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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Wow! What a rain-soaked summer. Over the Labor Day weekend a friend of mine reported seeing mushrooms galore on a canoe fishing trip. He had picked some and was describing them to me over the phone. One was trumpet-shaped, kinda yellow and the other had pores instead of gills. Were they edible? I told him I'd have to see them in person and that 'over the phone' descriptions of mushrooms cannot be used for determining edibility.

With what looks like a bountiful season for mushrooming we have to be careful. No guessing when it comes to eating, and then always save a portion of the mushrooms you eat. Our refrigerators should have a sampling of our fungal meals lying in waiting, waiting hopefully to be discarded. If by chance there's some problem, nothing spells relief like the phrase "Oh, I've saved some of the mushrooms we ate". No words can replace those half-dried up wilted sporocarps stuck way in the back of the frig next to the corn. With some collectors these specimens reside on white or black paper with the intention of obtaining a spore print; or maybe and more likely, the saved mushrooms are part of the next meal, the first meal being very small—portioned to see if they're agreeable to the eater. Eating is essentially a one way trip as digestion changes the appearance of the mushroom. So to Docs the refrigerator has an effect on the saver mushrooms, especially when I forget about them and find them around Thanksgiving Day.

The mushrooms that my friend described to me over the phone sure sounded like chanterelles and boletes, but turned out to be some sandy *Laccaria ochropurpurea*, a *Suillus* and a non-descript *Lactarius*. Oh well, I have to encourage him to collect and learn more because I think he has a 'hen of the woods' growing in his backyard.

A few other items. One concerns the possibility of a member directory that would be made available to the membership. This idea was brought up at the June picnic by Tom Fifield and the discussion that followed indicated that it would be useful to the society. Maybe look for a small section on the membership form next year asking if one wants their name printed in it, and at what address and so forth. Also, I apologize for the missed name tags; you are important and deserve to be recognized. Also to any members that have not received all their newsletters and foray notices, I apologize; we can make amends.

A last thought: Try working a "catch and release" (just the spores) into your collecting this season.

UPCOMING WMS EVENTS

September 13 (Saturday) — Devil's Lake State Park Foray

September 20 (Saturday) — Pike Lake State Park Foray

September 21 (Sunday) — Wild Mushroom Festival, UW-Waukesha

September 27 (Saturday) — Greenbush Trail Foray, N. Kettle Moraine

October 4 (Saturday) — Point Beach State Forest Foray

October 5 (Sunday) — MPM-WMS 14th Annual Mushroom Fair, Milwaukee Public Museum

All forays meet at 10 a.m. Members should have received detailed flyers on all of the forays except the 27th. The announcement for that foray as well as the announcements for the Wild Mushroom Festival and the Annual Mushroom Fair are included with this newsletter.

WILD MUSHROOM FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Absolutely No Experience Necessary!

Sunday, 21 September 1997 at UW-Waukesha, 11 am — 5 pm

The Wild Mushroom Festival sponsored by the Wisconsin Mycological Society and the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha needs the following categories of help:

- 1. Most importantly, people to collect any and all fungi that can be found in a variety of habitats and bring them to the festival site late Saturday afternoon or early Sunday morning by 10 a.m. Identifications will be made, if possible, during setup of the fresh fungi display.
- 2. People to sit in shifts at the Wisconsin Mycological Society booth, promote the Society, and encourage new memberships.
- 3. People to “watch over” the stamp collection and the morel mushroom displays.

Note that none of the above responsibilities requires experience in identifying fungi. The most basic beginners to the highly advanced members would be a great help in making this day a success. If you're interested in promoting education about fungi/mushrooms and our society, please call Alan Parker—Home 542-7688, Office 521-5495—or just show up the day before or the day of the festival. Your help would be greatly appreciated! There's abundant free parking all around the Commons Building where the event will take place. Also, tell other people about this festival – it is completely free and open to all!

