



KEY TO MUSHROOM CLUB FORAYERS

A Perceptive MST Member

Mycelium, Mycological Society of Toronto, Jan.–Mar. 2005

[Although experts estimate species of fungi in the Pacific Northwest may possibly number in the thousands, most of us recognize, at most, a hundred or so, if that many. Thus the popularity of field guides and mushroom “keys,” step-by-step decisions that, we hope, will allow us to trace the mushroom in hand back to a name.

Keys to identifying mushroom species range from David Arora’s omnibus *Mushrooms Demystified* to the keys to individual mushroom genera generated by the Pacific Northwest Key Council. What we really lack is a key to mushroom hunters. Face it. Mushroomers are a confusing lot.

Presented below for your edification is a key to mushroom forayers created by an anonymous member of the Mycological Society of Toronto. Although created for MST, the key should prove just as useful for PSMS. When using this key, however, bear in mind that, as the author warns, species complexes do occur and create additional speciation difficulties. Ed.]

Key to Mushroom Forayers

- 1a. Persons with baskets, paper or other bags, slow moving to meandering, not moving along well-defined paths.
2. Eumycologia
- 1b. Persons without such paraphernalia moving more rapidly, may be associated with quadrupeds, occasionally stopping for short periods.
Pseudomycologia
(generally classified as *Homo caniphilus* or *H. motus*)
Not dealt with here.
2. Eumycologia
- 2a. Persons with broad often-aged baskets, appearing disheveled, dull-colored, greens, browns, and gray predominating.
3. Generalis Group
- 2b. Persons with deeper baskets, may often be absent but generally with paper and other bags. Dress various, often rucksacked.
4. Mycoedulis and Mycophagus Groups
- 2c. Persons with baskets containing plastic boxes, which are often segmented. Persons appear focussed. Diagnostic lens carried around neck.
5. Micromycologia Group
3. Generalis Group
- 3a. Persons with baskets with high fungal diversity, appearing colorful, often with several small brown mushrooms.
Vocalization “Look at this.” “Now this is interesting.”
Mycophilus notabilis
- 3b. Knowledgeable persons with baskets of moderate fungal diversity, containing honey mushrooms and Chicken of the Woods. Rarely with sac or coral fungi. Vocalization: “These

will cook up nicely” and “with white wine and garlic.”

*Mycophilus culinaris**

- 3c. Persons with baskets with few species, often associated with others. Vocalization always questioning such as “What do you think of this?” “Have we got this one?”
Mycophila perplexa or *M. initia*
4. Mycoedulis and Mycophagus Groups
- 4a. Persons present only at the beginning and at the end of forays, generally shy and retiring, often returning with full baskets. Vocalization: None. *Mycoedulis areanus*
- 4b. Persons generally clumped or in loose groups, often moving initially rapidly along well-defined routes, quadrupeds rarely present. Always successful with full baskets. Vocalization: Various, often loud. *Mycophagus sociabilis***
- 4c. Persons wandering between groups, often with incomplete baskets and holding several fungi in hand at any one time. Vocalization: “Can I eat this one?” and “Is this one good?”
Mycophagus dubius
5. Micromycologia Group
- 5a. Individuals on hands and knees or at least crouching, often close to decaying logs and tree bases. Often solitary, but generally very loosely associated with similar species. Vocalization: Generally incomprehensible, but muttering about sporangia and calcareous peridia often faintly heard.
Myxophila vehementia
- 5b. Individuals crouching to upright, generally with basket containing at least some macro fungi. Rarely solitary, generally in small groups, often in pairs. Not restricted to decaying logs.
Mycophila omnigena

I trust that this key will be of assistance to seasoned members as well as newcomers. Using this as a guide, and with some thoughts about how you may fit in, you will have the opportunity of taking your rightful place in the Society. This may be with a stomach full of the most delicious fungi known to humankind, or with a mind focussed on knowing every fungus in Ontario’s forests, or with a great group of people having lots of fun. Alternatively, and I trust this may be the right place for you, “a bit of all three.”

MST Ed. note: My attention has recently been drawn to a variant of unknown taxonomic position, described as *Mycophilus mentorens*. This appears to be in the Generalis Group, and constantly talks to others about the fungi being found. *M. mentorens* var. *sootsii* has often been seen in our area.

*A confusing species with affinities to *Mycophagus sociabilis*.

**This is a species complex with several subspecies including ssp. *diversiculinaris* and ssp. *amicus*. *M. garrulus* is doubtfully separable apart from its louder vocalization.

