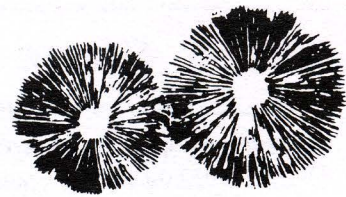


SPORE PRINTS

BULLETIN OF THE PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Number 341

April 1998



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Doug Ward

We have some exciting opportunities as well as challenges facing us in the next few years. We have wonderful things going on in the areas of fungi cultivation, education, and gastronomy as well as the challenges of how do we deal with the very probable collision of the timing of our annual show and Seahawks using Husky Stadium and the every widening loss of old growth forests. It is a really great time to be elected to be your president because we have such a talented mix of long-time members with their tremendous knowledge and newer members with all the enthusiasm and energy to learn and make things happen. I am looking forward to the next two years and hope that we can continue the trends of bringing our interest in fungi to a larger and larger club membership.



GROWING OYSTER MUSHROOMS IS EASY!

Rob Countess, *Fungifama*, March 1998



I never met a house plant I couldn't kill. Even the hardiest species wither away under my care. I just don't have the patience for plants—they grow too slowly. Now, mushrooms on the other hand, I'm so good at growing them, that they're springing up from between my toes. As a child, I was not aware of my special talent for cultivating fungi. It was just so easy that I took it for granted, but my mother was always very proud of me. Wet towels left in piles of dirty underwear in the corner of my room produced wonderful colonies of mildew; bread crusts left under my bed flowered in blues and greens; Brussels sprouts and broccoli hidden in my secret spot under our kitchen table soon sprouted white fur coats, as did many of my pet fish at the bottom of my aquarium. (Yes, the bottom. Fish may float at first but they sink if you leave 'em long enough.) Let's not even talk about the back of my fridge. I think I first became aware of my gift when I borrowed a friend's car for a couple of weeks and mushrooms began sprouting from the floor.

Mushrooms are exciting to grow. Unlike boring plants, fungi grow so quickly I am compelled to check them hourly when I'm home so that I don't miss any of the action. They are like mutant space alien blobs that have descended upon our planet and are trying to digest it all with their eclectic array of exoenzymes. Lucky for us they are edible or we might have lost the battle already.

Let me describe my most recent experience with mushroom cultivating and maybe I can convert some of you closet botanists.

Many days before day 1—Renata Outerbridge moves into town and asks me if I want some old oyster mushroom spawn that she's had since the dawn of time. I say "sure." She has two species. (Spawn is mushroom mycelium growing on grain, usually rye.)

Day 1—I swing by Borden mercantile and pick up a bale of straw (dead wheat plants with their heads chopped off) to grow the mushrooms on. From there I head to Sean McCann's place. Sean has a propane burner and an old oil drum which we use to sterilize the straw. After cooking it for an hour, we dump it on a spawning table and let it cool and drain. When the dead wheat plants with their heads chopped off have cooled enough, we release the fungus (sound of trumpet fanfare), mixing the spawn in to speed the rate of decay, er, colonization. We stuff the inoculated dead wheat plants with their heads cut off into plastic bags and poke holes in the bags to let the fungus breathe. I go home and put the bags in a warm humid room.

Day 2—Nothing happens. I grow impatient.

Day 3—The fungus stirs. All the individual rye grains from the spawn have grown nice fur coats.

Day 4—The colonies are 1 cm across now.

Day 5—The colonies are 2 cm in diameter.

Day 8—The bags are 30% colonized, but the mycelium is sparse.

Day 12—The bags are almost fully colonized; the mycelium is still sparse.

Day 14—The bags are fully colonized and the mycelium is thick and white. Primordia (baby mushrooms) have already started to form in clusters of 30 to 100. They are grayish and have no caps yet.

Day 15 AM—The primordia have caps a few millimeters across and they are BLUE!!! I did not expect this and get very excited. I call my mom. She's still proud of me.

Day 15 PM—The caps are almost 1 cm across now. All the bags are fruiting, some with up to 30 clusters of primordia. The 'shrooms are growing quickly and becoming trumpet shaped to tongue shaped. It's exciting. I check them hourly, and they are bigger each time. Cool.

Day 16—Disaster strikes! My girlfriend, Margaret, keeps two rats, and Clovis, the smarter of the two (rats, that is), somehow breaks through my mushroom security system and seriously nibbles on a few clusters.

Day 17—The mushroom is now rat-proof.

Day 18—The mushrooms look like they are ready to harvest. We have a bunch on a pizza. Delicious! Clovis looks at me remorsefully and I forgive her; she even gets a few small fresh mushrooms to nibble.

