

Fungifama



The Newsletter of the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society
March 2003

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SVIMS web site: www.svims.ca

Dues: \$15.00 per year per household, payable in January by cheque made out to SVIMS or by cash at meeting.

Meetings: First Thursday of the month (no meetings December, January, July, and August), 7:00 p.m. sharp at the Pacific Forestry Centre, 506 Burnside Rd. W., Victoria. Lots of free parking. The meeting room is near the main entrance door. Non-members welcome.

Caution: The South Vancouver Island Mycological Society (SVIMS) newsletter, Fungifama, is not intended as an (online) identification or medicinal guide to mushrooms. There are risks involved in eating and in using wild mushrooms. The possibility may exist that you are allergic to a specific mushroom, or that the mushroom may be anomalous. SVIMS, Fungifama and the authors on this site

warn that the reader must accept full personal responsibility for deciding to use or consume any particular specimen.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Morels are up In the Victoria area!
Monthly Meetings:

Thursday, April 3

Mushroom Identification: Finally understand what makes one of those poisonous look-a-likes different from one of those excellent edibles. A host of experts will show you the easy and, yes if you want, some of the more difficult methods used to identify mushrooms. Bring in mushrooms to be identified by the group. Learn some of the basics about identifying mushrooms.

Thursday, May 1:

Program to be announced.

June: no meeting, but don't miss The President's Picnic (see Events and Forays).

July: no meeting

August 16, 17, 18. Special Meeting: International Workshop on edible Mycorrhizal Mushrooms. There will be a special meeting with guest speakers from the workshop. See the details under Announcements.

Events and Forays:

President's Picnic - Thursday June 5 @ 5:00 p.m.

Our June meeting will be a picnic at the Beaver Lake Group Picnic Shelter

on Thursday, June 5th. Please note early starting time of 5:00 p.m. but the festivities will last until dusk so join us any time. Bring your own picnic supplies, food, and a lawn chair. There are picnic tables and a barbecue stove but feel free to bring your own BBQ if your culinary talents require lots of elbow room. Potable water, bathrooms and a briquette disposal pit are available. A forest is close by for those who just can't help taking a mini-foray.

Family, friends, and children are welcome (please note dogs are not allowed between June 1 - September 15). Frisbees, kites, baseballs and bats are encouraged. Who knows – maybe we can organize some team games – the "Cagey Courts" versus the "Amazing Amanitas"???

This is NOT the Elk Lake Picnic Shelter which is close to the Boat House. Follow the signs to Beaver Lake where you will find a huge parking lot, a large, open grassy area, and the Beaver Lake Group Picnic Shelter.

For more information telephone our president, Christine Roberts (478-2976) or membership secretary, Jean Johnson (656-3117).

Prez Sez for February, 2003

Our first serious meeting of the year at the Pacific Forestry Centre featured our very own Richard Winder talking about Morels. His talk came a little earlier in the year than the delectable mushrooms themselves but it is as well to be prepared. Richard was bugged by a recalcitrant projector, which flatly refused to show his lovely pictures. Undaunted, he wheeled the laptop around so we could see the images and he spoke eloquently on the delights -and dangers of these hard-to-see Ascomycetes and their look-alikes, the Gyromitras and Verpas. There are more dangerous chemicals in the Gyromitras and relatives than just the rocket fuel we knew about already, so it pays to double check your finds before eating what

could be your last meal. It seems many Morels are cryptic, they disguise themselves as pinecones and bits of ash on burn sites. Richard described seeing fields of morels as far as the eye could see following forest fires! Dream-on the rest of us! John was most disgusted with me last year because some others and I ate all the evidence of the locally found blond morel and didn't save any to show and tell at the meeting later! Ooh, naughty, slapped wrist!

For those of you who would have liked to join the 3-club foray to Lake Wenatchee, May 9-11th, and think it is too late, it is not. I phoned Margaret Dilly and she has reserved us some space with an option on more if needed. The Tall Timbers folks are giving us first dibs on the remaining accommodations. So far we have 12 of you signed up.

Adolf Ceska would also like to know if you want to go on the Last Resort trip to Manning Park, October 3-5th, price \$80. Jean Johnson and Adolf have more details on that.

Paul Kroeger is our guest speaker for the March meeting and he suggests a foray on Thursday to collect fungi for the evening meeting. Anyone interested? Suggestions as to where might be good foraying grounds would be welcome. Otherwise we'll probably end up at Royal Roads again, which is OK too. He will show us some slides donated to VMS by local naturalist and photographer Roy Phillips, amongst others. Those of you who know Paul and his unique voice and sense of humour will no doubt be looking forward to next weeks' talk. Christine.

