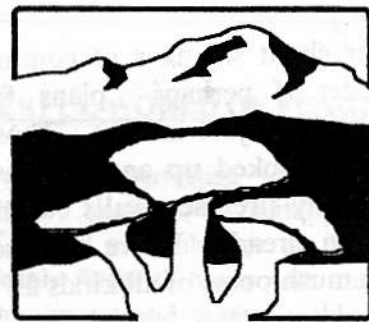


Spore-Addict Times



The Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society

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SEPTEMBER 1995

MONTHLY MEETING: WHEN: Monday, September 25th. WHERE: UMB Building on the corner of Cheyenne Mt. Blvd. and Nevada. WHAT TIME: 7:00 P.M. PROGRAM: A potpourri recapping the season and other membership supplied topics. This should be a fun meeting!!!

CREEDE 1995: (Through the eyes of Esther Price)

Lee and I took off Friday morning the 25th of August at about 8:30 and headed over Monarch Pass to Creede's annual mushroom conference.

This year (as last) our own Lee Barzee was "Madam Mushroom". Believe me she did a super job identifying the crop. There must have been 100 people on Saturday morning to join in a very fruitful search for mushrooms.

Back at the ranch (Creede Community Center) at 1:00 P.M. the group spread a real haul of mushrooms on about six big tables. Moisture had brought out every type of Cortinarius ever heard of, Agaricaceae, Leccinum, all kinds of Lactarius, Albatrellus, Hygrophorus, Hydnum, Hydnellums and all sorts of coral fungi. Not to mention copious amounts of Lee's favorite wee small LBMs and even teenier Lycogala, jellies and Auricularia.

We stopped at the top of Slinggullion Pass where we found a 13" Rocky Mountain Bolete which we brought to the meeting. No other Boletes showed up. The Chanterelles were just pushing up.

Most of us from PPMS gathered for dinner at the hotel Saturday night. David and Annette with Evan, Lori, Doris, Graz, Frank and Judy Urban, Esther, and Lee Barzee. We thought Gustafsons, Mary Fielder, and

Bonny McKay might come but they were too busy cooking and freezing their harvest at the Snowshoe.

By Sunday morning there were only about 20 mushroomers left for the trip around Batchelor's Loop. Lots of good hunting places - a mite drier, more Lactarius deliciosus and a photo worthy Amanita. Lee identified in the field. After the foray there wasn't much left to do except ^{throw} out several hundred mushrooms. Being the super mycologist she is, Lee Barzee brought several specimens home to inspect under the microscope and send identifications to their finders.

We came home over Le Veta Pass and had one last adventure turning off to go to the top of the old Le Veta Pass to see an historic D & Rio Grande Building built in 1878. No mushrooms but mighty thunder and stabs of lightning sent us scurrying for home.

Esther Price

MAYBE NEXT YEAR.....:

All too soon the mushroom season has come to an end. A season that is more forgettable than unforgettable. We started off well with plenty of snow in the mountains and rain at the lower elevations. Looking out the window at the rain drops cascading down in rivulets on my window pane, I was pleased. I saw, in my mind's eye, the stirring of mycelium deep beneath the surface of the forest floor, snaking out in all directions, preparing for the upward thrust that was sure to result in a banner year for mushrooms.

After about six days of continuous rain I started to wonder if perhaps plans for an ark would be appropriate, just in case. Those thoughts intensified when I looked up and saw rivers of water pouring down my fireplace walls. Come on now, enough is enough already! We've had enough rain to supply us with mushrooms of all kinds all summer long!

We had a reasonably good morel season, prolonged by the rainy cold weather that persisted through June.

We actually gathered morels in rain, sleet, hail, and snow, on the same foray. We also gathered nice, mature morels growing right next to large, rather deep, snowbanks. Not just one or two, lots of morels!

Then the rain stopped. The temperature jumped almost immediately to well into the 90's and the humidity became almost non-existent. It seemed that in only four days the total effect of all that rain was erased. Except of course, the weeds. They were everywhere. Most mushrooms seem to dislike weeds so much they refuse to occupy the same space.

Now I was standing at my window watching the shimmering heat waves rising into the beautiful deep blue skies of Colorado. No rain in sight. Oh, we did get an occasional light shower, most of which evaporated about a thousand feet above the ground. Except at the airport where the official measurements are taken. I have never forayed at the airport and I don't think I want to.

July came and went as we waited for our beloved boletes to appear. The spirit of the true mushroom addict is indestructible. Not even the fisherman who can sit on the banks of a lake for hours, staring at a bobber that never moves, displays as much faith in the future as the mushroom seeker. Scrambling over rocks and logs, up that hill and down the other side; maybe in the valley just ahead mushrooms will be sticking out of the ground everywhere. Oh well, maybe next week for sure.

August has been relegated to the annals of history. Let the record show that a few boletes were found at high altitudes, above 10,000 feet. None, or virtually none below that.

September started as hot as a two dollar pistol at a firing range. Then the cold rains came, barely in time to be too late. A few chanterelles were found nestled in the cleavage between rounded hills on the front range. Those that were found seemed to stand proudly erect, aware that they had achieved a feat others could not match.

Walking through the woods as quietly as the most skilled hunter, seeking the elusive and highly prized chanterelle. There! just ahead! a beautiful cluster of golden chanterelles shining in the sun.

