

Fungifama

May, 1997

The newsletter of the **South Vancouver Island Mycological Society**

Volume 4.5

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Membership & Subscription:

Hannah Nadel

Dues: \$15.00 per year per household; after July \$7.50. Please make checks payable to SVIMS or bring cash to meetings.

Meetings: First Thursday of every month (except December, January, July, and August) 7:00 p.m. Sharp at the Pacific Forestry Centre, 506 West Burnside Rd., Victoria. Parking is plentiful, and the meeting room is by the entrance. Non-members are welcome.

NEWSFLASH! Our overnight morel-hunting trip scheduled for early May has been brought forward a week on Randy Marchand's advice.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEETING Thursday, May 1

We will show the NAMA slide program that introduces the major groups of fungi.

Would everybody please bring in one or two fresh specimens to try to classify afterward? This program will serve as a basis for future programs on identification of gilled and non-gilled mushrooms, so don't miss it!

Please be a friend to the environment: bring your own coffee mug! And remember that we always appreciate your home-made cookies, etc.

FIELD TRIP Sunday, April 20 John Dean Provincial Park.

Bryce Kendrick will lead a trip through the trails of John Dean Provincial Park. Come and explore this beautiful park and help spot fungi. The Friends of John Dean Park are trying to compile an inventory of all organisms in the Park. SVIMS can play a useful role here. Meet in the parking lot at the top of the access road at 10:00 a.m. Call Bryce if you need directions.

FIELD TRIP Saturday-Sunday, April 26-27 Oyster River, south of Campbell River.

Meet Hannah Nadel at the Pacific Playgrounds campground registration area at 1:00 p.m. sharp on Saturday, and be prepared to leave immediately for a morel hunt. Meet at the same spot at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday morning to continue the search. The address is below.

Please arrange your own accommodations. Here are nearby choices on the river and/or ocean: Tenting, RV, and fully-equipped cottages are available at Pacific Playgrounds Ltd. Turn east off Hwy 19 on to Saratoga Beach Rd. and drive 1.6 km. It is well-marked. Phone: (250) 337-5600.

Just past the Pacific Playgrounds on Saratoga Beach Rd. cabins and campsites are available at Saratoga Beach Resort (phone: 337-5511), and Oyster River Resort (phone: 337-51701). Cottages are available at McLeod Cottages (337-55471).

Also, on the highway is Bennett Point Resort Motel, which offers some sea views and inexpensive rooms (\$34.00 single, about \$40.00 double, and \$6.00 for an extra person in room). It's at 4384 S. Island Hwy, just south of Oyster Bay (south of Campbell River), and is on the east side of the highway, marked with a big blue and red sign. Phone: 923-4281. For more information, please call Hannah at 544-1533.

EVENTS ELSEWHERE

Wallowa Lake, near the Blue Mts, Oregon, June 6-8.

The Oregon Mycological Society is basing its spring foray in the Wallowa Lake Methodist Camp, 90 Miles east of LaGrand, Oregon. Dr. Michael Beug, back by *acclamation*, will be on hand

to teach mushroom identification and ecology. Some fishing may round off the fun! Fees are US \$65 for adults, \$30 for children aged 2-8 (under 2, free), to cover day fee, lodging and 6 meals from Friday night through Sunday 2:00 p.m. Registration deadline is May 16. Forms available at the next SVIMS meeting, or send name, address, phone number, number of people attending, special dietary needs, and a cheque or money order (in US\$, made out to OMS) to: Mary Megant, Foray Registrar, 9533 N. Buchanan, Portland, OR 97203.