Spore Prints

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CALENDAR

- Oct. 1 Beginner's ID, 7:00 PM, Douglas Classroom, CUH
Oct. 7 Field Trip, La Wis Wis
Oct. 8 Beginner's ID, 7:00 PM, Douglas Classroom, CUH
Oct. 10 Membership Meeting, 7:30 PM, CUH
Oct. 14, 15 *43rd Annual Wild Mushroom Exhibit*, Sand Point
Oct. 21 Field Trip, Twanoh State Park
Oct. 22 Beginner's ID, 7:00 PM, Douglas Classroom, CUH
Oct. 24 *Spore Prints* deadline (**send articles to Ron Post, Ron46@hotmail.com**)
Oct. 27-29 PSMS/The Mountaineers weekend foray
Oct. 28 Field Trip, Newcastle
Oct. 29 Beginner's ID, 7:00 PM, Douglas Classroom, CUH
Nov. 4 Field Trip, Deception Pass
Nov. 5 Beginner's ID, 7:00 PM, Douglas Classroom, CUH

BOARD NEWS

Dennis Oliver

Finally the rains have arrived in the Pacific Northwest. PSMS finances are good. Tony Tschanz, John Goldman, and David Manus will form a committee to review our current portfolio. The preparation for the annual mushroom show is going well. The board encourages all members to become involved by collecting mushrooms for the show and volunteering for jobs. Signup sheets for committees will be at the October meeting. A truffle workshop is being contemplated for sometime in January (prime truffle season); further investigation is needed. The board will not meet in October, a post show break, but will meet again in November.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, October 10, at 7:30 PM at the Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle

Our distinguished speaker this month is Dr. Sigisfredo Garnica. Dr. Garnica comes to us from the University of Tübingen, Germany, where he is on the faculty of the Department of Special Botany and Mycology. Dr. Garnica has worked primarily on *Cortinarius*, first from South America in Nothofagus forests in Chile and later in Europe, and is interested in fungus systematics and biogeography. The purpose of his visit to Seattle is to collect specimens and prepare a paper with Dr. Ammirati. His talk to PSMS will be on biogeography, using *Cortinarius* as a model genus to study this excitingly area of mycology. Please help us welcome Dr. Garnica to Seattle!

Would persons with last names beginning with the letters M-Z please bring refreshments for the social hour?

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Cathy Lennebacker

All field trips start at 9 AM. Please be prepared for the weather. A potluck is held in the afternoon through October. The potluck time is at the host's discretion. Be safe and bring a watch, compass, walkie talkie/GPS if you have them, and a friend. There will be club signs posted at each site to help you locate the group. Good luck and have fun picking.



October 7

La Wis Wis

La Wis Wis campground is located just outside the southeastern corner of Mt. Rainier National Park in old growth forest with thick moss cover. The forest service campground closes September 30, but there are lovely free primitive sites just north along the Ohanapecosh River. There are no bathrooms, so be prepared. It's a long way but worth the drive.

Driving Directions. Take I-5 south to exit 68 and turn east on US 12. Drive 65 miles to Packwood. Continue 7 miles east on US 12, then drive ½ mile west on forest service road 1272. The main campground will be closed, so follow the PSMS signs north from there to a free spot between the campground and Mt. Rainier National Park.

Alternate Route. Go east on Hwy. 410 over Cayuse Pass, past the southeast entrance to Mt. Rainier National Park toward Packwood. The La Wis Wis campground entrance is on the west side of the road 7 miles past the Ohanapecosh campground.

Follow the PSMS signs from both directions.

October 21

Twanoh State Park

(elev. near sea level, 20 miles SW of Seattle by ferry)

Alas, this lovely park on Hood Canal is closed for camping. We will meet in the day use/picnic shelter. ID: *Brian Luther & Larry Baxter*.

Driving Directions: *From downtown Seattle*, take the Bremerton ferry and follow Hwy 3 to Belfair. From there follow Hwy. 106 8 miles west to Twanoh State Park. *From Tacoma* go north on

Hwy. 16 to Purdy, about 12 miles past the Narrows bridge, then go west on Hwy. 302 about 20 miles to Hwy. 3, then go north on Hwy. 3 about 4 miles to Hwy. 106, and then go west on Hwy. 106 about 11 miles to Twanoh State Park.