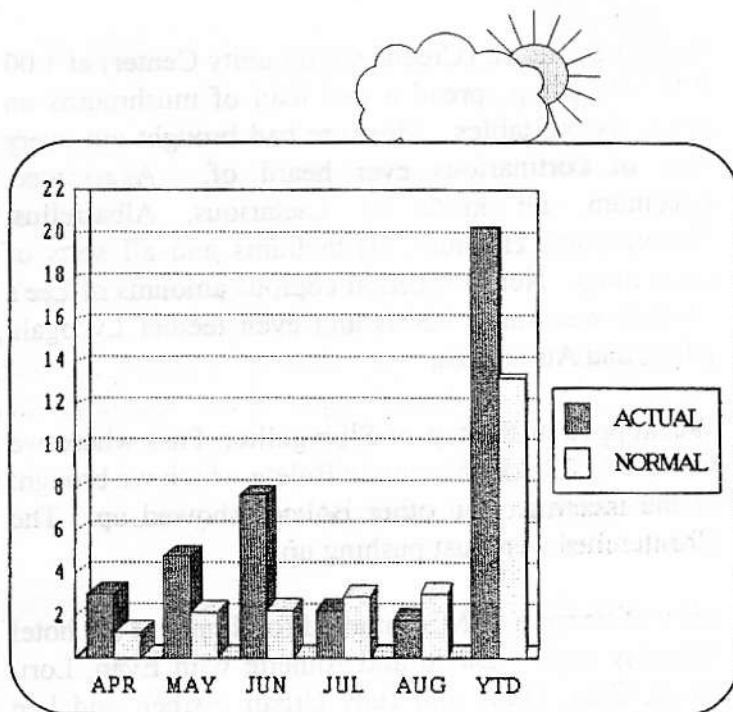
Quickly!

Oh no! Just some aspen leaves that have now started to fall. How could the deity be so cruel? Maybe in the valley just ahead. Have I heard that somewhere before?

Maybe next year for sure. And so it goes.

George Davis

RAIN REPORT APRIL - AUGUST 1995





Dan's Culinary Corner

Here's a creative use for *Albatrellis* ^{a confluens} ~~ovinus~~ (the Sheep Polypore) which has been common this year. This mushroom is a very safe edible as it is easy to recognize; it keeps well too. Our thanks to fellow mycophiles Lori Ligon, Margaret Breth and Graz Benda for their refinement of this dish.

An Albatrellis Brunch

4 slices lean bacon
 1/4 cup chopped onion
 1 Tbsp chopped mild green chilies
 The kernels from one ear of sweet corn
 1/4 cup chopped *Albatrellis* mushrooms
 Scrambled eggs, tomatoes and toast

Slice the tomatoes, cook the toast and scramble the eggs. Meanwhile, in another pan:

Cut the bacon into 2 inch pieces and fry until crisp. Remove the bacon and drain, discarding all but 1 Tbsp. of the bacon fat. In the remaining fat, sauté the onions and mushrooms until soft, stirring often. Add the corn and chilies and continue to sauté (a minute or two) until cooked through. Don't over cook. Return the bacon to the dish and when all is hot, serve with the prepared scrambled eggs, sliced tomatoes and toast.

If necessary, frozen or canned corn may be substituted for the fresh.

Bon Appétite!

Dan Lacy

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FUNGI

We humans have been perfecting our farming techniques for some 10,000 years, or so anthropologists believe. There is no reason to think that we will not continue for the foreseeable future to tinker with methods and additives, squeezing greater and greater yields from dwindling cropland. Ten thousand years is a pretty impressive length of time to have been engaged in farming the land to feed ourselves. Or is it?

The oldest farm in the world is not tilled by human hands nor has it ever been. That honor belongs to the leaf cutter ants. They have been diligently tending mushroom gardens underground for at least the last 23 million years. An article in the journal *Science*, as reported in *Newsweek* (December 19, 1994) states that they have been tending the same fungal lineage for all that time. "It's as if your family passed along the same starter culture for yogurt or sourdough for millions of generations," says co-author Ted Schult of Cornell University.

Ants are believed to have evolved from wasps about 100 million years ago. They have had 77 million years to develop an efficient method for cultivating and passing along the culture for perpetual growth of their crops. No telling what we may be able to accomplish if we keep trying for that long. We might even know EXACTLY when and where to look for each variety of shrooms that interests us. Would that really be a good thing? I think not.

The interest in fungus and the mushrooms that are associated with some forms of fungi has been accelerating at least since the discovery of penicillin. The amount of information about new discoveries is literally snowballing.

In the current issue of *Discover* magazine an article by Carl Zimmer reports that a pond that is 400 million years old has been discovered in Scotland. Spores found in rocks used to date the age of the pond look exactly like those of modern mycorrhizal species. This is a rare opportunity to view fungi fossils.

Life did not emerge from the sea until about 500 million years ago. It took about 40 million years for it to learn to cope in its new environment. By that time the presence of fungi facilitated an explosion of growth across the land. Great forests spread rapidly to all areas where the climate permitted. And as a result of all this, we have the pleasure of searching for our beloved mushrooms.

Millions of lives have been saved using antibiotics developed from fungi. We have just begun to scratch the surface. Many more important discoveries lie ahead, many of which will be revolutionary.

GEORGE DAVIS

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