

Next Meeting Aug. 18th, 2003

SPORES Afield

The newsletter of the Colorado Mycological Society

August 2003

The CMS Mushroom Fair is Sunday, August 17th.

Bring this issue of Spores or your membership card.

Step right up! There are still plenty of activities to take part in to help pull the Fair together. For newer members a brief review of the process is in order. (OK, you experienced members can read this, too.)

First, start doing those rain dances! Then, a few days before the Fair, begin collecting. Ellen Jacobson will be leading a foray on Friday, August 15th to collect for the Fair and believes that Dr. Miller and Mrs. Miller will join her. They will meet at 9AM at the north-east corner of I-70 and Morrison Rd. This is a great opportunity to collect wild mushrooms with two wonderful teachers. Best to call if the dry conditions continue to be sure it is still on. See the article in this issue (page 3) on how to collect to keep those beautiful specimens in prime condition. Don't just heap them all together in a box or basket. We sometimes have to discard whole collections because they are too dirty and broken to use. Also, our identifiers need information about habitat in order to properly name species, so be sure to have as much info as possible with each of your collections. Some will be new to our Fair, and some might even be brand new species.

Specimens need to be refrigerated after collecting.

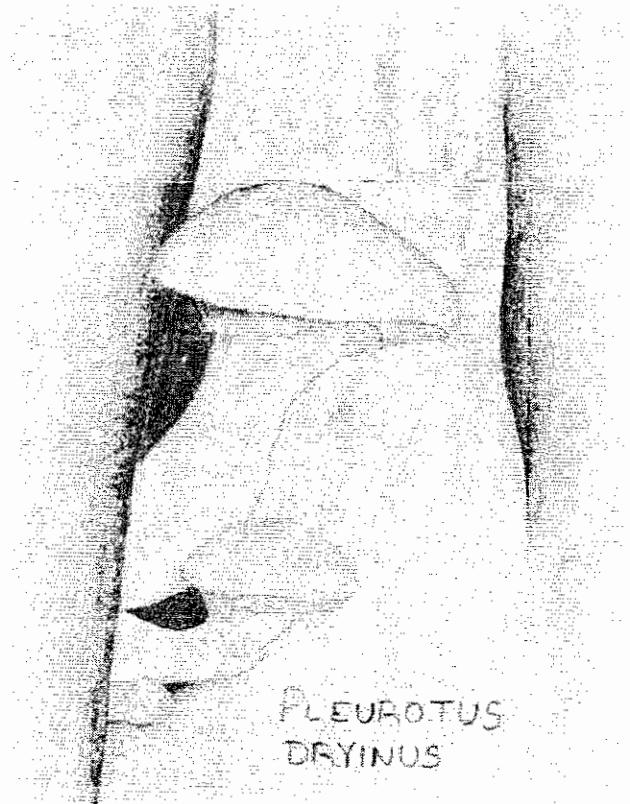
(Continued on page 5)

Speaker for August meeting:

Dr. Orson Miller

"Puffballs, Earthstars, Birds nests, and Stinkhorns from Deserts to the Mountains."

The strategy, ecology, and habitats they occupy world wide and in the Rocky Mountains are one of the marvels of nature. We will illustrate and discuss all this and more!



Original artwork by CMS member Erin Abernathy.

I have seen other pieces of Erin's work and hope to feature more of her artwork in future issues. She's a very good artist! The editor.

