

# Fungifama



The Newsletter of the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society  
October 2003

<i>President</i>	Christine Roberts	250-478-2976
<i>Vice-President</i>	Richard Winder	250-642-7528
<i>Treasurer &amp; Membership &amp; Subscriptions</i>	Jean Johnson 2552 Beaufort Rd., Sidney, BC V8L 2J9 jeanwade@islandnet.com	250-656-3117
<i>Refreshments Organiser</i>	Gerald & Marlee Loiselle	250-474-4344
<i>Foray Organizers</i>	Adolf & Oluna Ceska	250-477-1211
<i>Fungifama Editor</i>	John Dennis Jdennis@pfc.forestry.ca	250-595-7499
<i>Directors-at-large</i>	Bruce Norris Renata Outerbridge Pat Carruth (Publicity)	250-743-0782 250-595-7499 250-642-4423
<i>Webmasters</i>	Ian Gibson ig@islandnet.com Rob Countess	250-384-6002 250-902-0562

**SVIMS web site: [www.svims.ca](http://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.

## Monthly Meetings:

### **Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup>:**

Dr. David Largent, Professor Emeritus, Humboldt State University, will be telling us about the genus *Entoloma* in California and Washington.

## Events and Forays:

### Sunday, November 2:

**SVIMS Mushroom Show at the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. Show starts at 10:00 am and goes until 4:00 pm. Come for a taste test (mushrooms cooked on the spot), see Western Biologicals display on growing your own (make it an easy sure thing by buying a kit), visit the kids booth and just plain learn about the mushrooms out there right now!**

### Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup>:

**The Survivor's Banquet at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Organized by Shannon Berch. This will be our classic potluck event. Bring one of your favourite dishes (mushrooms or not), a giveaway item and enjoy the "Vicious Raffle" and the entertainment TBA. This is an event not to be missed.**

## Prez Sez - September

Those who attended the public or the workshop talks at the International Workshop on Ectomycorrhizal Edible

Mushrooms learned about the joys and problems of getting these tasty and valuable mushrooms to grow on demand. Delicacies such as truffles, matsutake, morels and chanterelles have been tended, cultured, inoculated onto host trees and shrubs, and much secrecy and mystique surrounds the whole business. However, the experts have achieved only sporadic successes so don't feel bad if your little morel patch didn't produce, but if it did, you can feel really really brilliant!

Our September meeting got the new season underway and we welcomed some new members, of whom, Pat Carruth decided to throw herself in at the deep end and volunteered to be our new publicity director. She takes over from Diane and Justin who have done an excellent job for the past couple of years, despite being really busy, thanks guys!

I gave a presentation on the study I had done in the Clayoquot forests along with Oluna and Adolf Ceska, Bryce Kendrick and Paul Kroeger, with help and many photographs from Pam and Harvey Janszen. We all had a really fun time although it was hard work, and we found 670 species over the 5 years. I hope no-one was too bored, nobody snored, so I guess it was OK.

We rounded off the month with a foray to Lizard Lakes, organised by Richard Winder, who weighed our edible finds to see what the impact of 30 or so people had on the biomass. Turns out that we would have had to work about 10 hours non-stop to pick ourselves a kilogram of edible mushrooms each in that area in this dry season. Several of us found *Sparassis crispa*, the cauliflower mushroom, so it looks like this is a good year for them. Incidentally, keep your noses peeled as well as your eyes because I

smelled the *Sparassis* before I saw it.  
Christine

## Prez Sez – October

After all that dry weather we finally got some rain, and rain, and more rain!

For our October meeting, John Dennis and Jean Johnson gathered together lots of information and pictures of what details we need to be looking at when we try and identify a mushroom. John explained some of the technical terms and illustrated with slides what they meant, and showed us how to use a key, and pretty much demystified a lot of the jargon. We also had a display of fungi sorted, not by name, but by such things as textures, shapes of caps and stalks, veils and rings, pores, gills or spines. This gave us a hands-on experience of terms like viscid, depressed, umbonate, decurrent and so on, so we don't all feel lost when the scientists amongst us natter away.