Prez Sez for March 2003

Our March meeting featured a talk and slides by Paul Kroeger of Vancouver Mycological Society. Paul has spoken at our club on various topics for many years now, and is always very interesting and often humorous. This year's talk was on psychoactive mushrooms or "magic mushrooms" as they are commonly known, a sensitive subject but one in which ignorance

is dangerous. It also has a fascinating history as we discovered from Paul. These mushrooms, mostly of the *Psilocybe* genus and now illegal to possess, we learned were used for centuries in shamanic healing rituals, especially in South America. Paul showed slides of mushroom stones -ancient sculptures relating to the ceremonial practices, and of the ethnomycologists R. Gordon Wassen and his wife Valentina who brought in teams of experts to study all aspects of these shamanic ceremonies and the chemistry of *Psilocybes*. The recreational use of such mushrooms is very recent, and followed trials of the active compounds for medicinal use in psychiatric patients. Paul told us anecdotes of the very strange behaviours of people who were intoxicated with *Psilocybe*, with some positive, some negative results, and he warned us of the dangers, particularly that **PSILOCYBE MUSHROOMS CAN BE LETHAL TO CHILDREN**. Getting them mixed up with deadly *Galerinas*, which look similar and grow in the same substrate can also be fatal.

Paul described some of the visual and other physical and psychological effects, and showed paintings done by an artist following a "trip", which shows the pointillist effect apparently experienced. Finally we got to know the taxonomy, chemistry and origins of the various species.

Our meeting in April is a workshop on mushroom identification so bring in your finds. We will have microscopes and will show you how to use them, we'll have Ian Gibson's Matchmaker key -which you can use online, and lots of books to check your finds out with. If you have had difficulty following a key and identifying a mushroom (who hasn't), those of us who have struggled with it many times will be on hand to sympathize, and maybe even lend a hand! Some advice on collecting: Collect the whole mushroom right down to the base of the stipe, get a young and a mature one if possible, make a note (on paper) of what it is growing on (wood, soil, chips etc.) and what trees are nearby. Put each collection into a

separate wax paper package with your note. At home, you can make a spore print. This is a very useful identification procedure as spore colour can help you find which genus it is in. Put the cap gills side down after cutting off the stipe, (or for a non-gilled mushroom, lay it down) on a sheet of white or half black, half white paper, cover it with a bowl to keep the moisture in and put the assembly outside. After a few hours you should have a spore print which you can fold up or spray with a fixative (hair spray works) if you want to keep the nice "design". If you don't want to cut the stipe off your mushroom, cut a hole in a piece of white card and carefully pass the stipe through this so the gills touch the card, then support upright on a glass, cover with a cup or wax paper.

Christine

The Season's Potential

Renata and I found morels in Victoria on Saturday March 22nd. There were a dozen beautiful morels and six to eight damaged specimens. Once again it was a disturbed area built up a bit with clay soil and covered with chip mulch. They were so hard to see that it took several trips around the area before they were spotted.

Also, we had four morels come up in our garden (March 15th). Don't bother sneaking over. They have been coddled with some eggs. Absolutely delicious! We were using a composting technique called "trenching" to recycle kitchen waste. In several areas we buried apple cores, peels and also put in clay soil, wood ashes and lime. However, only in the spot where we put the morel inoculum we got from Richard Winder at last year's Survivor's banquet, did the morels come up. Other members who got this inoculum in the raffle and planted it in their gardens should check the areas very carefully. It looks like it could be a great spring morel season.

Speaking of the Survivor's Banquet, this year's Wicked Raffle brought in \$120.00 in ticket sales. That Money Mushroom is doing a good job!

Oyster Fest

Has anyone had "problems" with eating oyster mushrooms? I have friends who grew some oyster mushrooms and ate them many times with no problems. However, they had cramps and diarrhea after eating them while drinking alcohol. It happened three times, once each with wine, beer and whisky. This is a reported phenomenon with *Coprinus atramentarius*, but I have not heard of it with *Pleurotus*. I tested it on myself with wine and had no problem. I guess I'll have to test it with the beer and whisky.
John

Announcements:

The 3rd International Workshop on Edible Mycorrhizal Mushrooms: Ecology, Physiology and Cultivation

Workshop to be held at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada on August 17-19 2003.

This Workshop follows the 4th International Conference on Mycorrhizae (4th ICOM) which is being held on August 10 - 15 2003 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
<http://www.congresbcu.com/icom4/>

So, if you are interested in truffles, boletes, chanterelles and other delectable mycorrhizal mushrooms, be sure to mark August 17-19 2003 in your calendar.

The web site and registration for the 3rd IWEMM will be on-line soon. For more information contact Shannon M. Berch
Shannon.berch@gems7.gov.bc.ca

Not close to home but interesting anyway:

Morel Mushroom festival - May 16-18, 2003, Muscoda, Wisconsin

The Village of Muscoda, Wisconsin Tourism Committee is currently making plans for the annual Morel Mushroom Festival. As in years past, the buying

and selling of morels will start the week before the festival and run through the close of the event. Arrangements are being made for the parade, arts/crafts show, flea market, custom car show, ball tournament, food stands, fireworks and other family events. The Muscoda Fire Department will be hosting their annual steak supper on Saturday night, May 18th. Music and dancing will start at 8 p.m. For further information contact the Muscoda Village Office at 608-739-3182 or write to PO Box 206, Muscoda WI, USA 53573.