Day 19—I refrain from harvesting all the mushrooms in order to see just how big they will get. The caps are no longer blue but rather a faint blue-gray. The color intensity fades as they get larger.

Day 20—Some caps have heavy pale pink spore prints from the caps above them. (Pluteaceae!)

Day 21—The largest caps are more than 12 cm across. I harvest enough to fill two shopping bags from a total four bags of straw. I call my mom. She says she's proud of me.

Spore Prints

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PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Annual dues \$20; full-time students \$15

CALENDAR

April 10–11	Field Trip, Steelhead State Park, Rockport
April 13	Basic I.D. class, Isaacson Classroom, CUH, 7:00–9:00 PM (registered people only)
April 14	Membership meeting, CUH, 7:30 PM
April 20	Basic I.D. class, Isaacson classroom, CUH 7:00–9:00 PM (registered people only) Board meeting, CUH Board Room, 7:30 PM
April 24	<i>Spore Prints</i> deadline
April 27	Basic I.D. class, Isaacson classroom, CUH, 7:00–9:00 PM (registered people only)
May 2	Field Trip, Bullfrog Flats
May 9	Field Trip, Twenty-Nine Pines
May 11	Basic I.D. class, Isaacson classroom, CUH 7:00–9:00 PM (registered people only)
May 12	Membership meeting, CUH, 7:30 PM

BOARD NEWS

Agnes Sieger

Education Chair Brandon Matheny reported that the Beginning I.D. classes are set up for Monday nights this spring. Classes are for 6 weeks, 24 persons per class. Membership Chair Bernice Velategui reported that we now have 470–480 members. Starting this month, we will deposit \$200 monthly into the building fund. Rosters not picked up at the banquet will be available at the April membership meeting. Rosters still not picked up will then be mailed to members. Joanne Young has the reservation form for park sites for the summer picnic. We need a volunteer to find a site and coordinate the activity. Because of a football game conflict, the date of the annual exhibit has been changed to November 7–8, 1998.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, April 14, at 7:30 PM at the Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle.

Our guest speaker this month is Norwegian mycologist Gro Gulden. The title of her talk is “Mapping and distribution of mushrooms.” Dr. Gulden has been curator at the Botanical Museum of Oslo, Norway, for more than 30 years. Her research has been primarily in agaric taxonomy, where she has focused on the family Tricholomataceae and the genus *Galerina*. She is interested in alpine and arctic macromycetes and has travelled extensively in arctic and alpine regions. Myco-sociological work, especially in connection with air pollution and forest dieback, took her to study in the Black Forest of Germany and to the study of mycorrhiza. That interest also brought her to Corvallis, Oregon, where she is currently spending a sabbatical year.

If your last name begins with the letters Q–V, please bring a plate of refreshments for the social hour.

MUSHROOM MECCA: HAIDA GWAI

Jennifer Lawlor, *Fungifama*, March 1998

Last year at this time, I looked back to the previous Fall and begrudged the time I spent indoors wishing I could be in the forest. I was determined not to miss another season. Unsatisfied with casual, interspersed forays, I needed more.

Recalling mushroom stories told to me by others who had journeyed to Haida Gwaii [to go commercial mushroom picking], I knew this was where I wanted to be.

When the end of August rolled around and I had to fly out of Alaska (remember the ferry strike?), I was more than a little financially insecure. Still, I was not going to give up my dream. I had heard of chanterelle picking on the islands but hadn't a clue where the sites were, or how to get to them by foot. Would there be chanterelles everywhere? Would I see a shimmering golden hue as I approached the islands from the water? I hadn't a clue. Driven by my foolish passion, I hopped on the ferry from Prince Rupert headed toward Skidegate, Graham Island. Things would work themselves out (I hoped!)

At 4 AM we reached Skidegate, still dark before sunrise. Worry set in as I realized that once all the cars left the ferry, I would be on my own. “Uhh, excuse me, but you wouldn't happen to know anything about chanterelle picking, would you?” I asked the young woman on my right as we waited to disembark. “Well, I don't really know, but I am with some other folks who have been here picking before. I think we are headed to Skidegate Lake, did you need a ride?” Did I need a ride? Yahoo! Mushrooms, here I come...

Within hours I was setting up a temporary camp on Skidegate Lake, Moresby Island, with my new friends. This was my home for the next couple of months: a beautiful place! Just under 2 km from us were the buying stations—a total of four impermanent structures put together with young alder and blue tarpaulins or a simple extended canopy from the side of a trailer.

The buzz around mushroom camp: no chanterelles. There had been a flush early in the summer followed by a dry spell. We needed a lot of rain if there was going to be any season at all. Oh well, I was happy to be there. I headed into the forest to take a look for myself.