October 27–29 PSMS/The Mountaineers Joint Foray

This year, we again have *two options* for the PSMS/The Mountaineers joint field trip at Meany Lodge near Stampede Pass—a three-day trip beginning Friday evening for \$95 or the usual two-day event beginning Saturday for \$60. To register for this weekend, call 206–284–8484 after October 1. Space is limited, so register early. *Host: Coleman Leuthy. ID: Coleman Leuthy, Brian Luther, & Larry Baxter.*

Driving Directions. See the accompanying article by Coleman Leuthy for driving directions to Meany Lodge and to the Crystal Spring Forest Camp, where the two-day participants will meet on Saturday.

October 28 New Castle Park, Bellevue

This Renton Park is nearby for your driving convenience. Look for chanterelles “for the pot.”

Driving Directions: From I-405, take exit #9 to 112th Ave SE. At the top of ramp go west toward Lake Washington. The park is on the left at the end of the road.

November 4 Deception Pass (elev. near sea level, 80 miles north of Seattle)

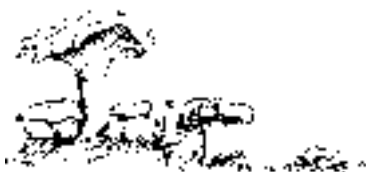
This saltwater campground is open year round. We will meet at the Cranberry Lake shelter. A \$5 parking fee is collected at the entrance unless you are camping, in which case your camping receipt includes parking. No potluck as it gets dark so early. There are several delicious restaurants in LaConner for a friendly dinner. This is a state park, so remember to follow the park rules on mushroom picking. See April 2066 *Spore Prints*.

Driving Directions: From I-5, take exit #226 and go west on route 536 (becomes 20). Turn south, away from Anacortes and toward Whidbey Island. Cross the bridge at Deception Pass. The park entrance is on the right 1 mile past the Deception Pass Bridge. Follow the PSMS signs.

November 11 Seward Park

For die-hard mushroom hunters, we have added a late outing to a large Seattle city park on Lake Washington where a variety of mushrooms is known to flourish. With a little luck, the weather will remain mild, and mushrooms will still be flourishing for a late season thrill that doesn't require a long drive home. *ID: Brian Luther & Larry Baxter.*

Driving Directions: Take I-90 exit 3 on the west side of Lake Washington, go south on Rainier Ave about 3 miles, and turn left on S. Orca St. heading east. Follow PSMS signs to shelter.



PSMS/THE MOUNTAINEERS FORAY

Coleman Leuthy

This year, there are two great ways to enjoy this annual mushroom weekend at Meany Lodge:



Option 1 - Friday night through Sunday afternoon. Cost \$95. Limit 30. Join us at Meany Lodge at 7 PM Friday night for a mushroom identification seminar and desert buffet. This seminar includes a mushroom identification field guide and CD. The seminar will be lead by Larry Baxter, long time PSMS member and identifier. The evening will end with a dessert buffet. Get up Saturday morning to a great breakfast, pack a sack lunch, and head out for a day of mushroom hunting with our team of expert guides. Return to Meany Lodge Saturday afternoon to join the rest of the weekend's activities.

Option 2 - Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon. Cost \$60. Limit 40. Convene Saturday morning at 9:30 AM at the Crystal Springs campground. Meet your guides, break into collecting groups, and head for the woods. Begin gathering back at Meany Lodge around 3 PM, where we'll have sorting and ID display tables set up. Bring a sack lunch.

While the mushrooms are being sorted, your taste buds will be tempted by a hot mulled punch, canapés, and hors d'oeuvres featuring local mushrooms collected throughout the year followed by a sumptuous gourmet dinner and dessert. After dinner there will be an evening presentation on Northwest mushrooms.

Sunday we'll enjoy a breakfast featuring local mushrooms. After breakfast we will collect locally, review the display, have a seminar on “Don't eat the mushroom!” and a seminar on mushroom preservation, preparation, and cooking. We will enjoy the fruits of our efforts at lunch before we head back to town.

Driving Directions. Take I-5 east over Snoqualmie Pass to Exit 62, turn right at the top of the exit ramp, and continue ¼ mile. The Crystal Spring Forest Camp where we will meet on Saturday is straight ahead at the sharp left bend in the road. Do not cross the bridge. Bring trail head permits. For those going directly to Meany Lodge, continue past the Crystal Spring campground, cross the Yakima River, and go straight at the Y. About 1/8 mile after the John Wayne Trail, turn left. (Look carefully—the road is narrow and drops off the Stampede Pass road.)

Continue on the main road going under the power line, cross the creek, and turn right up the hill. At the top do a 180° uphill right turn through the gate and parallel the railroad tracks to the private crossing. (Caution: the trains come very fast and quietly downhill.) Cross and continue a short distance. Go left uphill on the driveway to Meany Lodge.

