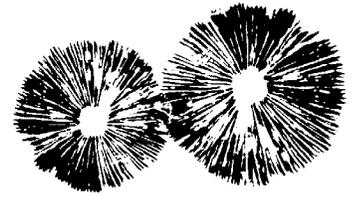


SPORE PRINTS

BULLETIN OF THE PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Number 378

January 2002



ALONE IN PARADISE Alexander (Saska) Viezmanski *The Sporeprint*, L.A. Myco. Soc., Dec. 2001



Why Russians don't pick morels is not an easy question to answer. Perhaps it is just a tradition. We also don't eat many of the other edible mushrooms, such as the "Horn of Plenty" (*Craterellus cornucopioides*) or "Shaggy Mane" (*Coprinus comatus*). On the other hand, Americans don't eat lots of lactarias that we love—for example the "Woolly Milk Cap." (That's the Russian version of *Lactarius torminosus*; the American species is not considered edible.)

It is probably like a language: If one generation passes its knowledge only to its own next generation, the result can be different peoples speaking different languages.

Another reason might be that in Russia we have very few morels, at least in my part of Russia. I spend most of my time in the woods, yet until this year I found morels only once or twice, and each time it was just a single mushroom. So maybe, though a few people do find morels, this is not enough to start a "chain reaction" toward widespread knowledge and interest in them.

My friend gave me one more important possible reason. For most Russians, a mushroom is something that has a stem and a cap, with either gills or tubes, and the cap is more or less round and smooth. So for most people, morels don't even *look* like mushrooms. Perhaps for the same reason, we don't pick puffballs or any coral mushrooms; these things look dangerous to us.

But this year I was ever so happy that Russians don't pick morels! In the beginning of June I went to the country market in St. Petersburg to see if commercial pickers were selling any mushrooms. This is usually the signal for me to start my season of painting them.

I was thrilled when I saw the whole basket of great black morels. Nobody was buying them. Some people were wondering if they were edible, and if so, how to cook them. The slightly drunken salesman, a professional mushroom hunter, tried to encourage people, but had no success.

I asked the man how much they cost, trying not to show that I was ready to pay any price he would ask. "How many do you want?" he asked. I picked out about five of the best looking ones for my painting. "Fifteen rubles," he said, thinking that he was taking great advantage of me. And before I could answer, he said, "Well, take them for ten." This was about forty cents! I tried not to express my feelings on my face, took the mushrooms, and ran home to paint.

I was tempted to ask him to show me his picking spot, but I knew he would never do it, not even for good money. I decided to find the spot myself. The only thing I knew from my mycologist friend was that morels like the burned forest. The previous summer was very dry, and we had a lot of forest fires. These fires were especially concentrated along the railroads because people throw their still burning cigarettes from the train windows.

A few days later I took a train to a spot I had noticed last year. There was a burned pine forest by the railroad between two stations, about a mile long.

I was surprised to meet people with baskets on my way to the burned forest. They were proudly carrying their first *Boletus edulis* of the year. (We call them "whites" because they stay white when you cut them.) I decided to look for them too, but first to check out the burned forest.

The fire had been only on one side of the railroad. I was coming from the other side, so I crossed the rails, and...

It took me several seconds to realize what I was seeing on the ground in front of me. They looked like burned stumps of little trees. First I saw one, then ten. They were everywhere! Big and small, single and in clusters. It was a very strange feeling: I did not have to look for the mushrooms—I had to decide which ones to pick.

I started with the freshest looking ones, then the biggest, then the strangest-looking ones. Finally I decided to find some very small ones to finish my future paintings. It took me a while to find the first cluster of tiny ones: they were gray and almost invisible on the gray burned ground. But after I found the first ones, all of a sudden I discovered thousands of them all around me. It was difficult to avoid stepping on them.

Soon my basket was full, though it seemed there were not any less morels around than when I began!

Then I saw my first competitor. He was walking pretty fast towards me, definitely wanting to check out my basket. "Have you found any?" He asked.

"Of course I have," I responded. "They are everywhere!"

He looked into my basket and made a strange face: "Do you eat this stuff?"

"Yes," I said.

"No, I take only the whites," he said proudly.

"Good for you," I thought, "and very good for me."

I spent the whole month painting them, going to that forest about twice a week. Nobody picked the morels, and I could watch the changes in their population. After days, there were not fewer mushrooms, but fewer and fewer of the tiny ones.

