

DECEMBER MEETING Monday, Dec. 12, 8 p.m., Eames Theater, Pacific Science Center.

Species photographed by Dr. Dick Black and Paul Macapia at The Exhibit to be shown with commentary by Ben Woo. Plus bonus - Ben's shots of people species appearing at that event, both foreground and behind-the-scenes. Identification of your own finds afterward.

For benefit of new members: WHEN YOU BRING FUNGI FOR IDENTIFICATION, please separate each species (the ones that look alike to you). The ultimate in convenience for both you and the identifying expert is a large shallow box with dividers in it, or with plastic baskets you get with market produce, or at the meat market. If no box or basket is available, use wax paper spills, sandwich bags or rolled-down paper bags. No plastic bags - they accelerate deliquescence. Think of that! As you learn from inspecting the specimens of others, you know how much more informative it is to be able to see easily.

DO NOT FREEZE SPECIMENS, cry our experts in anguish. Specimens defrost into thickish puddles, unloveable and unidentifiable.

Mycology (from the Greek 'mykes' - fungus, or mushroom: (1) the branch of botany dealing with fungi; (2) all fungi native to a specific region.

PHOTOGRAPHERS Choose your very best slides (not more than 12) for showing to the Society. Contact George Rafanelli, PA 2-7011, who will coordinate the loan of your slides with others. Be sure to have your name on them. Call him by Jan. 15, please (target date for the show is Feb. 13 meeting) so we can make sure of identity of species, and weed out duplicates. Your slides will be given the greatest care, so please come forward with faith.

If you took shots at The Exhibit which show people and mushrooms in some relationship, please tell Connie Young, EA 3-3857. We need to build a file of publicity pictures. Demand for these will be greater each year we fondly believe. Your help greatly appreciated, greatly appreciated.

"There is not one person whose life is not affected - sometimes for good, sometimes for ill - by fungi. Often scorned, often ignored, the yeasts, molds, mushrooms and other members of the strange kingdom of fungi are of major importance to your food, your health, your very existence in the world. The one fungus readily conceded to be pleasant, is, of course, the mushroom, and true mushroom lovers are a breed apart.... Each year more than 165 million pounds of mushrooms...are sauteed, broiled, stuffed, cut up in sauces or sliced raw into salads in America alone."

MUSHROOMS, MOLDS AND MIRACLES, by Lucy Kavalier, The John Day Co., 1965. Seattle Public Library. 589.2/K 17 M

This fascinating book is a layman's survey of the world of fungi - mushrooms and other cherished associates - bread, beer, wine, cheese, whisky, and the yeasts, food of an undernourished future. And, distressingly, plant smuts, blights and mildews, athlete's foot, ringworm; fungi that eat plastic, and destroy adhesives used to glue optical instruments. Synthetic paints are attacked, so are cosmetics. Fungi even feed on today's jet fuels. Fungi generally are more help than hindrance, but they are EVERYWHERE. Step outside. Are your rose leaves gray, your evergreens brown, your lilacs withering? That's Them. Those are They. Get ready to fight!

LEARNING ABOUT MUSHROOMS,  
OR FUNGUS FRUSTRATION  
(or vice versa--they're  
everywhere...)

Each of you became a PSMS member for slightly different reasons. Some are hopeful instant pothunters, as the man who called to say he was going hunting, and would I please explain briefly over the phone how to tell good mushrooms from bad, so in case there were no

game he could bring back something for his time and trouble! Let me say at once that nobody in the world could do this. The more you learn about mushrooms, the more you understand what there is to learn. The material we studied last Spring, which will be sent new members, will give you a start on widening your horizons and suggest areas where you will find expansion helpful. Below is a list of books I own. It is a rank amateur's list. Our real experts have many, many more, and access to many. But you have to start someplace, if only to find out what you don't know.

1. The Savory Wild Mushroom, Margaret McKenny, U. of W. Press, 1962, \$3.95.
2. The Mushroom Hunter's Field Guide, Alexander H. Smith, U. of Michigan Press, revised 1963, \$6.95.
3. Guide to Common Mushrooms of British Columbia, Bandoni and Szczawinski, Handbook No. 24, B. C. Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C. 50¢.
4. A Guide to Mushrooms & Toadstools, Lange & Hora, E.P. Dutton, 1963, \$5.95.

Only by constant and repeated exposure and checking with his own books and keys does the newcomer to mycology eventually lay a foundation upon which to build a structure of fungi facts.

Often you can learn which mushrooms are good to eat only by learning which are poisonous, since there are many that are superficial look-alikes. There is no one simple, single place to learn Everything About Mushrooms. The more you know, the more you learn. Different books have different degrees of usefulness; the same is true of keys, which are often frustrating, but which at least open up possibilities. Textbooks never quite do it all for you. You often must just bring mushroom and expert together.

But each time you tackle a problem of identification, using every means at hand, you soak up a little more information on what to look for, you intensify your ability to distinguish details, and you get better acquainted with an author's meaning. Eventually you come to understand what they mean when they say "woolly", or "silky" or velvety". Learning terms is most helpful in the long run, though it may seem a drag at first. Learning

"Mushrooms are making sounds and we should be listening to them."--

John Cage, composer

a Latin name (and since there is more than one system in operation, you may learn more than one - it's worse than a Russian novel), is no more trouble than learning the first and last name of a friend, rather than forever trying to identify him or reach him on the phone by a

nickname. Along with terms, the first thing to learn is major groups: boletes, polypores, cup fungi, morels, puffballs, agarics.

Don't hesitate to ask silly questions. Every expert asked them once. In fact, at the last PSMS Board meeting, while we were identifying the Exhibit slides, distinguished experts were heard murmuring "What can this be?"

Be patient with your Society. We are in our third year of trying to build a system of information and education for members who vary from the puzzled beginner to the knowledgeable expert. Don't give up. Make spore prints. Dissect mushrooms. Break stipes. Inspect bases. Judge caps, colors and textures - it will all come to something. Press on bravely. We're all going through it. And Seasoned Greetings to all Mushroom Lovers.

Connie Young, Editor