Equipment. Bring a basket, box, or large paper bags to carry your treasures—and small wax-paper sandwich bags for small individual collections. Bring a sleeping bag, pillow, towel, etc., for dormitory accommodations. Club policy: No alcohol in the lodge and no pets.

For additional information call Coleman Leuthy, 206–322–2554. To sign up, call 206–284–8484. NOTE: This event sells out every year so make your reservation early!



TRoublesome Creek Field Trip Brian Luther

September 16, the day of our first fall outing, was supposed to be the only dry day of the week, so we were expecting the clouds to part and to get some sun breaks. However, the day ended up being pretty wet, clearing up only just as we were leaving. The area, in the mountains between Index and Skykomish, was beautiful, surrounded by extensive, deep, virgin woods with huge Douglas Firs and little under-story. However, we did encounter a couple of problems.

Thanks to our hosts, Steve and Adriana Haynack, who had thought ahead and took the time to rig up tarps between the trees with bungee cords and rope, we were provided with some protection over the hosting table. Emily Routledge had another tarp we rigged up, but we really needed more tarps and had a few mishaps with accumulated water suddenly cascading down on people. I had brought a lot of wood with me to build a campfire, but the people in charge of the campground wouldn't let us have one, even though it was raining. Thank you, Adrienne and Steve, for doing a great job of hosting and remaining cheerful with all the problems we had.

Only eleven people signed in, but it was a nice, if small, group, with two new members, Sherwood Stolt and Kristina Utzschneider. Thirty-four species of fungi were collected, and Marian Maxwell did a great job identifying.

One of the edible finds of the day was a perfect solitary *Boletus edulis*, which didn't have a single worm in it. I know because it was sautéed Sunday morning and added to some scrambled eggs! Donna Palomaki found several chanterelles near the entrance, which was encouraging to all of us after such a dry summer. The most unusual species found was *Gymnopilus punctifolius*, collected by Marian Maxwell. Steve Haynack found the most colorful fungus—an almost perfect clump of young *Laetiporus conifericola* (western Chicken of the Woods), which had beautiful orange pileii and the most perfect brilliant sulfur yellow pore surfaces.

It was the last day that the campground was open, and Steve paid a fee for day use, which should have been fine up until dark. However, the people in charge of the campground decided that our day-use fee had expired just as we started potluck at 5:00 PM, forcing us to quickly clean up, disassemble everything, and pack up. Steve offered to pay for the full overnight camping fee so we could stay, but the lady was being unreasonable and told him he didn't have a tent and so he couldn't have the site overnight and they wouldn't let us stay, even though there were obviously no more campers coming on this rainy day and more than two-thirds of the campsites were vacant. Needless to say, we were all a little more than miffed. If we come to this place again, we need to pay an overnight camping fee ahead. Our experience at Troublesome Creek has convinced me that it would be a good idea to have a selection of large sturdy tarps with grommets and bungee cords added to the list of basic hosting supplies, especially for field trip sites lacking shelters. They would only need to be taken to locations lacking a shelter.

So, Troublesome Creek ended up being a bit troublesome, but it was good company, our hosts did a wonderful job, and we were all glad to get out for the day.



BOLETES IN THE SNOW

Mike Boom

Mycena News, Myco. Soc. of San Francisco, December, 1998



It was a strange dream, and more than a little disturbing: I'm hiking through a green meadow in the mountains, listening to a chortling creek, enjoying a bright confetti of wildflowers. *Boletus edulis* dots the outskirts of the meadow, tucked up tight against the trunks of lodgepole pines, waiting to be picked. And there I am with my basket and knife.

But something's wrong. My vision is failing, dimming, filling with white specks that turn into hard pellets of snow. They cover the meadow, the flowers, the boletes, and the world with a sheer of frigid white. My hands turn into stiff claws and I can't unfold my knife. The boletes disappear while I look straight at them, fading to white.

Packs of vigilantes complete the hellish scene. They drive giant white pickups and silver SUVs. They carry rifles and scout the woods intently from the cab, waiting for the slightest motion. Every now and then I hear a rifle shot, and I know that they've killed another bolete picker. As I stumble deeper into the woods, I come across the bloody remains of a slaughtered boletophile who has been gutted and dragged from the forest. "Then I realize—this is no dream. It's real. It's September, I'm in the Sierras, and I'm hunting boletes with my friend Yutaka Wada. Fungal obsession has led me once again to the realm of the bizarre.