It was still pretty dry for the foray at Last Resort in Manning Park at the beginning of October, so it was slim pickings for all concerned, but I heard that those who went enjoyed it anyway.

We had dry and pleasant weather for our little Royal Roads foray, as we fortuitously timed it during a break in the deluge! Most spectacular find were two huge *Bondarzewia montana*, amongst the almost 50 species we recorded.

We rounded off a busy month with the Cowichan Lake foray. Jean, who normally gets us all organised, is anxiously awaiting Grandmahood so had other things to think about, so we had to manage without her. Nonetheless, we arranged ourselves into groups and forayed widely, bringing in around 120 species, including some humongous *Leccinums* Pat found, a few *Sparassis*, lots of interesting oddities. There were very few chanterelles to be had and even the buyers were pretty much skunked this year.

This year, SVIMS is 10 years old, so those of you who were around in the early days,

please dig up some memorabilia for show and tell at the Survivors Banquet. Mark your calendars now for that prestigious event, better still buy a fabulous NEW **SVIMS 2004 calendar** which has it already marked in, along with other important information. Quantities are limited so get yours now and avoid disappointment!  
Christine

### **Announcements:**

#### **SVIMS Calendar 2004:**

No this is not the old, recycled calendar of 1997 or whatever year it was. This is the new SVIMS calendar with all sorts of new mushroom pictures! There will be a few 1<sup>st</sup> editions available at the Swan Lake Mushroom show. Check them out and, if you are lucky, get your copies early for yourself and Christmas presents.

#### **Those Fantastic Fungi!**

Bryce Kendrick will be instructing a three hour session on the "Fifth Kingdom" at the Dunsmuir Lodge campus of the University of Victoria on Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Beginning with a richly illustrated tour of the fungal kingdom, the class will then embark on a field trip through the surrounding forested area to find where fungi live. The conclusion will be an in-class inspection of the fungal discoveries. Fee: \$26.75 (includes GST and coffee/tea). You can register with the UVIC Division of Continuing Studies by telephone (472-4747), by fax (721-8774) or on the Web – [www.uvcs.uvic.ca/reginfo.cfm](http://www.uvcs.uvic.ca/reginfo.cfm).

#### **More Mushroom Experts Give Crash Course:**

Nov 30, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. Mushroom experts Oluna and Adolf Ceska give crash course on identifying fungi. Meet at Metchosin Wilderness Park by

wooden entrance sign off Clapham Drive. Sponsored by the Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter.

#### **Microscope Course:**

I just received an inquiry at our Oct. SVIMS meeting regarding microscopy. Is there anyone out there who would like to take a beginner's microscope course - perhaps a one day session on the weekend - or perhaps a series of short evening sessions (4). Please respond and I will keep a list and let you know when we have found a teacher.  
Thanks, Jean

#### **NEWS RELEASE:**

Gary Lincoff to be at SOMA Camp Wild Mushroom Retreat

The Sonoma County Mycological Association (SOMA) invites you to the 7th annual SOMA Camp Wild Mushroom Retreat. The Camp will be held on Martin Luther King weekend, January 17-19, 2004. This year, SOMA is very pleased to have Gary Lincoff, well known author of the "Audubon Field Guide to North American Mushrooms", with us as our keynote presenter for the three day weekend.

SOMA is also very pleased to announce that we are moving the Camp to a beautiful new facility, located near Occidental, Sonoma County, about one hour north of San Francisco. The spacious, modern buildings are set amongst 225 acres of oak, madrone, tan oak, redwood, and Doug fir. The newly-built cabins are bright, clean, and airy, with hardwood floors and stylish bunks. There's plenty of room for all the workshops and classes that will be offered, a great specimen room, basketball courts, hiking trails - and it's all surrounded by great habitat!

The Camp, a benefit for SOMA, is full of mushroom forays, specimen tables, slide shows, and speakers, as well as classes & workshops on mushroom dyeing, paper-making, cooking, medicine making,

photography, cultivation, truffle hunting, and more, and of course, great wild mushroom cuisine from the SOMA culinary group.