Upcoming Events

- Aug. 2nd** Chris Hardwick will lead a foray. For more information contact Chris at 303-237-0356 or by e-mail at cchardwick@yahoo.com
- Aug. 9th** Tom Ruzicka will lead a foray. For more information contact Tom at 303-447-2740 or by e-mail at tomruzicka@mindspring.com
- Aug. 15th** Ellen Jacobson will lead a foray along with Dr. Orson Miller and Mrs. Miller. For more information contact Ellen at 303-741-3836 or by e-mail at egj538@aol.com
- Aug. 16th** CMS Mushroom Fair Setup in **Gates Hall** just past the doors to Mitchell Hall.
- Aug. 17th** Jason Salzman will lead a city mushroom foray in the morning to look for mushrooms for the Mushroom Fair. **This foray will not leave from the Morrison exit.** Please contact Jason at 303-433-6961 or by e-mail at newsmush@netone.com for more information on the time and where to meet.
- Aug. 17th** Annual CMS Mushroom Fair at Denver Botanic Gardens will be held in **Gates Hall**
- Aug. 18th** Dr. Orson Miller, "Puffballs, Earthstars, Birds Nests, and Stinkhorns from Deserts to the Mountains"
- Aug. 21-24th** Telluride Mushroom Festival for more information contact Manny Salzman at 303-296-9359 or by e-mail at lodomyco@dnvr.uswest.net
- Aug. 23rd** Ed Lubow will lead a foray for new members. Contact Ed at 303-680-7724 or by e-mail at elubow@home.com
- Aug. 23-24th** Creede Mushroom Weekend - Larry Renshaw, President of CMS will be leading forays searching for Boletes and Chanterelles. Cook and taste with wine included. Contact Larry at 303-648-0048 or by e-mail at lmr@hotpop.com
- Sept. 8th** Cook and Taste, more information on page 4
- Oct. 13th** To be announced
- Oct. 19th** End of Season Mushroom Dinner

All meetings are held at the Denver Botanic Gardens in Mitchell Hall at 7:30pm unless otherwise announced.

All forays meet at 9:00 am in the northeast parking lot of I-70 and Morrison road, exit 259, also known as the "T-Rex" lot unless otherwise announced. Please try to be there about 15 minutes early and be sure to check in with the foray leader and sign the release form. Car-pooling is highly recommended from this point because most foray locations do not have enough parking for a large number of cars. **You must be a member to attend a foray.**

Spores Afield

Spores Afield is published from March through October by the Colorado Mycological Society. CMS dues are \$23 for the first year and \$20 thereafter. Send membership dues to CMS Membership Chair, Box 9621, Denver, CO 80209. All CMS members receive *Spores Afield* as part of their membership.

CMS is an affiliated member of the North American Mycological Association.

CMS website: <http://www.cmsweb.org>

The Fair is coming, the Fair is coming and once more it's time for all good CMSers to scour the hills and dales for the wonderful wild mushrooms that will fill the tables at the Denver Botanic Gardens.

Since the prime function of our club is education it is most important that we collect as many new and unusual specimens as possible. The first step then is to choose a good picking place, one that has an interesting variety of species. In a dry year, moist mini-climates near streams, springs, and seeps are good places to search. Chicago Forks, on Route 103 out of Idaho Springs, and the campgrounds along Route 40 on the East Side of Berthoud Pass would be excellent choices. In wet years, almost anyplace will do, although it's fun to get out of the box and look in areas that you would normally avoid such as rocky roads and grassy meadows.

We always need specimens of the common mushrooms for display and the natural habitat, but our visiting Mycologist is much more interested in unusual and new-to-Colorado mushrooms; so please concentrate on collecting anything that looks different to you. Who knows maybe your specimen with your name mentioned as collector will end up in the Denver Herbarium or even the Field Museum in Chicago?

Always pick the entire mushroom including the base and wrap it, snugly, dirt and all, in a twist of waxed paper. Label your specimen with location, habitat, and your name. Put it in a sturdy container, heavy mushrooms on the bottom, lighter ones on the top, and deliver to the gardens on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning. My favorite basket used to be an old, red King Soopers plastic special, but now I have a lovely, woven willow basket that works just the same but looks a lot better.

If you are not going directly to the gardens, please keep the mushrooms cool overnight. I find that

in the refrigerator for one or two of these shallow boxes. Specimens, still wrapped in waxed paper, will also keep fairly well outside, but only in cool shade.