Then the mushrooms started looking more dry, and did not grow as big. The biggest ones disappeared. The big clusters and groups disappeared too; most of the remaining mushrooms were single.

Finally it was difficult to find good ones to paint. Besides, a lot of the other mushrooms started fruiting, and I stopped hunting for morels.

Morels are the most difficult mushrooms to paint. In the beginning it seems just impossible to track all those veins and cavities. But eventually the effort—and patience—overcame, as always.

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Spore Prints

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PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Annual dues \$20; full-time students \$10

CALENDAR

Jan. 8	Membership Meeting, 7:30 PM, CUH
Jan. 14	Board Meeting, 7:30 PM, CUH
Jan. 22	<i>Spore Prints</i> deadline
Feb. 6–10	NW Flower & Garden Show
Feb. 12	Membership Meeting, 7:30 PM, CUH

BOARD NEWS

Agnes Sieger

PSMS is still in need of an Education Chair. Thanks were given to John Goldman for his assistance to Colin Meyer to complete last fall's classes. It was decided that in spite of projected increases in field trip costs, hosts should not collect money from field trip participants to subsidize field trip costs at this time. Concern was expressed over PSMS's liability regarding cultivation workshops not explicitly sponsored by PSMS. The bylaws will be voted on by the general membership at the January meeting. Several club members were suggested as nominations to the board. PSMS will staff a booth at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show, February 6–10, 2002. The Survivor's Banquet is scheduled for Saturday, March 16, 2002, at CUH; the event will be potluck style. A chairman is needed for the banquet. Ramona Owen volunteered to assist the chairman of the banquet. Karin Mendell has lined up program speakers through June 2002. PSMS will reserve the weekend of October 18–20, 2002, at Sand Point for the 2002 Annual exhibit. Doug Ward volunteered to present a mushroom lecture at the Washington Athletic Club this coming fall. Ramona Owen, now filling a board vacancy, volunteered to serve as a contact for public relations regarding education.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, January 8, 2002, at the Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle

Our guest speaker for January's membership meeting is Fred Rhoades, Ph.D. Dr. Rhoades is a biological consultant, researcher, and lecturer for Western Washington University. He has also offered classes and seminars at the Olympic Park Institute, the North Cascades Institute, and the San Juan Nature Institute in Friday Harbor. Dr. Rhoades is an accomplished scientist and gifted teacher who has expertise in lichens, bryophytes, and mushrooms. In 1988 he re-examined baseline plots to determine the effect of air quality on lichens in Olympic National Park. Currently, he is serving as a consultant for the Forest Service, verifying the identification of several thousand lichen vouchers collected in the Olympic and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie national forests. He will be bringing to us a presentation on Mushroom Ecology, featuring the use of 3-D images (and 3-D glasses, which he provides!). He will talk about fungal biology as it relates to mushrooms—the way mushrooms and other macrofungi grow, interact with their environment, and reproduce—and review the major ecological roles of the macrofungi. In order to illustrate the general principles, he will review some of the major genera, since the ecological roles are mostly genus-specific. All the above will be illustrated with Kodachrome slides projected in three dimensions.

Will people with last names beginning with the letters G–M please bring a plate of refreshments to share at the meeting?

FUNGAL ENDOCARDITIS: A DISEASE OF THE HEART

Sara Jelsma and Robert Fogel

Mycolog, Humboldt Bay Myco. Soc., Sept. 2001

Pathogenic fungi cause disease by parasitizing their plant, animal, or human host. In humans, some of these fungi are normally present on, or in, our bodies and cause a problem only when the bodily defenses that control them are weakened or damaged. For example, *Candida albicans*, a yeast that normally lives harmlessly on our skin and mucus membranes, can, in certain conditions, grow out of control and cause the mouth disease "thrush" or other "yeast infections."

A specific disease or set of symptoms can sometimes be caused by one of several different potential pathogens (disease-causing organisms). Sore throats can be caused by both bacteria and viruses. Endocarditis is a heart disease that can be caused by either bacteria or fungi.

Endocarditis is an inflammation of the heart muscle, the heart's valves, or the lining of the heart's chambers. The disease can be caused by many different pathogens, among them the filamentous fungus *Aspergillus fumigatus* and the yeast *Candida albicans*. The symptoms are very general, and typical of many physical problems. Only a physician can make an accurate diagnosis. The symptoms can include fever, weakness, chest pain, unexplained weight loss, aches, a heart murmur, blood in the urine or abnormal urine color, and straight, narrow red lines of broken blood vessels under the nails. A variety of tests, possibly including blood culture, a complete blood count, or a CT (CAT) scan of the chest, can be used to diagnose this disease. Some cases are "culture negative," meaning no fungus or bacterium can be found.