Fees: \$175 until Nov. 15, \$195 after that. Registration closes on Wednesday, January 7. Fee includes lodging, meals, and all activities.

Special Sunday only fee: \$90, includes lunch, dinner feast, and all the day's activities. To obtain a registration form, you may visit the SOMA website at [www.SOMAmushrooms.org](http://www.SOMAmushrooms.org), where you can also view photos and info from past SOMA Camps. Information and registration forms may also be obtained from Linda Morris, the Camp registrar, 707-773-1011/<[lamorr@pacbell.net](mailto:lamorr@pacbell.net)>, or the Camp coordinator, Charmoon Richardson, 707-887-1888/<[charmoon@sonic.net](mailto:charmoon@sonic.net)>.

Special note for food and wine fans - before and after the Retreat, we encourage you to explore the scenic back roads and numerous wineries, restaurants, and artisan food producers in the area. Within a short drive of the Camp are the well-known appellations of the Russian River Valley, Dry Creek, and Sonoma Valley, with the Alexander Valley, Carneros region, and the Napa Valley not much further away. In addition, the beauties of the Pacific Ocean are also nearby.

We hope to see you at the Camp!

### **Check these out:**

New website to check out: The Edmonton Mycological Society at [www.wildmushrooms.ws](http://www.wildmushrooms.ws)

### **Foray Reports:**

#### **Manning Park Foray – October 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

This was a foray wonderfully organized and executed by **Sharmin Gamiet** and other folks from the Vancouver Mycological Society. It was held at a place called Last Resort that resembled a ski chalet, complete

with three floors of bunk beds housed under a steep, gable roof. There was room for 50 people and it was solidly booked. Twelve years ago, the VMS had held a very successful foray here and they were hoping to revive it on a regular basis. Since Steve and I had arrived at noon (a la **Adolf Ceska's** tongue-in-cheek instructions), we were able to watch everyone else arrive, including the cooks who came prepared to feed 50 people using their own equipment. Several cars were loaded with propane tanks, portable stove tops, meat slicers, coffee urns, etc. to say nothing of 25 loaves of bread, 75 ears of corn, and enough spaghetti sauce to turn us all into honorary Italians. Oh, yes, and there was complimentary rhubarb wine provided by the principal chefs, **Jurgen and Kristina Kuerten**. Having arrived early, Steve and I went exploring for several hours before sunset. The resort was located at about 1200 metres and we drove several hundred metres higher outside the Park boundaries. It was DRY. DRY, DRY, DRY. Dust kicked up behind our vehicle as we sought out likely mushroom habitats. We decided to return, and at about marker 4 km. we glimpsed thousands of Shaggy Manes (*Coprinus comatus*) just emerging. We picked about five pounds and returned to Last Resort for a "snack" which turned out to be two types of soups, enough chicken wings to feed a small army, a fresh veggie platter, a delightful fresh fruit platter, and banana bread. I ended up giving Jurgen the mushrooms because he is attempting to control his blood sugar levels with the fungus. This may sound far-fetched but there is a substance found in an African leaf fungus that has the ability to activate insulin receptors. Because the compound is a non-peptide analogue of insulin, it is not degraded by digestive processes and can be taken orally. That evening, VMS President, **Paul Kroeger**, gave a slide show presentation. One set of slides focused on the "Shroom Town" set up at Cranberry Junction near Smithers, B.C. for the sole purpose of housing pickers and buyers of Pine

mushrooms (*Tricholoma magnivelare*). An entrepreneurial spirit definitely dominated, typified by one Buyer's Hut. A buying station by day, this location also offered tattooing and body piercing at night while also serving as a privatized liquor outlet that was located right next to a mobile brothel. As Paul stated, "This could turn into a real nightmare for some novice mushroom picker. After cashing in his harvest, he spends his profits at the self-same tavern, waking up next morning, hung over, with newly pierced body parts, an embarrassing tattoo on his rump and no money in his pocket."