REMEMBER

Don't jumble lots of different dirty mushrooms in cardboard boxes. Unfortunately, most of them end up in the trash container.

Don't leave them in a hot car. The best solution is to have a cooler ready and transfer the mushrooms to the cooler before heading for home. Or place them in the shade next to the car.

DESPITE FIRES, FUNGUS IS NOT AMONG US

Originally published in the Denver Post
July 12, 2003.

The mushroom boom expected in Colorado's burn areas this summer has become a bust. "We're not sure what happened," said Vinnie Picard, a spokesman for the White River National Forest. The forest was expected to be the epicenter for mushroom pickers based on the belief that morel mushrooms thrive after a fire followed by a lot of spring moisture.

The U.S. Forest Service had prepared for an onslaught of mushroom pickers in areas burned last year, particularly by the Coal Seam Fire near Glenwood Springs.

NOTICE!

Don't forget to sign up for the October 19th End-of-Season Mushroom Dinner before it is too late! See the July SPORES for details, or contact Tom Ruzicka, at 303-447-2740

SEPTEMBER MUSHROOM TASTING

SEPTEMBER 8, 2003

We are planning a wild mushroom Cook & Taste for the September meeting. The cook & Taste will be held at 7:30 in Mitchell Hall at the Denver Botanic Gardens. Members are encouraged to bring a mushroom dish to share with other members. Those who have no time to cook or cannot cook may bring drinks, desserts, salads, or bread (prepared food from the grocery is fine.) The cook and Taste is being organized by Vice President William Windsor. Contact him at 303-544-6069 to let him know what you are bringing. We don't want all the same dish.

Only the following mushroom species may be used:

Boletus barrowsii
Boletus edulis
Cantharellus cibarius
Commercial mushrooms from a grocery
Coprinus comatus
Dentinum repandum
Flammulina velutipes
Hydnum imbricatum
Lactarius deliciosus
Marasmius oreades
Matsutake - Tricholoma magnivelare or Tricholoma caligatum
Morchella angusticeps
Pleurotus ostreatus

All the dishes brought to the Cook & Taste must follow these rules:

- 1) All mushrooms must be well cooked. Raw mushrooms will not be allowed in any dish.
- 2) Use only one species of mushroom in each dish.
- 3) A written recipe prominently showing the species of mushroom in the dish and the cook's name **MUST** accompany each dish.
- 4) *Leccinum* species are not allowed!
- 5) If you have a supply of a good, common edible species of mushroom that you would like to use in a dish, but it isn't on the list above, call Marilyn Shaw at 377-1278. All exceptions must be approved in advance of the Cook & Taste.

Loss of son, saddens CMS friends

Rodney Taggart, 47, son of Tom Taggart, CMS Foray Chair and long time member, passed away on Tuesday, July 22. Although he had experienced some respiratory difficulties during the previous month, his death was sudden and unexpected.

Rodney and his twin brother, Robin, were the youngest of Tom's children. Rodney lived in Denver and worked in the construction trades. He graduated from South High, and served in the U.S. Navy for four years.

Grave side services were held on July 29 at Fort Logan National Cemetery.

Our thoughts are with Tom at this difficult time.

Marilyn Shaw

(Mushroom Fair Continued from page 1)

Bring your collections to the Gardens on Saturday afternoon, if possible, or on Sunday morning. Dr. Miller, Vera Evenson, Ellen Jacobson and other members will be working hard to identify and record as many species as possible. We usually have over 200 species at a typical Fair.

An important word about getting into the Gardens to help. Please bring your August issue of Spores with your up-to-date mailing label on it or your membership card and show this for free admission. We plan to have an updated roster at the gate, too, so be sure your membership is current.

On Saturday afternoon, **Gates Hall** will be set up to sort and identify mushrooms. Not pretty, but efficient. Lots of hands and feet are needed to simply carry mushrooms around and get them to the right place at the right time. Work continues from about 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm or 6:00 pm.