Aspergillus fumigatus and *Candida albicans* are opportunistic pathogens. They exploit weaknesses or lapses in the body's defense mechanisms. Our skin is an important defense against pathogens. These fungi enter the body through wounds, such as surgi-

cal incisions, the insertion of catheters (tubes) into already existing wounds, or the sharing of contaminated needles by drug users.

As organisms, *Aspergillus fumigatus* and *Candida albicans* do not resemble one another at all. *Aspergillus fumigatus* is a member of a large genus of filamentous fungi. Most *Aspergillus* are harmless, although other species have caused allergic reactions, since many produce huge amounts of airborne spores, called conidia, in wet or humid rooms. We often breathe in the spores in such rooms, but *Aspergillus fumigatus* does not cause infections when inhaled.

Candida albicans belongs to the group of fungi called yeasts. It is a very distant relative of a yeast in another genus, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, used in making bread. *Candida albicans* does not produce air-borne spores. It spreads to new places by being carried there.

The treatment of fungal endocarditis can require surgery to remove colonies of fungi from the heart, and antifungal drug therapy for 6–8 weeks. (Additional note: Dental patients with some types of congenital heart problems are usually given antibiotics before a procedure to protect them from a bacterial form of this disease.)

ADDITIONAL BYLAW CHANGE Joanne Young

Here is one more bylaw change voted for by the Board of Trustees. It was accidentally omitted last month.

ARTICLE VI, Board of Trustees
Section 3 - Vacancies:

PROPOSED CHANGE: Insert the sentence shown in bold type:

Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Trustees (except vacancies at the end of a designated term) shall be filled through appointment by the Board of Trustees. **The position of any Board of Trustees member may be considered vacant after three (3) consecutive Board of Trustee meeting absences.** The positions of President, Vice-president, Treasurer, Secretary or Elected Trustees shall be filled by an appointee of the Board of Trustees for the remainder of the predecessors' term, except as specified in Article VII, Sections 5 & 6. Alternate Trustees receiving the most votes in the previous election shall be considered by the Board of Trustees as prime candidates to fill vacancies. Also, a Trustee may be appointed by the Board to fill an officer vacancy. If no Alternate Trustee is available, then the vacancy shall be filled by election by the Board of any person eligible to run for a position on the Board.

FOOD FIGHT! Eric Swisher *MushRumors*, Northwest Mushroomers Assoc., Sept. 2001

Porcini mushrooms (known better to you as *Boletus edulis*) were the featured ingredient on a recent episode of "Iron Chef," a show on the Food Network. The show pits a challenger chef against one of a panel of "Iron Chefs" who represent the house, so to speak. The theme ingredient must be used in all dishes created for the competition. To attempt a description of the delicacies presented in this Porcini Battle (yes that's the actual title of the episode) would only dishonor them. Suffice it to say that the creativity and elegance of the dishes proffered by both competitors amazed me and served to remind me of the high esteem that those "in the know" hold for something that we can find for free! Everyone

owes it to themselves to enjoy this exceptional treat, simply because you can.

Many dishes prepared on the "Iron Chef" series feature edible mushrooms, both wild and cultivated, from enoki to Matsutake, with many in between. Consider it recommended viewing if you watch TV.

LEPIOTA CAPS STUFFED WITH TOFU AND PINE NUTS

Robert Rich's Wild Mushroom Cookbook
<http://IA.vwww.amoeba.com/mslepracho.html>
via *Fungifama*, So. Vancouver Island Myco. Soc., Sept. 2000

Lepiota rachodes is especially well suited for stuffing, for several reasons. It has a mild flavor that complements and blends well with the juices from the stuffing. It grows large enough that the young round caps can hold enough to make a meal. It has a firm texture with low moisture, giving it a good structure for stuffing. Lastly, it rarely has any bugs, so you don't have to feel nervous about serving an entire cap. If you can't find *Lepiota*, you can substitute any large young *Agaricus* (except perhaps *A. augustus*, whose almondy flavor might not blend well with the stuffing). If it's the wrong time of year, you can use the large brown *Agaricus bisporus* sold in stores as "Portobello."