The next morning, filled with scrambled eggs and Shaggy Manes, we formed foray groups. We were told that we had to return with the same people we went with "even if we didn't like them." "Bring them back here, " we were told, "and we'll feed them first and then get rid of them for you." There were about 17 people from the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society (SVIMS) and I teamed up with **Chuck and Linda Dary and Helga Wolnicki**. We decided to circumnavigate Lightning Lake, hopefully finding some fungal specimens on the darker, moister north bank. Our tally, after two hours of walking, and 5 sets of eyes peering avidly, was only 10 specimens. However, we definitely collected the Biggest, Dirtiest Mushroom award for a *Russula brevipes* that was the diameter of a dinner plate. I also collected a memento from this walk: several bloody scrapes on my face and forehead. I had tramped into the woods to collect a polypore fruiting on a dead tree. As I was going back to the path, my foot caught on some roots and I tumbled face first onto the forest floor. Blood running down my face, I rejoined the others, clutching my fungal find in one hand. Later, I learned from Paul Kroeger, that this specimen was a *Phellinus populinus*, otherwise known as the major ingredient in "Chew Ash". A tradition among both the Indians and Eskimos of Alaska and the Yukon, it is made by adding chewing tobacco and tea leaves to the ash of the fungus. The mixture is then kneaded like dough and shaped into pellets which are

placed inside the mouth and masticated at will. The use of 'chew-ash' is still a popular habit in the Yukon. Although both tobacco and tea are stimulants, the resulting mixture is said to act as a sedative.

Getting back to the Resort, we found all the foray members reporting in. The most spectacular find was the hundreds (yes, hundreds) of Shaggy Manes that Jurgen and Kristina went back to pick. They found them growing in a patch three kilometres long and it took six people all afternoon to process them. Nobody else had found very many species or specimens even though we had searched from the alpine meadows to the riparian lake region among a mixed forest of Douglas fir, Englemann spruce, and Lodgepole pine with poplar, aspen and cottonwoods. This would have been a veritable mushroom heaven if the moisture conditions had been right. **Oluna Ceska, Paul and Ian Gibson** spent the rest of the afternoon identifying all the species. That evening we had another wonderful meal: pasta, spaghetti sauce, and fresh corn from Sharmin's farm with a talk and slide show afterwards by **Dr. Jim Ginns**, the former curator of the National Fungus Collection with the Department of Agriculture Canada. You may remember when Jim visited SVIMS and we took him on a foray on the wettest day of the year. Talk about fungus – we probably had it between our toes and behind our ears after that day! The next morning, Paul led us around three picnic tables laden with fungi, describing the species in that particular blend of irreverent humour, esoteric information, and scientific accuracy that is his delightful style. My favorite story from this session involved the *Hericium coralloides*, a magnificent sight and a magnificent edible. However, it consists of a complicated branched framework that insects love to live in. And where there are insects, there is insect frass (otherwise known as "poop"). Asked how he cleans the *Hericium* before he cooks it, Paul replied, "My favorite method is to shake it a bit, put it into a frying pan with butter, add lots of cracked black pepper and turn the lights

down low.” One hour later, we were heading home.

It was wonderful of the Vancouver club to invite us to participate in this foray. Even though the species count was low, the food was good and the company was great. It would be wonderful if we could return the favour some day. There are many people to thank for organizing this event and if I have left anyone out, I apologize in advance. Sharmin Gamiet (organizer); Victoria D’Ambroise (hospitality); Jurgen & Kristina Kuerten (principal cooks); Mrs. Armallini and her son, Augustino (cooking and cleaning), Betty Pembroke (Vice-President), and Paul Kroeger (President), VMS.