ANNUAL MUSHROOM FAIR

The 14th annual Milwaukee Public Museum — Wisconsin Mycological Society Mushroom Fair will be held this year on Sunday, October 5, from 10 am to 4 pm in Uhlein Hall of the Museum. As the enclosed flyer says, the fair is “an educational celebration of fungi,” featuring a display of identified fungi, information on how to identify fungi, area chefs demonstrating techniques and recipes for cooking with mushrooms, and the winning entries in this year's 35 mm Mushroom Photo Contest. Many other features are listed on the flyer. Also, the Museum Gift Shop will be selling mushroom identification books and other literature as well as T-shirts, posters and other fungal memorabilia.

The Mushroom Fair has been held each fall since 1984, and it traditionally has been an important way for our club to promote itself and get new members. Over the years the fair has had a small core of people from the mushroom club to bring in fungi, man booths and talk to fair visitors. However, that core has been shrinking in recent years and consequently help from additional members would be greatly appreciated this year. Especially important to the fair is having a good display representing the great variety of fungi. Please consider donating specimens that you have collected at the Point Beach Foray the day before the fair or from any individual collecting that you have done earlier in the week. You can either give them to someone you know is attending or contact the fair coordinator Kevin Lyman at the museum (414) 278-6142 about bringing them in yourself.

In addition, it would be nice to have a few people to man some of the booths and talk to fair visitors. All of the things that Alan said about volunteers in his announcement for the Wild Mushroom Festival are true about the Mushroom Fair as well. No special experience is necessary to man the WMS table and talk to fair visitors about joining the society. Otherwise, if you have a special interest in one of the areas such as mushroom identification, mushroom photography, mushroom crafts, mushroom cooking, or mushroom growing, the fair could probably use your help. In any case, contact Kevin Lyman about participating in the fair. Admission is free that day for those who are working as volunteers at the fair.

Otherwise, even if you are not able to bring in mushrooms or work as a volunteer at the fair, but can tear yourself away from the Packer game, come out and enjoy the fair and the rest of the museum that day.

ANNUAL PICNIC MEETING — June 21, 1997

After an overnight rain and flooding, the turnout for the '97 annual picnic and business meeting was low, about 20. Nonetheless, by the time of the picnic, the weather was actually quite pleasant, and people attending had a nice evening. Even with the small turnout, the quality and quantity of potluck dishes that members brought were excellent. Thanks to Jay Kempinger for grilling the brats and the mushrooms, to Greta Menke and Steve Morse for preparing the portobellos, and to all others who assisted with picnic preparation.

At the subsequent business meeting, the board of directors was nominated and approved to remain the same as last year. The directors are: Bill Blank, Kris Ciombor, Martyn Dibben, Tula Erskine, Harold Korslin, Ray Llanas, Dave Menke, Alan Parker, Sunny Rupnow, Sami Saad, Chuck Soden, and Peter Vachuska. Other topics discussed at the meeting included having an affiliate chapter of WMS at La Crosse and having a membership directory to be given to members. At the board meeting after the general membership meeting, the slate of officers was also approved to remain the same as last year: President Bill Blank, Vice-President Tula Erskine, Secretary-Treasurer Chuck Soden, and Asst. Secretary-Treasurer John Steinke.

SUMMER FORAY — July 25, 1997

My foray was fun but small (12 members). We went to Harold's woods in the morning and five die-hards (after a little Linie's Red) went to my grandmother's woods in the afternoon. Very hot day again, but okay hunting. The only thing that was found in quantity was chanterelles, which was great. The best find was a collection that I would call the sweetbread mushroom (*Clitopilus prunulus*). The problem was it had a strong smell of garlic.(?)

John Steinke

THE PHANTOM PHOTO FORAY OF '97

I'm pleased to announce that I had the distinction of leading the first ever two-day photo foray. At least part of it anyway. On Saturday August 16th a few members headed out to Scuppernong thinking it was photo foray day. John Steinke was there. I heard rumors that one or two others were there also. At least John thought there were others although he was unable to get a confirmed sighting.