Recipe (from the Muscoda site at <http://grantcounty.org/ci/muscoda/recipe1.htm>)

Morel Mushroom Spread

20 g dried morels (or 200 g fresh morels)

1/2 glove of garlic, finely chopped
a bit of dill weed chopped
salt, pepper

1/2 pint of whipping cream
fresh dark bread

Rehydrate the morels for 1/2 hr and boil in the water used for the rehydration (or finely chop and fry fresh morels). Reduce the liquid to a minimum, add salt, pepper, garlic and dill weed at the end. Add whipping cream and simmer till it is thick. Serve hot or cold on bread.

Treasures from the Kingdom

Taylor Lockwood has released a DVD of the music he uses in his slide shows, and a video from his trekking in Australia and New Zealand. See his website for details: www.fungiphoto.com/Treasury/DVD.html.

Telluride Mushroom Festival - August 21 - 24, 2003, Telluride, Colorado

This 22nd annual festival features mushroom lectures, forays, hands-on identification, cultivation workshops, a mushroom feast, mushroom poetry

and a mushroom parade - down the main street of Telluride. Experienced guides will lead daily fungus forays in the forests generally productive of a wide variety of wild mushrooms, particularly chanterelles and porcini.

Nationally recognized authorities on mushrooms will present lectures and workshops: Dr. Andrew Weil, Gary Lincoff, Paul Stamets, Dr. Emanuel Salzman, and John Corbin.

For information and registration fees, check out www.shroomfestival.com or contact: Fungophile, Attn. Mushroom Festival, Box 480503, Denver, CO. USA 80248-0503 or telephone/fax: 303-296-9359.

Your Chance to Foray in Mexico

For fungi aficionados with a taste for the exotic, Mexican Mushroom Tours (MMT) has announced its 2003 schedule of mycology/travel/culinary adventures down south. Run by ex-Toronto fungi enthusiasts, Gundi Jeffrey and Erik Portsmouth, MMT has, since 2000, organized intimate groups of intrepid forayers to explore the mushroom treasures in their adopted country. A feature article in the *New York Times* Travel Section, August 2002, called their tours "mushroom heaven."

This year there will be two different excursions: the first, August 24 - 31 in the cool, forested, central highlands of Tlaxcala, the smallest state in the nation, but known as "the mushroom capital of Mexico." This high-altitude (7,000 ft. +) region, 60 miles east of Mexico City, was the site of the acclaimed 1998 NAMA Foray. MMT promises that the fourth annual tour here will be better than ever. (Group size limit 22.)

The second excursion, October 19 - 26, is a new tour, researched and planned for more than a year, in the eastern coastal semi-tropical state of Veracruz. In locations ranging from near-sea foray sites to higher elevation coffee and citrus environments, this exciting new outing will include visits to

spectacular waterfalls and important archeological sites.

(Group limit 14, **already sold out**)

Both tours are all-inclusive (excluding travel to Mexico gathering point) and will feature comfortable, colorful lodgings, all meals (with wines at dinner) bilingual, local mycology experts as guides and technical presenters, and much more, along with the ambience of a small, international group of fungiphiles of all levels. The tour fees (per person, double occupancy) are: Tlaxcala US\$1,330.00; Veracruz US\$1,380.00.

For further details or reservations, contact: Gundi Jeffrey at gundi@mexmush.com or log onto www.mexmush.com.

Membership News

Congratulations to SVIMS members Victoria Bolton and Gabriel Levesque. Their marriage took place on Saturday March 15. May your forays be long, joyous and bountiful!

Welcome new members Juniper English, Dave Smith, Rob Cummins, Mike Bluemel, and Arnold Smith.

The passing of SVIM's member Al Rupprecht:

Many of you may remember Al Rupprecht, a SVIMS member from Parksville. Al died on Dec. 14 at age 74 of heart disease. He was born in San Francisco and worked as a geologist in the oil industry in Texas, Wyoming and Alberta. He moved to Calgary from the U.S. with his wife and family in 1968. He and his wife, Jeanne, moved to Parksville in 1990.

Al was honoured with the Citizen of the Year award for Parksville as he was actively involved in many community projects - conservation, water supply issues, streamkeepers, the under-privileged. He was

the local authority on mushrooms and went on many SVIM forays. He seemed to have some influence in city hall - a rare accomplishment for a conservationist - and even ran for council once.

He was the sort of person that should be granted a longer life.

Submitted by Ron Wall