There were mushrooms everywhere—*Cantharellus*, *Hydnullum*, *Lactarius*, *Russula*, *Polyozellus*, and *Sparassis* to name a few genera. I headed back to camp that evening with a big grin on my

face declaring: Mushrooms galore. Well, I guess not everyone there was interested in genera other than *Cantharellus*.

The rains eventually came, but either they were too early or too late, before the full moon or after the full moon, the weather was too mild or else too cool—everyone had their own theory as to why the chanterelles did not fruit in abundance. El Niño? I was continually told stories of entire hillsides glimmering with the beautiful golden yellow chanterelle. It would have been a sight to see. Perhaps next year.

I spent two months camping next to Skidegate Lake and was able to support myself (and save some money too) by harvesting chanterelles. Each day I would head into the forest fully adorned with rain gear, a knife, and a five-gallon bucket strapped to my back. Most days I filled my bucket. At the end of the day, I took my harvest to the buying station and gently poured the beautiful chanterelles into several small plastic containers carefully separated from my night's feast of blue chanterelles, or cauliflower mushrooms, chicken-of-the-woods, or pines. I loved this part of the day—surrounded by the fresh pumpkin aroma of chanterelles.

Camp life was another daily pleasure. I had heard so many terrible stories about mushroom pickers being disrespectful, competitive, and unfriendly. My experience with the pickers on Haida Gwaii was completely the opposite. There was a real sense of respect between people and toward the mushroom resource. A picker who showed up at the buying station with a button was scorned by both the buyer and other pickers—everyone wanted to maximize the harvest and it doesn't take an ecologist to realize that this requires a responsible harvest.

Chanterelle picking was a wonderful experience in so many ways: spending so much time focused on one species gave me a real sense of familiarity and kinship with it, and searching for the elusive patch was like a game and inspired my primeval hunting instinct. I was living closer to my roots, supporting myself (albeit indirectly) by harvesting a product sustainably from the forest; and perhaps most importantly, I saw and was a part of the transformation of the forest and its fungal communities. In the two months I spent at Skidegate Lake, I learned more about fungi than I have since I first discovered the kingdom for myself. My curiosity has just been whetted; I am dreaming of the fall.

PSMS ROSTER

Doug Ward

The 1998 roster is ready thanks to the hard work of Patrice Benson. For those who missed the annual banquet, the rosters will be available for pickup at the next regular membership meeting. Please plan to attend and pick up your copy so we can avoid the mailing expense. If you see errors in your address or phone number or if there is any missing information, please bring this to the attention of any club officer or board member and we will get a correction added to the data base and published in the *Spore Prints*.

MUSHROOM ASTROLOGY

Bob Lehman, LAMS



Aries (Mar. 21 - Apr. 19): You are energetic in your mushroom hunting and love to explore new territory. You visit several sites in the course of a day's foraging even if the first site had more than enough mushrooms. You are confident and enthusiastic, and you act on inspiration. When everyone else knows it's too dry for mushrooms, you go find them. You like to make quick identifications and you risk poisoning yourself.

MACDONALD PARK FIELD TRIP

Mike Lovelady



Identification Chair Brian Luther at MacDonald Park, March 21, 1998

but if eaten with alcohol, may cause physical distress. It pays to know your mushroom.

By 9:30 or so, about 40 people and three or four dogs were milling around the shelter.

Brian Luther gave a brief talk on the collecting and development of *Verpa (Ptychoverpa) bohemica* fruiting bodies, their association with black cottonwoods, and potential problems with eating them. Then Wayne Elston, Brandon Matheny, and I took three groups out to hunt. Although only 10 verpas were found, we were lucky and it didn't rain. PSMS Identification Chair Brian Luther, assisted by Brandon Matheny and Dick Sieger, identified several species. Dick Sieger passed around a minute but exquisite white *Lachnellula* sp. for people to look at through a hand lens. At least a couple of people collected some of the abundant nettles, the old stalks of which were covered with *Lasiosphaeria acuta*. Noticeably absent were *Pleurotus ostreatus*, some of which almost always comes in on this field trip. Maybe we'll do better at Steelhead Park, April 10–11.



UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Mike Lovelady

Wanted Field Trip Hosts: We still need hosts for upcoming field trips. This is great way to learn mycology, meet people, and find out where to hunt mushrooms. To volunteer, call or write Field Trip Chair Mike Lovelady at (206) 932-8497 or 4841 Delridge Way SW, Seattle, WA 98106.

