs". Indeed, sometimes they do seem to grow that large. Hopefully, this is the year.

Bon Appétit!

Dan

COLORADO SPRINGS RAIN REPORT JULY IS THROUGH THE 15TH



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