This particular excursion starts on a Saturday morning in Oakland when Yutaka and I pack up camping equipment and leave on a four-hour-plus drive to the Shaver Lake area, just northeast of Fresno. A friend of mine reported seeing a few boletes there the previous weekend, which is enough to send me into paroxysms of optimism. We leave under ominous grey skies—but what the hell! Mushrooming is all about inclement weather anyway, isn't it?

As we turn out of the central valley and start climbing into the Sierras, we ascend straight into a thick fog bank that quickly turns into rain showers. Rain showers turn into steady rain, which turns into a downpour. No matter; we're equipped for rain, and we're even more optimistic now. But we've got lots more climbing left to do.

At around 7000 feet, I note with alarm that the car thermometer reads 34 degrees. That's okay; there's lodgepole pine forest out there and some forest service roads leading out from here, so I crank the steering wheel hard left and we bounce our way in. It's curiously crowded with traffic on roads that I'm used to seeing deserted in the spring morel season. We catch a glimpse of camouflage through their windshields and then remember: it's deer-hunting season in the Sierras. And these guys aren't going to let a little rain stop them.

Well, neither are we. After a few false starts we finally make it up to 8000 feet where the temperature hovers at 33 degrees and the rain keeps pouring. As I put on my rain gear, I wish I hadn't traded my nice red rain suit for discreet green. I crave high visibility and can feel antlers growing out of my head. But Yutaka spots a cluster of four nice young oversized boletes growing right along the road, so it's a quick plunge out of the van and into the wet and wooly wild.

Okay! Boletes, and plenty of them—at least at first. But they peter

out, and we spend a lot of time tramping up and down a creek flowing through the meadow, covering our baskets with plastic bags so the boletes within don't get waterlogged. I gradually notice that the motion of the airborne water molecules is slowing and they're pining for crystalline structure. Sure enough, the rain gets a little—shall we say—hard, and starts to turn white. The meadow takes on a crust of snow. To make matters more challenging, a thick fog kicks up and the gloom of twilight sets in. Boletes keep our blood hot, though, so we keep searching and picking until the bitter end, when it's almost too dark to see our way back to the van.

We retreat to lower altitudes where it's not snowing and wisely give up on cooking out. We eat at Shaver Lake's finest dining room surrounded by locals, deer hunters, and walls of knotty pine. One advantage to picking mushrooms in deer-hunting season: no one looks askance at two grubby-looking guys dressed in rain suits. As we leave, the sky opens up to reveal a web of stars; all just a ploy to goad us back into an optimistic frame of mind. In the middle of the night I awaken to the sound of a heavy downpour and can think only one thought: 3000 feet higher this is snow, and it's blanketing all the boletes there.

The next morning the rain has stopped. It's foggy, but we have hopes the snow might be melting. We decide on a late morning start to give it some latitude. I take the opportunity to buy a red neckerchief to wear for visibility, and the Spanish lady behind the counter—hearing that we're mushroom pickers—rhapsodizes over the boletes she used to eat in Spain. We deftly avoid telling her where and what we're picking right now, then hightail it to the heights to continue our search for bigger and better boletes.

There's plenty of snow, you betcha. Patches of ground start to open up, though, and we find a few boletes in a forest raked by the garbage of a ski run. We decide to return to yesterday's twilight zone, and are fortunate on ascending higher to find that the snow has thinned out. The hunters have not, however, and now that the visibility is better they're shooting more. Whenever we're walking on the road, they stop their vehicles to ask us if we've seen any deer. After several of these encounters, it dawns on us: these hunters have no legs! They are, in fact, the mechanized centaurs—human gun-carrying torso on top, truck, jeep, or SUV below. Add to that a visual oxymoron: they all wear camouflage jackets, even though they never leave the confines of the cab for the forest.

As we tramp up and down the snow-sogged meadows and creek beds picking occasional boletes, we see plenty of deer signs—a lot of them half-eaten boletes literally scored with buck teeth. Yutaka points out that “a hunter could sit right at the top of this meadow with a good book and a thermos of coffee and go home with a deer at the end of the day.” No such good sense here, though. The deeper we go into the woods, the more secure we feel that we won't be bothered by deer hunters. Whatever happened to the wily woodsman who knows his prey intimately, tracks it high and low, reads scat like the morning paper, and comes home every season with fresh venison and tales of the woods? Extinct, no doubt, at the hands of motorized centaurs.