### LIZARD LAKE FORAY – Saturday, September 27, 2003

Foray leader, Richard Winder  
Mushroomers are wildly optimistic. In spite of very dry weather, no recent precipitation, and a three hour drive, over 30 people met at the Logger’s Pole in Sooke at 9:00 a.m. to carpool. Our destination – Lizard Lake – just past Port Renfrew. For those of us who live in Sidney, we had to get up at 7:00 a.m. on a Saturday. John Dennis showed even more fortitude – driving from Prince George and arriving at home on the Island, all in one day - just so he could get up at an impossibly early hour next morning to look for mushrooms. Foray leader, Richard Winder, said the area was usually dependable for a robust chanterelle fruiting and so we all brought buckets and huge collecting baskets (again, wildly optimistic).

We broke into groups – some to scour the flats and others to scramble up steep banks – and met again just after lunch to compare specimens. In a normally wet year, this area should have been wall-to-wall mushrooms so we did well to find as many species as we did in this uncharacteristically dry year.

Richard gathered data on the weight of edible species with the following results. There were two periods of picking, each 1.5 h in duration. There were 30 people

searching (well, there were 12 vehicles, I think the headcount was around 30).

11694.8 g of mushrooms was harvested. That means that there were  $11694.8/30 = 389.826\_g$  harvested / person, or  $389.826/(2*1.5) = 129.942\_g$  harvested / person / hour. **So, it would have taken the average SVIMS member from morning to evening, with no break for lunch, to find a kilogram of edible mushrooms.** This being an ultra dry year, I think we can count that as some kind of baseline rate :-)

Thank goodness Richard didn’t weigh the pickers. I would have taken myself out of the sample!

The fun, of course, is the “hunt” and the good company. Like Pavlov’s dog, we only need to be rewarded occasionally (with good edible fungus, that is) to keep us forever optimistic.

### Mushrooms found at Lizard Lake:

Albatrellus ovinus  
Aleuria aurantia  
Amanita sp. (small)  
Amantia franchetti  
Boletus chrysenteron  
Boletus coniferarum  
Boletus mirabilis  
Boletus smithii  
Boletus zelleri  
Cantharellus formosus  
Cantherellus subalbidus  
Chroogomphus tomentosus  
Collybia acervata  
Coltrichia perennis  
Crepidotus sp.  
Entoloma sp.  
Fomitopsis pinicola  
Fuligio septica  
Galerina sp.  
Ganoderma tsugae  
Gomphidius subroseus  
Gomphus clavatus  
Gomphus floccosus  
Gymnopilus picreus  
Heterobasidion annosum

Hydnum repandum  
 Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca  
 Hypholoma fascicularae  
 Hypomyces chrysospermus  
 Hypomyces lactiflorum  
 Leptonia sp. (blue)  
 Lycoperdon pyriforme  
 Mycena sp.  
 Oligoporus sp. (orange staining)  
 Phaeocollybia ammiratii  
 Pleurocybella porrigens  
 Polyporus badius  
 Ramaria botrytis  
 Ramaria sp. (7 of them)  
 Rhytisma punctatum  
 Russula aeriginea?  
 Russula fragrantissima  
 Russula occidentalis  
 Russula smithii (cf)  
 Russula xerampelina  
 Sparassis radicata  
 Strobilurus trullisata  
 Suillus lakei  
 Tricholoma sejunctum  
 Xerompelina campanella

**Royal Roads on October 18<sup>th</sup>.**  
 Foray Leader Christine Roberts.

There were seven of us who were not wimps and came out despite the wet weather on Saturday 18 October at Royal Roads. We headed off in the direction of the fallen hemlock which I had espied growing *Hericiums* last week, but they hadn't grown much in a week so were a bit of a let-down. However, May and Anne found two humongous *Bondarzewia montana* nearby, then a *Sparassis crispa*, then Eric got a large perfect *Boletus mirabilis* so we were off to a good start. We wandered around near the big hemlocks and Doug firs for a while, then crossed the lawns and went up both waterfall trails. Jack and May both brought cameras and I think they took enough photos to keep SVIMS in calendars for a few years. We got some pretty neat stuff, listed below:

*Bondarzewia montana* (the spores really do look exactly like *Russula* spores!)