You'll be amazed at how much more you know at 5:00 pm than you did at 1:00 pm.

The big push begins at 8:00 am Sunday morning. By 11:00 am **Gates Hall** will be magically transformed into the colorful Fifth Kingdom of

Fungi and the gates will then be flung open to the public. When it is a good mushroom year this is one of the Garden's busiest Sundays.

Our Mushroom Fair is now an institution. People tell us they look forward to it and come every year. The benefit to the public is great, but it is, perhaps, even greater for our own members. It is the most rewarding and fun thing we do all year. Don't miss being a part of it!

Fair Fliers: Lets not keep our Fair a secret. Please read!

A flier with information about our 25th Annual Mushroom Fair is included with this newsletter. Due to the dry conditions the CMS Board decided to wait until August 8th to make the final decision on whether to have a fair this year or not. Please wait until the final decision is made to post the fliers. If the Fair is on please post it where it will be seen by as many people as possible. You may wish to make a few additional copies, or call Marilyn Shaw, 303-377-1278, for a supply.

Do not post fliers on telephone poles, trees, stop sign posts, or anywhere on public property. We could be fined for doing so. Instead, try grocery stores, libraries, health clubs, etc.. Always get permission first. One of the best locations is in the rear side windows of your car. That way you are a traveling billboard.

Message from Fair Chair Kim Gabaldon

Since we have the use of the kitchen again, we are going to bring back the pot-luck for the workers. Please bring a dish to share. If you don't have time to fix anything, it would be fine if you just pick something up at a deli or bakery. If you are going to bring something to serve hot, a slow cooker or a hot plate is helpful but not mandatory.

We still need workers for the sorting on Saturday the 16th. On Sunday, the day of the fair, we will need people there in the morning to help with setting up. We will also need help with the pot-luck and other refreshments. We need some people to help in the Kiddie Corner and also some people who are willing to be available at some of the displays if someone wants a break.

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Mycology on the Internet

<http://pluto.njcc.com/~ret/amanita/>

By Ed Lubow

Continuing with last month's theme of web sites that help with identification, this month's site is very specific for the genus *Amanita*.

Amanita, of course, is well known as the genus of mushrooms responsible for more fatalities than any other. While you would think that fact might discourage most people from ever trying them, in fact the genus also has a number of species that are rated very highly as edibles. The problem with eating *Amanitas* is that the potential consequences of misidentification are higher than with most groups of mushrooms. For that reason, if you find yourself wanting to eat *Amanitas*, you should be relatively very advanced at mushroom identification, and you should collect the species you want to eat several times and verify the identification before you try eating it for the first time.

This month's web site was originally set up by Dr. Rodham Tulloss, a specialist in the genus *Amanita*. He now has a collaborator, Dr. Prof. Zhu-liang Yang from China, who is also a specialist in *Amanita*.

The web site lists 512 species of *Amanita*, out of which they have completed pages for 150 species. Each of the individual species pages has excellent photographs, and a description of the species. Currently, most descriptions are not very detailed, consisting mostly of general discussion about the species. Even so, they are very informative.

In addition, several provisional keys developed by Dr. Tulloss are available. These keys require the use of a microscope, but if you have one available and know how to use it they are very useful for helping to distinguish between the various species.

Since *Amanitas* are a rather prominent feature of the mycoflora of Colorado, these pages and keys have proven to be very helpful to me. If you have an interest in *Amanitas*, you'll probably find them helpful, too.

Identifying Mushrooms on the Internet

By Marilyn Shaw, Toxicology Chair

I cringe when the nurses at Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center call about a mushroom exposure and tell me the person calling has attempted to identify the mushroom by going on the internet. Once and for all, I hope, you cannot accurately identify mushrooms by looking at photographs, especially if you know little or nothing about the subject.