Certainly the weather was better on Saturday than it was on Sunday when five somewhat soggy members gathered for Photo Foray #2: The Sequel. Present were Tula Erskine and myself, Peter and Colleen Vachuska and new member Karl

Vachuska (a cute little guy, patient beyond his months) riding in the rumble seat on Peter's back. Together we tramped off through a rather moist day that in the end yielded quite a few interesting finds.

Among them were the wartlike clumps of *Christiansenia mycetophila*/ growing on *Collybia dryophila*, an unidentified stinkhorn, a *Cortinarius* sp., several *Amanitas* including some of the largest *muscaria*/ I personally have seen, legions of bird's-nest fungi and an interesting little purple mushroom.

Oh well, looking past the confusion over the "official" date (the 17th, right?) it seems everyone had a fruitful outing. Furthermore, I don't feel quite so bad about the small turnout anymore. By the way, next year's photo foray will be held...

Charles Fonaas

MYCO-BRIEFS

- Fungi are important in redistributing the carbon supply in the forest community, according to a report in the August 7 Nature. In a study which seems to contradict ecological models that assume plants are always in competition for resources, Suzanne Simard of the Ministry of Forests in British Columbia and her research colleagues report that some trees give their neighbors carbon obtained from the atmosphere, even at a loss to themselves. For example, in their study, it was found that birch trees gave fir trees more carbon than they received in return. The carbon travels via mycorrhizal fungi shared by both kinds of trees. The fungi normally receive carbon from the trees in the form of sugar, but these new results suggest that the fungi also give up carbon, even though there is evidently no immediate benefit to the fungus in the process. (Science News, August 9, 1997)
- The alcohol in beer is generally produced with the help of a yeast, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*./ However, this yeast did not always have the ability to make alcohol. Two scientists at Trinity College in Dublin, Kenneth H. Wolfe and Denis C. Shields report in the June 12 Nature that they have found more than 370 instances in which *S. cerevisiae*/ has two almost identical copies of a gene on a single chromosome. They have concluded that there must have been an accidental duplication of the entire yeast genome millions of years ago. They contend that two yeast cells once merged to create a cell that had four sets of chromosomes. While most of the extra genes were quickly eliminated, the extra genes that *S. cerevisiae*/ did hold onto may have evolved to provide the yeast with new abilities. For instance some gene pairs contain a gene activated in the presence of oxygen and one activated when no oxygen is present. The latter gene would enable the yeast to use fermentation (which uses sugars, but not oxygen, to generate alcohol and carbon dioxide) as a form of respiration. (Science News, June 21, 1997)

Colleen Vachuska

FERRUGINOUS WHAT?

by Dick Grimm

reprinted from the

Ohio Mushroom Society Mushroom Log

July/August 1997

I get a special charge out of authors' descriptions of mushroom odors and mushroom colors. It seems to me that things could be plainer if odors and colors could be made synonymous with things we recognize in everyday life.

For example, one of the very worst descriptions I think is one I read recently about odor. The term was... "pleasant." I ask you, what is a "pleasant" odor? I like to smell gasoline. Most people don't like to pump their own gasoline because they hate the smell. Is gasoline a pleasant smell? Well, it is to me. "Pleasant" is not an odor. "Pleasant" could be a feeling, "pleasant" could be a condition, "pleasant" could be a situation, but I can't see pleasant as an odor. Perhaps this particular author meant non-offensive; however, that is hardly a description, either. I put two thumbs down (both mine)

on “pleasant” as a descriptive odor.