Ingredients:

5 large young *Lepiota rachodes* (still closed or barely open)
8 oz. firm tofu
2 Tbsp. pine nuts, chopped
2 Tbsp. green onions, chopped
2 Tbsp. romano or parmesan cheese, grated
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp. olive oil
1 tsp. oregano
1 tsp. fresh ground pepper (to taste)
Dash of salt (to taste)
Sprig of fresh parsley (chopped), optional

1. Clean the mushrooms with a brush or dry sponge, using minimum water.
2. Carefully remove the stems and set the caps aside to be stuffed later.
3. Chop the stems finely and sauté for 5–10 minutes on low heat, without oil, to soften and reduce moisture.
5. Place the cooked stem pieces into a mixing bowl and mash together with the remaining ingredients.
6. Spoon the mixture into the mushroom caps.
7. Place the filled caps, open side up, onto a lightly oiled cookie sheet.
8. Cook for 35–40 minutes at 300°F in a preheated oven.
9. Remove and sprinkle the chopped parsley on the top. Serve immediately.

Variations: You can bulk up the filling by adding cooked rice to the blend, increasing the herbs accordingly. Chopped tomato will add a pleasant acidity to the flavor, but at the risk of overpowering the mushroom. Chopped black olives will add a savory tannic twist.

Along in Paradise, cont. from page 1

While painting, I could trace through all their stages and admire the changes. In the beginning when the size is less than an inch, they are dark blue-gray and you cannot see the cracks between the veins. Then they turn dark. Yellow-green, with thick veins and narrow cracks. The cracks open more and more, becoming almost-square or almost-round holes. The color of the mushroom turns brown. Then the veins get thinner and dryer, eventually looking like a web, through which you can see the light color of the main body.

After painting them, I cooked and ate them solemnly. They were great! I even encouraged some of my friends to try them. They were pleasantly surprised, and the next time I had more people at my table.

Perhaps in a few years I will not be a happy, lonely morel hunter anymore. That would be too bad. But our people will have one more mushroom to enjoy, and that would be good.



CALLING ALL FUNGI & FLOWER LOVERS

Karin Mendell

The question is, "Did PSMS get back into the Northwest Flower & Garden Show for 2002?" The answer is, "Yes!" We will have a booth at the show, February 6-10, 2002, to educate and inspire the "Love of Fungi." New member Hariana Chilstrom, who decorated the main hall at the Annual Mushroom Show, will lead the effort to create a new booth display. Cathy and Don Lennebacker and Karin Mendell will coordinate volunteer workers and assist Hariana. Please contact Cathy via e-mail (crazyquilter@hotmail.com) or Karin via phone (425-868-3497) or e-mail (k.mendell@attbi.com) to vol-

unteer to staff the PSMS booth at this year's Northwest Flower & Garden Show.

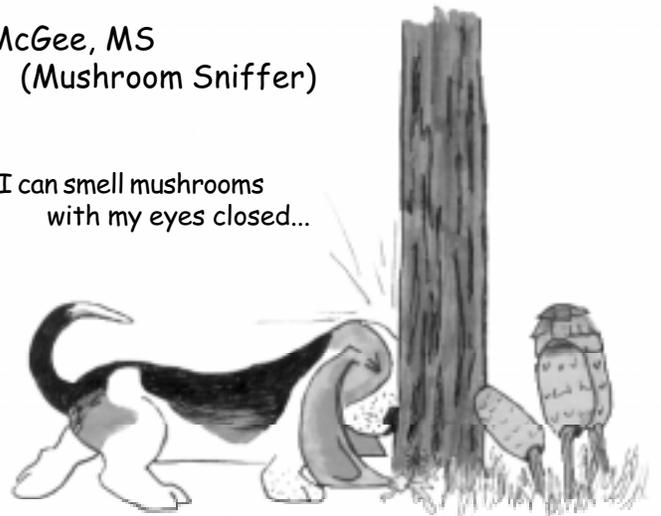
Volunteers will be expected to work a short shift and will be admitted to the show free of charge. A sign-up sheet for specific times will be available at the January membership meeting. However, the February meeting falls after the Flower Show, so be sure to either sign up in January or call Cathy or Karin to reserve your spot. Volunteers will be taken on a first come, first served basis. This show is always very popular with our members!

*The porker and the truffle hound,
Both find and dig them from the ground,
The dog for treats,
The pig for eats,
At several hundred bucks per pound.*

Boris Subbotin, via *The Sporeprint*,
L.A. Myco. Soc., Dec. 2001

**McGee, MS
(Mushroom Sniffer)**

I can smell mushrooms
with my eyes closed...



Gloria Barber, 2001



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