\**Boletopsis subsquamosus* nice collection!  
*Boletus mirabilis*  
*Russula brevipes*  
 Ditto lobsterized by *Hypomyces lactiflorum*  
*Russula adusta*  
*Boletus mirabilis*  
*Russula veternosa*  
*Clitocybe dealbata*  
*Leucopaxillus albissimus* probably var *lentus* (not huge, pale buff cap, taste very sweet)  
*Hebeloma* sp in amongst Skunk cabbage  
*Amanita gemmata* (under Beech in the gardens)  
*Ramaria* sp. light brown  
*Clavaria vermicularis*  
*Inocybe sororia*  
*Inocybe albodisca* (near Beech trees)  
*Naematoloma* (*Hypholoma*) *fasciculare*  
*Armillaria* cf *ostoyae*  
*Cortinarius* subgenus *Phlegmacium* with very bulbous base  
 \**Rhizopogon parksii* (the "truffles")  
*Leucopaxillus* sp. (warty amyloid spores) small, brown capped, not bitter, strong farinaceous taste -anyone know what this might be?  
*Amanita smithiana* (buttons)  
*Agaricus praeclaresquamosus*  
*Agaricus campestris*  
*Marasmius oreades*  
*Bovista plumbea*  
*Amanita pachycolea*  
*Marasmius salalis* -little white and buff mushroom with red-brown stipe, long thin spores, stinks!  
*Hebeloma crustuliniforme*  
*Bolbitius vitellinus*  
*Gomphus floccosus*  
*Suillus caeruleus*  
*Ganoderma tsugae*  
*Lycoperdon pyriforme*  
*Pleurotus ostreatus*  
*Gymnopilus spectabilis*  
*Cortinarius cedretorum* This one is interesting, the gills were pallid, off white when picked, and a few hours later they had taken on a distinctly pale violet tinge, and the base of the large bulb has a bright yellow mycelium.  
*Pluteus cervinus*

Strobilurus trullisatus -truckloads of it  
 Xeromphalina fulvipiles  
 Cortinarius glaucopus gp -buttons only, eaten away inside, strongly rimmed bulb.  
 Russula murrillii  
 Russula cf raoultii or crenulata (gill margins smooth - will work on it some more)  
 Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca  
 \*Hohenbuehelia geogenia? -on hemlock (the funny, gelatinous skinned "oyster mushrooms") 5-6cm across, beige, gelatinous top, metuloids around 75-86 x 16 microns, smell strongly meally, spores 5-6 x 3.5 microns. The habitat is wrong for this species, it may be a Panus but none seem to quite fit either.  
 Lepiota sp. -small, ring lost or none, pinky brown scales, not bruising much just slightly pink on stipe, in grass.  
 Tricholoma pardinum

Compiled by Christine Roberts, who is to blame for any wrong ID's.  
 Anyone want any of these keeping for the herbarium or whatever? I dried the ones marked with asterisk.

**Articles of Interest:**

From the BBC News world edition, September 19, 2003  
 Russians lost in mushroom heaven  
**A bumper mushroom crop in Russia this year has pleased everyone except officials of the Emergencies Ministry in St Petersburg.**

They are the ones that have to go looking for mushroom hunters who get lost in the forests near the city - a total of 121 people since 1 August.  
 Most missing mushroomers are found within 24 to 48 hours, although the ministry says 11 are currently unaccounted for.  
 "People are people, so we have to look for them come what may," said Yuri Yushin,

spokesman for the Emergency Ministry's northwestern branch.  
 But he and others in the ministry complain that their resources could more usefully be spent dealing with forest fires and other genuine emergencies.

**'Make a cup of tea'**

St Petersburg is surrounded by sparsely populated marshland and forest, ideal country for mushroom hunting but also easy to get lost in.

The pull of the forest is even greater this year, because of the size of the crop - reportedly the best in the region for half a century.