I see “foetid” used often. Foetid means stinking. I suppose if something smells foul, like a dead carcass, like carrion, like expelled intestinal gas, like rotting flesh, or perhaps dead fish, then “stink” is legitimate. There are a lot of things that literally stink. “Stink,” in itself, describes, well, only stink actually. I do think that when a synonym can be used to further describe stink it should be used. Nothing vague. I have heard “Boy, that stinks like hell”. Now think about that and tell me the odor you conjure up in your mind. Smoke and/or charcoal could be embraced. Perspiration surely, but let’s face it, “hell” also is not a descriptive adjective for odor. Again, I think “stink” should always be used with a descriptive adjective so there is no doubt just what the author is saying. *Inocybe incana* is described as smelling like mice, further, like wet mice. I am 70 years old and so far as I can recall I have never smelled a wet mouse. It never occurred to me to smell one even though I have, on occasion, trapped some of the pesky devils, but they were always dry. I could, therefore, never match the odor with *Inocybe incana* because I could never seem to have the *Inocybe* and the wet mouse in my hands at the same time. It would just be my luck to have a dry mouse with no available water when I discovered the *Inocybe*, but heck, I hate to be pessimistic about it, there is a chance in ten thousand the situation could come about, I suppose. A tough comparison, home or away.

Camphoratus is another species name that is used on more than one occasion and in nearly all the situations the odor of camphor is not even vaguely present. I recall that in *Lactarius camphoratus* it smells of maple syrup or perhaps blackstrap molasses.

“Anise” is often used to describe *Clitocybe odora*, and also *Agaricus arvensis*, among others. When I ask someone to smell these mushrooms and even plant the seed in their mind (“like anise”, I say) they will invariably say, “It smells like licorice to me.” That is why I say we should use odors that are familiar with lifestyle objects.

Many *Hebelomas* smell of radish or potatoes. Usually, again, unless you plant the seed, on an odor request, you come up empty. Yet you might say, “Do you think this smells like potatoes?” A “wiffer” ensues; “Why yes,” they say, “It does.” On the other hand, if you were to say, “What do you think this smells like?,” you are likely to get a negative head shake. Smells simply do not register the same with everyone, and don’t register at all most of the time unless it is very obvious... like a wet mouse. In Latin species names, when you see the term “odorata”, or “odoratus”, the author is trying to tell you something. There is a smell here. A good author who puts a name on a mushroom with odoratus involved usually uses a prefix as to what odor we are looking for... he plants the seed in a manner of speaking. “*Clitocybe odora*” tells you very little, other than there is a smell here. If it were named “*Clitocybe anisodora*,” one could, if he recognized the odor of anise, probably put two and two together and come up with licorice, or an anise smell. Otherwise, I dunno.

Inocybe pyriodora has the name “pyri” describing the term odora. That’s good. If “pyri” means “pear” in the “pear-shaped puffball”, it must mean the same in *Inocybe*... and it does. In the *Lycoperdon* (puffball) it has the reference to the shape, thus form, so the species name “*pyriforme*”. In the *Inocybe*, it has the reference to the odor, thus “*pyriodora*”. If you don’t plant the seed here, however, there won’t be one in ten come up with, “Jeez, that smells like a pear.” They may say, “It smells good,” however “good” smells...? They may say it smells “fruity”. How does “fruity” smell? Smell an apple if you would, now smell an orange, now a banana. All fruit you see but, three different smells. It’s tough out there. Plant the seed and you will get the answer you are after, otherwise, don’t get your hopes too high.

“Farinose” and “farinaceous” need to be separated in one’s mind even though they mean “mealy”. Farinose means “mealy” in texture, as in “sandy” or “gritty”. On the other hand, “farinaceous” has reference to odor... a smell of meal or flour. Pull the lid from a box of “rolled oats” and take a whiff... that’s farinaceous. Often, the two are used synonymously, farinaceous especially meaning both granular and/or freshly ground meal. At any rate, when you read *Amanita farinosa* the reference for the species name is texture and not odor.

Chlorine is an odor often referred to. Especially those large cottony fruitings of the *Lepidella* section of *Amanita*, viz. *Amanita chlorinosma*. Since there is some confusion over what chlorine smells like one could best go to everyday smells again. It smells like a swimming pool or, it smells like chlorox (household bleach).