April 10–12

Steelhead State Park, Rockport
(elev. 300 ft, 95 miles NE of Seattle)

There are two possible routes, both lined with cottonwood trees under which you can look for *Verpa bohemica*. Either take exit #208 from I-5 at Arlington and go east on State Hwy. 520 through Darrington and north to Rockport or continue north on I-5 to exit #230 at Burlington and go east on State Hwy. 20 to Rockport. Steelhead Park is on the river bank and is frequented by bald eagles. For Friday and Saturday night, we reserved Adirondack shelter A1 which has bunks for eight campers.

May 2

Bullfrog Flats
(elev. 2000 ft, 80 miles east of Seattle)

This is a new site at the northwest corner where I-90 crosses the Cle Elum River. Take I-90 east over Snoqualmie Pass to exit #80. Go left at the stop for about 500 ft, take the first right, and follow the PSMS signs.

UPCOMING MUSHROOM EVENTS, 1998

April 18–19: “The Myxomycetes: Small is Beautiful,” a workshop with Dr. Harold Keller and the New Mexico Mycological Society. NAMA and NMMS members \$25, non-members \$35. Check to “Myxomycete Workshop,” Doris Eng, NMMS, 724 Madison NE, Albuquerque NM 87110-6217. More info: (505) 2567899 or e-mail AmanitaX@aol.com.

May 28–31: Oregon Mycological Society Spring Study Foray in the Wallowa Mountains of Northeast Oregon, at Wallowa Methodist Camp. Orson and Hope Miller will be myco-coaches. Contact Maggie Rogers (503) 239-4321 or e-mail rogersmm@aol.com.

June 12–14: Southern Idaho Mycological Society Spring Foray, Quaker Hill Church Camp, just outside McCall, Idaho. Contact Marie Bailey, 160 NW 6th St., Ontario OR 97914.

Aug. 17–23: NAMA’s Mexico Foray. Join 39 others to foray Mexico’s mountains above Mexico City. Hotel lodgings. Contact Ken Crouse, Foray Coordinator (910) 973-5569.

Aug. 27–30: 18th Telluride Mushroom Festival, Telluride, Colorado. Contact Fungifile, phone (303) 296-9359.

Aug. 29–Sept. 5: Foray and workshop marking retirement of Roy Watling; social event and *Boletus* workshop. Kindrogan Field Centre, Enochdhu, Blairgowrie, Perthshire PH1 0 7PG (Scotland) U.K. Telephone 01250 881286.

Sept. 25–27: Annual Spokane Mushroom Club Foray at Hills Resort, Priest Lake, Idaho. Contact Kelly Chadwick, W-720 Park Pl., Spokane, WA 99205.

Oct. 12-18: Forays and gourmet dining (including truffles) in Italy, starting in Pisa and ending in Rome. Cost \$1,998 double occupancy plus airfare. Contact Albert J. Casciero, (301) 593-4620 (e-mail casciero@wric.org).

Oct. 23–25: Oregon Mycological Society Fall Foray, Camp Tapawingo, Oregon, west of Fall City. Contact Conrad Thorne, (503) 281-0500.

Oct. 24–25: Mycological Mysteries: Northwest Mushroom Ecology, introductory seminar with Dr. Fred Rhoades, at Chinook Learning Center on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound, north of Seattle. One college credit available, tuition \$145. Contact North Cascades Institute, (306) 856-5700 ext. 209.

RADIO GOURMET

Joanne Young

Check out KUOW Radio Gourmet Mauny Kaseburg’s web site (<http://www.maunyskitchen.com/FoodBites/fb0403.htm>) for an article on morels and verpas. Select “Recipes” for links to three recipes from Patrice Benson, the “Marquessa of Mushrooms.”

MUSHROOM CULTIVATION CLASS

Ed Foy

Ed Foy will teach a course in mushroom cultivation at Discover U., International Trade Center, Seattle, from 10 AM to 1 PM, Saturday, May 2. Attendees will take home a bag of *Pleurotus*-spawned straw that will fruit for several months. Those interested can phone (206) 443-0447. Cost of the course is \$38.00. PSMS members will not pay the additional \$4.00 materials fee.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Videographer: PSMS needs one or two people to videotape the programs at our membership meetings. The tapes are kept in the library for member use. You don’t need to own a camcorder (PSMS has one) and you don’t need any special skills! You can learn on the job. Please volunteer even if you don’t think you can attend every single meeting.

PSMS Picnic Planner: In mid summer, with no meetings or field trips, we start to miss each other. In years past PSMS has had a picnic at a park in or near Seattle, usually in July. We can have one again this year, but we need a coordinator to make the arrangements and take care of the details. If interested, call Doug Ward at (206) 523-0781 or Joanne Young at (206) 633-0752.

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