The discovery of hallucinogenic mushrooms in the area in recent years raises the possibility that some lost people may

<p><b>FAVOURITE RUSSIAN MUSHROOMS</b>          Bely or Borovik (Penny bun boletus)          Opiata (honey mushroom)          Podberyozovik (Rough birch stock)          Masliak (Slippery jack)          Ryzhik (Saffron milk cap)</p>
--

not just have taken a wrong turning.  
 The newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta, reporting the disappearances, had some advice for potential mushroomers. It said people should be aware of which direction they were travelling in, but if lost they should keep calm, build a fire and make some tea.

People could generally live for as long as a week in the forest without any great risk to their health, the article said.

**National pastime**

Mushroom-picking is a national pastime in Russia, with thousands of people going out into the woods every summer and autumn to gather.

Mostly mushrooms are appreciated as a nourishing pickled or fried dish or as a base for healthy soup.

But in recent years Psilocybe, or magic, mushrooms have been discovered outside St Petersburg.

Occasionally, people mistakenly eat poisonous toadstools.

Moscow health officials quoted by the Associated Press news agency say 34 people have died from eating fungi this year. A total of 457 cases of poisoning have been reported throughout the country.

### **Fairy Rings**

Are you lucky enough to have fairy rings in your turf this year? These dark-green circles of grass that sometimes have mushrooms associated with them were once thought to be good luck. Folklore had it that the worn circle of grass with accompanying dark ring was caused by the little people or "fairies" dancing on the grass. In Germany they are called "Hexen Rings" and are attributed to witches dancing and in France they are called "Ronds de Sorcieres" and legend has it that toads with bulging eyes appear inside the magic circle. Whatever explanation has been given to the appearance of fairy rings, most turf managers and some homeowners find them objectionable in turf.

Fairy rings can be identified by a dark-green circle of grass and may or may not be accompanied by mushrooms. They are caused by soil inhabiting fungi of the class *Basidiomycetes*. There is a wide diversity of fungal species that cause fairy ring and their identification is not all that critical in assessing treatment strategies. The diameter of the fairy ring may be only several inches or it could up to 50 feet.

So what causes the dark green circle and the inner circle of dead turf? The dark green circle is caused by the fungi breaking down organic matter in the soil and releasing nitrogen that then becomes available to the plant. This is simply the fungus fertilizing the turf. Unfortunately, the mycelium of the fungi penetrates deep into the soil and becomes so dense it essentially prevents any moisture from penetrating the soil. The effect is that the turf above the mycelium dies from lack of water, thereby creating the inner circle of dead turf.

What can be done about these dancing fairies? In home lawns, fairy ring often doesn't kill the turf but rather is unsightly to those pursuing a uniform green lawn. In

those cases, don't worry about trying to get rid of fairy ring, but simply maintain an adequate fertility program to mask the dark green circles of grass. Aeration of the areas affected by fairy ring and heavy irrigation will help the turf survive. If the problem is very severe and you feel action must be taken, the area can be dug up and then reestablished. However, this is no guarantee that fairy ring will not return. A more ingenious recommendation would be to kill the turf in the affected area with a non-selective herbicide and then rototill the area in several directions to spread the mycelium evenly over the area. Fairy ring fungi are antagonist towards each other and if they are intermixed, new fairy rings will not develop.

For the golf course superintendent, treatment of fairy ring may be more critical to prevent dying of turf on greens. A combination of aeration, drenching the soil with a wetting agent, and application of a fungicide such as flutoloniol or azoxystrobin may help you eliminate or at least suppress fairy ring.

### **Membership News**

**Thanks to Gerald & Marlee Loiselle for accepting the posts of Refreshment Managers. Judging by the crowds around the "goodies" table at the last meeting, everybody appreciates your efforts! Also thanks to Pat Carruth for taking over the Publicity duties. This post is very important in making our functions worthwhile and bringing in new members. We can't thank Justin and Diane enough for all the work they have done in the last 3+ years on this.**

**Welcome new members:**

Welcome Richard and Agnes Seiger from Port Angeles Washington. Agnes is the editor of the Puget Sound Mycological Society newsletter "Spore Print" which we also receive. Also, welcome new members Daniel Tschudin, Leslie Duke, Heather

Leary, Jacques Forest, Pat Carruth, and Doug Robb.