By the end of Sunday, Yutaka and I are wet, cold, and thoroughly exhilarated. We hit the road buoyed by modest success: we each have a grocery bag filled with young, well-refrigerated boletes. And for at least a couple of days we were enmeshed in the minutia of the forest. Perhaps that's the truly strange phenomenon these days.

SLIMY STOWAWAY SEIZED AT SEA-TAC

Scott Gutierrez, *Seattle P.I.*, 27 July 2006

It may not have been a terrorist or a drug smuggler, but a small, slimy stowaway intercepted this month at Sea-Tac Airport still posed a credible threat to the United States, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials say. They were talking about a seemingly harmless slug. Not much bigger than its Seattle counterparts, the slug nestled into a shipment of fresh Bulgarian mushrooms and slithered out during a customs inspection July 10.

The problem was that it belongs to a particularly ravenous species that can carry a virus harmful to several crops. The 62 cartons of mushrooms were destroyed as a precaution after the slug was sent to a federal lab and dissected, according to customs officials. “It was without documentation, and it paid the ultimate price,” Customs and Border Protection spokesman Mike Milne said.

“I can kid about it and you can kid about it,” said Milne. “But some of the pests intercepted coming into the United States can have a huge economic impact.”

The steel container of mushrooms arrived on a British Airways flight from London and was bound for a California importer. While examining the shipment, a customs agricultural specialist crawled inside the container to inspect more closely for pests and found the slug, Milne said.

A U.S. Department of Agriculture lab in Philadelphia identified the slug as *Lehmanna nyctelia*, indigenous to Europe, northern and southern Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

The species is a “voracious” feeder on a variety of trees, shrubs, crops and greenhouse plants.

It also can transmit the tobacco mosaic virus, which is particularly infectious to tobacco, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and several ornamental flowers, according to customs officials and Wikipedia.org.

It was the first time that this species had been intercepted at a U.S. port of entry, Milne said.

The slug is one of numerous foreign pests, plant diseases and contaminants that agricultural specialists look for as they examine imported produce and foods at ports of entry around the country, Milne said.

“These kinds of things are what these guys look for. They know certain areas of the world and what types of infestations have taken hold,” Milne said.

“It's kind of a ‘whew.’ It's what these guys do day in and day out, and in this case, they hit a home run.”



The individual who desires to engage in the study [of wild mushrooms] must face a good deal of scorn. He is laughed at for his strange taste among the better classes, and is actually regarded as a sort of idiot among the lower orders.

This popular sentiment, which we may coin the word “fungophobia” to express, is very curious. If it were human—that is, universal—one would be inclined to set it down as instinct and to reverence it accordingly. But it is not human—it is merely British.

— W.D. Hay, *British Fungi*, 1887

EDIBLES: US

Dan Long

Mycena News, Myco. Soc. of San Francisco, March, 2006

I was elated. I was walking down a trail in a remote area that nobody knew about, or so I believed. No human footprints or signs that anybody had been around for quite some time. Where were the candy caps? Suddenly I saw a pile of scat in the middle of the trail, including small bones and fur. Yikes!

A carnivore, and I was by myself, three miles from the car. I had not even told anyone I was mushroom hunting, much less where I was going. I had an immediate urge to be back at the car. Is there anything more powerful than fear?



Later, at home, I started to look for mountain lion information to avert the possibility that I would become mountain lion scat in the middle of some obscure trail somewhere, spooking somebody. About that time, someone posted a picture of a mountain lion track

on the Yahoo group Web page to further my fears. That track turned out to be a dog print. At that point I thought that it would be helpful to our group if I took some of the information I was coming across and wrote this story to shed some light on the odds of being eaten.

The mountain lion is secretive, and the sight of one is rare. Only by accident will you spot a mountain lion unless you are with an expert guide. If you have the good fortune to see one, it will likely flee the minute it sees or smells you. Generally, the mountain lion is calm, quiet, and elusive. It is commonly known as a cougar, panther, or puma. It is tawny-colored with black-tipped ears and tail and a white undercarriage. Although it is smaller than the jaguar, it is one of North America's largest cats.

Adult males may be more than 8 feet long, from nose to end of tail, and generally weigh between 130 and 150 pounds. Adult females can be 7 feet long and weigh between 65 and 90 pounds. Its life cycle is about 12 years in the wild. Mountain lions have from one to five cubs at a time, generally two years apart. Young lions need about two years to develop enough skill in hunting to make their own living. Male territories range from 15 to 30 square miles, and females range from 5 to 20 miles. They hunt in a radius of 30 to 50 miles. A mountain lion's territory sometimes is not one large area but rather several separate ones connected by pathways. They mark their territory and pathways with visible spots of feces and urine. Territorial pathways may overlap, but if the animals meet, one will always defer to the other, rather than risk injury by fighting.