Aug. 14-17, 1997. The North American Mycological Association (NAMA) Foray at Copper Mountain Resort in Summit County, Colorado. Registration package US \$319. It includes meals from Thursday dinner through Sunday breakfast, three nights lodging (based on double occupancy), and admission to all lectures, workshops and forays. Registration acceptance period from March 1 to June 30. Visa and MasterCard accepted. **Phone numbers: (303) 370-8066 (day), or (303) 443-8968 (eve).** Sponsored by Colorado Mycological Society and Pike's Peak Mycological Society. This is the premier North American meeting for amateur mycologists, with several hundred people attending each year. It is a great opportunity to meet amateur mycologists from all over North America, to collect in some wonderful places, and to augment your personal collection of mushroom T-shirts (or buy some as gifts for others).

Oct. 10-13, 1997. SVIMS Fall Foray at Bamfield Biological Station (details to follow in a later issue).

BOOK REVIEW

Over the next few issues of *Fungifama* I will be reviewing the most widely used mushroom guides.

The first thing to note about all mushroom field guides is their incompleteness. No guide yet published deals with more than a fraction (One-half? One-quarter?) of the total number of mushroom species in North America. So it will always be relatively easy to find mushrooms that simply aren't in the book. This is not meant as a serious criticism of the guides, since mycologists have not yet described more than a fraction of the mushrooms of North America. Fungi, even macrofungi, are still among the most poorly known groups of organisms.

The first book to be reviewed is one of the most popular and successful - "The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms" by Gary Lincoff (\$27.00 - a good feature!). Another good feature of this guide is that it is small enough to fit into a jacket or rucksack pocket: it measures 7 rh" x4" x 1". This leads to some compromises. The binding, though thin, is of durable and flexible plastic, but the paper on which the text is printed is very thin, and the text, though clear, is not at all bold, and is rather small. The 756 colour illustrations, all grouped together for easy

"thumbing through," were taken by many different photographers, and are printed 3 to a page. Most of them are very good, very sharp, large enough to provide the necessary detail, and show the fungi in their natural surroundings. They also cover a wide range of fungi - not just mushrooms, but also polypores, resupinate basidiomycetes (the "paint" fungi), gasteromycetes, jelly fungi and quite a few ascomycetes, as well as some non-fungi such as slime moulds. The illustrations are divided into 14 artificial groups, such as "veiled mushrooms with free gills" "morels, stinkhorns and other club-shaped fungi" and "coral-like mushrooms." I have never found this to be particularly useful, but perhaps an investment of time in studying the thumb-tab guide, just before the colour plates, which gives sketches of the various subgroups in each of the 14 categories, might pay off.

I have only two complaints about the illustrations: (1) The colour is often distinctly incorrect, though you may not become aware of this until you compare an actual specimen with the picture in the book. (2) The Latin names of the fungi are not given on the photographs: instead, we find "common names" that are often spurious. Gary Lincoff told me the reason for this. Apparently, the publisher insisted that readers wanted common names (such as we all use for birds). Unfortunately, said publisher did not seem to know that many fungi do not have common names. Thus Gary was "forced" to make up "common" names for hundreds of fungi that had never before possessed such things. In some cases, he used an English translation of the Latin binominal - *Tricholoma saponaceum* became the "soapy Trich". But in other cases he simply made something up. *Tricholomopsis rutilans* became the "variegated mop." The phalloid, *Pseudocolus schellenbergiae*, became the "stinky squid." Such names may be imaginative, but they are not very helpful, especially when the Latin binominals do not accompany them.

If you want the proper names, you will have to look in the 530 pages of text. The notes given for each Family are well worth reading, though I'm sure few people will ever bother to do this. The text is well laid out, species descriptions often being accompanied by a small habit sketch. The "common name" of the fungus is followed by its Latin name and the authority, then the family and order to which it belongs. The description is quite detailed, beginning with diagnostic features in italics, then giving macroscopic dimensions in both Imperial and Metric units. Spore shape and dimensions are also provided. These are followed by information on edibility, fruiting season, habitat, range, look-alikes and additional comments.

All in all, this is a good field guide. It is among the cheapest of the more comprehensive guides, and probably the easiest to carry into the field. All amateur mycologists should have a copy. You can probably find it in your local bookstore. Too bad the Latin names aren't given on the plates! BK