I think that often faint odors in mushrooms are masked by the fungus odor itself. Authors use the term “fungoid” in reference to this odor. For those not into mushrooming, for we mushroomers all recognize a “fungoid” odor, this

redolence to the unfamiliar would be called “moldy”. It is because of this “mask out” of fungoid odor that I always recommend taking a small piece of the fruiting and squashing it so the fresh juices permeate the nostrils in all their splendor (or repugnance).

I read a reference to odor as “spermatic”. I don’t think I want to field this one. I would comment to the point of saying that I doubt that a sperm has any traceable odor since they are probably measured in microns. It would surely take a bunch of them to impart an odor! Probably the author meant “semenaceous” (more traceable than spermatic) and that’s all I’m going to say on this subject.

The list goes on but my time is limited and space needs breathing room for other prose perhaps more important than what I am imparting here. It seems a good time to move forward to color, another dilemma in mycological terminology. Colors are sort of rough too. Probably half or more of the professional mycologists have a copy of Ridgeway’s color chart. This is an accepted color chart used in mycology to standardize different colors. This is so each mycologist can understand what color the other mycologist refers to. So, when you, the amateur read “Ridgeway 113 Yellow” , although it means something to those with the color chart, it means absolutely nothing to those of us who do not (if there is such a number and color, I don’t have the chart, do you?). So for amateurs why not... lemon yellow, banana yellow, golden yellow, or some appropriate yellow matching something we are all familiar with in our everyday life. *Russula silvicola* could be “fire truck red”, *Russula compacta* could be “flesh brown”, *Russula aeruginosa* could be “watermelon rind mix”, *Paxillus involutus* could be “horse hockey brown”, and so forth.

“Fuscous” is rather vague; it would be better described as “storm cloud grey”, since we all can relate to that.

“Sordid”, that sounds like a dirty book or an “X” rated description of some kind or another. It actually means “dirty” in a broad sense. So, “sordid white”, or “sordid grey” takes on rather vague meanings. How about “wash water grey”, or “off-white foam”.

“Ocheraceous” is one I can never get straight in my mind. “Pale apricot” seems to fit well. “Aurantia” is golden. I asked the jeweler if he could show me an aurantia necklace for my wife’s birthday. He didn’t know what I was talking about and so, I told Phyllis that I had intended to buy her a golden necklace for her birthday but the jeweler didn’t have one; this let me off the hook. I don’t have a lot of money to fritter away and there was this mushroom book I have been considering. A bit “pricey”, but now that I saved all that money on the elusive necklace... well, I did ask, you know.

So, I’d better cut this short. You all understand my meanings. Things could be so much easier out there in mycology land if folks would just quit trying to impress the masses and come down to earth. I think you will all agree that most of this Latin description stuff is just a lot of “foetid carrion” that needs to be improved upon.

SHOICHI YOSHIMI AND NATURE STUDIES IN THE KYOTO GYOEN

by Steve Nelsen

While I was in Japan I met Shoichi Yoshimi, who is the most accomplished amateur mycologist I ever met. Yoshimi is a 69 year old retired elementary school teacher and principal. He built his private school into one of the most prestigious in Kyoto. He told me that 40 years ago one of his students brought him a mushroom, and he was embarrassed when he knew nothing about them. He went to the library, looked up what it was, and got trapped into studying fungi. He currently has two popular books with color pictures in print, and has published scientific papers including “Gasteroid Fungi of Pakistan”, in English, in “Cryptogamic Flora of Pakistan”, published by the National Science Museum, Tokyo, and is also especially enthusiastic about *Cordyceps*. Yoshimi is the Kyoto mushroom expert for the Association for Preservation of National Gardens. I was lucky enough to be taken to the March 3rd, 1996 nature study session in the Kyoto Imperial Garden (Kyoto Gyoen), which is the grounds surrounding the former Imperial Palace in the middle of Kyoto, about 1.3 by 0.7 km in size. One can tour the buildings with guides during the year, but the nature study tours, which are free (and not for tourists, as they are in Japanese), only occur four times a year. The one I attended was run by experts on birds, trees, herbs, insects, and mushrooms. Hand-outs were provided, showing some key information.