Mountain lions usually hunt alone at night. In dim light, most cats see up to six times better than humans. They hunt by stalking, getting to within a few yards of their prey before lunging in for the kill. They have great speed for short distances and can leap 20 to 23 feet from a standstill. They prefer to ambush their prey, often from behind. They usually kill with a powerful bite below the base of the skull, breaking the neck. They often cover the carcass with dirt, leaves, or snow and may come back to feed on it over the course of a few days.

Individuals develop a preference for one type of prey (one may prefer rabbits, another deer), which limits competition with one another.

The status of the mountain lion in California has evolved from that of "bountied predator" (meaning monetary incentives were offered for every mountain lion killed) between 1907 and 1963, to "game mammal" in 1969, to "special protected mammal" in 1990. In 1920, a rough estimate put the mountain lion population at 600. Since then, more accurate estimates, based on field studies of mountain lions, revealed a population of more than 2000 mountain lions in the 1970s. Today's population estimate ranges between 4,000 and 6,000. The following suggestions are based on studies of mountain lions' behavior and analysis of attacks by mountain lions, tigers, and leopards.

Do Not Hike Alone: Go in groups, with adults supervising children.

Keep Children Close to You: Observations of captured wild mountain lions reveal that the animals seem especially drawn to children. Keep children within your sight at all times.

Do Not Approach a Lion: Most mountain lions will try to avoid a confrontation. Give them a way to escape.

Do Not Run From a Lion: Running may stimulate a mountain lion's instinct to chase. Instead, stand and face the animal. Make eye contact. If you have small children with you, pick them up if possible so they don't panic and run. Although it may be awkward, pick them up without bending over or turning away from the mountain lion.

Do Not Crouch Down or Bend Over: In Nepal, a researcher studying tigers and leopards watched the big cats kill cattle and domestic water buffalo while ignoring humans standing nearby. He surmised that a human standing up is just not the right shape for a cat's prey. On the other hand, a person squatting or bending over looks a lot like a four-legged prey animal. If you're in mountain lion country, avoid squatting, crouching, or bending over, even when picking up children. (As mushroom hunters, we are all doomed!)

Do All You Can To Appear Larger: Raise your arms. Open your jacket if you are wearing one. Again, pick up small children. Throw stones, branches, or whatever you can reach without crouching or turning your back. Wave your arms slowly and speak firmly in a loud voice. The idea is to convince the mountain lion that you are not prey and that you may be a danger to it.

Fight Back If Attacked: A hiker in Southern California used a rock to fend off a mountain lion that was attacking his son. Others have fought back successfully with sticks, caps, jackets, garden tools, and their bare hands. Since a mountain lion usually tries to bite the head or neck, try to remain standing and face the attacking animal.

This is a good website that shows you how to differentiate between dog prints and mountain lion prints: <http://www.bear-tracker.com/caninevsfeline.html>

This is a website that lists mountain lion attacks on people in California since 1890, some with graphic descriptions: http://tchester.org/sgm/lists/lion_attacks_ca.html

Other websites used for information are:

<http://www.395.coni/generalinfo/mtlion.shtml>

<http://www.projectwildlife.org/living-mountainlions.htm>

<http://california.sierraclub.org/mountain-lion/safety.html>

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/watchable/mtlionbro.pdf>



MUSHROOM OF THE MONTH: *Sparassis crispa*
Maggie and Nick Iadanza
MushRumors, Oregon Myco. Soc., Sept./Oct. 2006



Jürgen Duffner

Sparassis crispa in its usual habitat, growing at the base of an old tree.

With its appealing fragrance, crisp texture, and meaty taste, *Sparassis crispa* (the Cauliflower Mushroom) is a favorite edible for many mushroom hunters.

The fruiting body is made up of many layers that resemble a cauliflower, a brain, or to some, a coral or sea anemone. Size can vary, but it is not uncommon to find a mushroom weighing several pounds. Initially creamy-buff in color, the long-lived fruiting body gradually darkens—darker specimens may be tough and bitter. When harvesting, cut from the base making sure not to damage or dislodge its central “root,” as this may have an effect upon future fruitings. *Sparassis crispa* can grow in the same place year after year.

If you find a *Sparassis crispa*, you will need to learn a few tricks for cleaning and cooking this choice mushroom. Grit that accumulates in the nooks and crannies can be difficult to remove. It is best to first brush away as much dust and dirt as possible and rinse or spray with water. Then, break up the mushroom into pieces, cut into slices, and clean each slice individually before cooking.

Although some recipes call for sautéing *Sparassis crispa* as you would other mushrooms, we have found that the mushroom needs to be precooked in either water or broth or cooked for a long time until it is tender. This crunchy fungus holds up well in soups and stews that require long cooking. Try using precooked *Sparassis crispa* as “noodles.” Par-boiled *Sparassis crispa* freezes well; dried reconstitutes with little loss in quality.

Blowup showing
“cauliflower” pattern of
Sparassis crispa growth



LAMB, SPARASSIS, AND ARTICHOKE STEW

Chet Lee, *MushRumors*, Oregon Myco. Soc., Sept./Oct. 2006

The fragrant sweetness of the cauliflower mushroom pairs very well with lamb. A mild Indian curry is nice...as is this Greek treatment.

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 2 lbs boneless, cubed lamb
- 3 onions, peeled and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- ½ cup chopped Italian parsley
- 6 ounces tomato paste
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 28 ounces canned artichoke hearts in brine, drained
- 2 cups *Sparassis crispa* or *S. radicata*, chopped
- ½ teaspoon dill
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice

In your biggest frying pan, sauté the lamb in butter until lightly browned. Remove the lamb, placing into a heavy kettle. Sauté the onions, garlic and parsley until the onions are translucent. Add this to the lamb with the tomato paste and white wine. Simmer covered until the lamb is tender, about 90 minutes. Add the artichokes, *Sparassis*, dill, and lemon juice. Simmer until the *Sparassis* is tender. Season to taste and serve over rice.

YE OLDE SPARASSIS ROAST BEEF Maggie Rogers

MushRumors, Oregon Myco. Soc., Sept./Oct. 2006

- 2–3 lbs chuck roast
- 1 package dry onion soup mix
- 2 to 3 cups chopped *Sparassis*, fresh or dried

Lay the roast on a large sheet of aluminum foil. Sprinkle with the dry onion soup and the chopped *Sparassis*. Wrap so that the entire roast is sealed in and the air expelled. Place the wrapped roast in an ovenproof pan. Bake at 200°F for 6–7 hours.

Remove the roast from the foil just before serving. Serve with steamed carrot slices and boiled new potatoes dredged in chopped parsley and butter. Simple. Savory. Go hunt for *Sparassis crispa*...and share a bit with the recipe sharer!

BEGINNING MUSHROOM ID CLASS, SECOND SESSION
Colin Meyer

A second session of beginning mushroom identification classes will be offered this fall on three consecutive Sunday evenings, October 22 through November 5. Classes will be held in the Douglas Classroom at the Center for Urban Horticulture, from 7:00 until 9:00 in the evening. The classes will focus on learning the anatomy of mushrooms and how to use dichotomous keys for identification. The recommended text is *Mushrooms Demystified* by David Arora. The book will be available for sale on the first day of class, and there will be a few copies available for borrowing from the PSMS library. The cost for the classes is \$25. Registration is available to PSMS members only. The class always fills up, so please do not come if you do not have a confirmed registration. For more information or to register, please e-mail Colin Meyer at education@psms.org (preferably) or telephone 206-722-6687.

PSMS LIBRARY

Kim Traverse

Hi. I'm Kim Traverse, and my family and I moved from Michigan to Seattle two years ago. From 6-7 PM on meeting days, I will be keeping the PSMS library open for member use, and Ron Post and I will be taking care of further accessioning of donations.



The PSMS library offers a host of resources for members to use during the hour before meetings or to check out during that time for home and field use. However, much of this material goes underused, and that's a shame.

To encourage library patronage, I thought I might write a short review of various materials and suggest how they might be used. One of these items is

Protocols for an All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory of Fungi in a Costa Rican Conversation Area (signed by co-author Thomas E. O'Dell, with a forward by Daniel H. Janzen and Winnie Hallwachs).

This work outlines the protocol to be used for the fungal portion of a proposed inventory of taxa in the Area de Conservación Guanacaste. The inventory never took place, but if you want a brief overview of what it would take to really inventory the fungi of any area, this will broaden your appreciation of the challenges that entails. It might also help you think in a more comprehensive search mode when looking for fungi in the field.

We are sorry to report that longtime member Peter Miller passed away recently from a heart attack in his sleep.



page 8



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