For the fungi, only ascomycetes were covered, including drawings of morels, *Verpa conica*, two *Helvellas*, a *Peziza*, and an *Otidea*, as well as microscopic features for two of them. For the birds, everyone got photographs and full page descriptions of a thrush, a warbler, a bunting, two finches, and a grossbeak which were expected to be migrating through Kyoto on this date. About 100 people showed up, and dutifully followed each expert around, listening carefully to 2-1/2 hours of lectures delivered outdoors, through megaphones, illustrated with large posters. Americans would have wandered off by themselves in twenty minutes. Unfortunately the spring of 1996 was dreadfully cold by Kyoto's standards, and the birds were the latest they had been in years; none of the expected species had arrived. The ascomycetes also had not started yet in 1996, but Yoshimi and his assistant produced fresh specimens of *Xeromphalina*, *Strobilurus*, *Xylaria*, and a *Cordyceps* in addition to last year's shelf fungi. The APNS has had Yoshimi maintaining a collection of fungi and species descriptions for the Kyoto Gyoen since 1985. He is up to 381 taxa of macrofungi in this park in the middle of a city of 1.5 million people. The APNS is not casual about surveying all species of plants and animals that occur in their parks. Yoshimi and his assistant made 98 fungus-collecting trips between May 1985 and December 1989 in preparing the initial list of 341 species, published in 1990. Supplements were published in 1992 and 1995 showing the more unusual species (including all 40 first observed after 1989) illustrated with detailed drawings of microscopic features as well as color or black and white photographs. Morels are unusual in Kyoto. *Morchella conica* was present between Feb. 27 and March 26th 1994, and had been seen previously. I would have called it a young *M. esculenta*, but the spores shown are smooth. Yoshimi shows two pages of drawings of microscopic features for each species (from which I still would be unable to distinguish two species). *M. esculenta* is apparently really rare in Japan, even lacking a Japanese name (*M. conica* is Togariyamigasatake). It was first collected on April 20, 1990 (Yoshimi's fifth year) and had smooth spores, but the next collection, April 24, 1994, showed apiculi developing on the mature spores. The thing I found most interesting is that Yoshimi says morels are not eaten in Japan because they are considered not to taste good by Japanese. By the time I left Kyoto, Yoshimi had given me three boxed collections of *Cordyceps*, as well as a 22-specimen collection of the rather rare *Lindaria bicolumnata* (Lloyd) Cunn., collected in a Tokyo park in 1994, and sent to Yoshimi for identification (Yoshimi had also found it in the Kyoto Gyoen).

RECIPE:
HEARTY VEGETABLE BARLEY SOUP
by Joanne Pasek

- 1 cup barley
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 bunch leeks (about 1 pound) green tops removed, white part only sliced
- 8 ounces wild mushrooms, dried and reconstituted, frozen, or canned (I use a little more)
- 4 cans (13-3/4 or 14-1/2 oz) chicken broth with fat removed, or vegetable broth
- 5 medium carrots, cut into 1-1/2 x 1/4 inch strips
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 2 cups peeled and diced butternut squash
- 1 medium zucchini, diced
- 1 large bunch spinach (1 pound), stems removed and leaves chopped

Cook barley as package directs.

Meanwhile, heat oil in Dutch oven over medium-low heat. Cook leeks 10 minutes, stirring occasionally until softened. Add mushrooms which were precooked to desired doneness. Cook 5 minutes more. Add broth, carrots, salt, thyme and pepper. Bring to simmer over medium high heat. Reduce heat to medium and stir in squash and zucchini; simmer 8 to 10 minutes until vegetables are tender. Stir in spinach and barley; continue simmering until spinach wilts. (Sometimes I leave the spinach out for variety.) Serve with Parmesan cheese if desired. Makes 6 servings.