Most recently, on July 16, a mom in Idaho called to say that her 6 year old son may have eaten a mushroom growing in their lawn at about 1:15 PM. Not on wood, no trees nearby. Since the RMPDC receives approximately 450-500 calls a year involving mushrooms and most do not develop into poisonings (remember, most mushrooms are not poisonous) we have developed guidelines which determine when a consultant should be called. In this case, it was decided to wait and watch for symptoms. We don't want to treat unless there is some indication of need.

Everything was OK until about 5:30 PM the next day (28 hours post ingestion) when the youngster started having diarrhea, then vomiting. On the first call there were no specimens available. Dad had thrown them all away. Marty, one of the head nurses at the center called me about 7:30 PM on July 17th to see what we might be able to determine about the possibilities of this being a serious poisoning. I opined that this was unlikely, reviewing the possible delayed onset poisonings, but advised, if there was any doubt, liver function tests could rule out the deadly amatoxins.

A little later, the mom called again to say they had found some of the mushrooms and she had gone on the internet to ID them. According to her they were either the Destroying Angel or the False Morel. Wow! I then talked to her and got a detailed description. They were almost certainly *Marasmius oreades*, the Fairy Ring Mushroom, completely harmless, in fact one of my favorite edibles.

(continued on page 8)

Dried Fungus and Death

By Jason Salzman

Recently, I asked myself this question: Will I have dried mushrooms in my pantry when I die?

The issue arose upon my return from a trip to mycophillic Italy. There, I purchased a bunch of dried Tuscan porcini. I also picked a few pounds in the Italian Alps, which I dried and took home.

I resisted the temptation to be greedy, and gave bunch of the porcini away. Still, precisely because I am greedy, I had a large jar left over—which I put in my pantry.

But my pantry is getting full. I had to stack the Tuscan porcini on top of the jar labeled: *Boletus edulis* 1999.

Those are on top of a dusty jar from who knows when. And on a smaller shelf, it looks like I've got faded lobsters, oysters, and who knows what else. I was proud of myself for composting the shiitake that I purchased years back.

I wondered how many other mushroom hunters have stocks of dried mushrooms on their shelves gathering dust like a prize rack from dead deer. I bet lots of us do.

And this may be a global problem. The guy I collected mushrooms with in Italy told me that his father used to go out picking mushrooms *twice a day*, loved to dry them with meticulous care, but never ate them himself. His house is full of dried porcini and his health is now failing.

How much dried fungus sits in kitchens worldwide, waiting for the perfect moment to be eaten—a moment that, if you are like me, rarely comes. You don't want to cook dried mushrooms for just any meal. After all, not only are they delicious, but you had to hunt them down, clean the stupid things, and then slice and dry them deep into the night. And if you eat them, they might not be there when the *real* perfect moment for eating them arrives.

Or I say to myself, "Why go through all the

hassle of forcing the kids to nibble on one, and then watch them gag as they leap for their water glasses?" Why waste them to a typical mycophobic guest? Why cook them for a mushroom friend who has his own stockpile that he never shares with you?

The dried fungus sits there, waiting—and meanwhile your own death comes closer. It's horrible to think about how many star mushroom hunters have died with significant stocks of wild mushrooms uneaten.

So, I have resolved not to wait anymore but to eat while I am alive. I will suggest that my myco-friends invite me to dinner and prepare wild mushrooms. I will cook them for myself and let my kids go hungry or vomit if they must. I will start eating through my pantry.

Perhaps I'll discover that I don't really need so many, and I will tame the greedy instinct that drives me to collect too many mushrooms in the first place. And I will enjoy a less frenzied mushroom hunting experience, without the exhaustion of late night cleaning and drying sessions. I will live for the moment and enjoy my entire life more, right?

Jason just published a second edition of his book, *Making the News: A Guide for Activists and Nonprofits*.

(Fair continued from page 5)

Another very important job is the cleanup. We can be fined an extra fee if we leave a mess. It seems that the first people there on the day of the fair are always the last to leave, so have a heart, and help out so these people can get home.

Any help will be greatly appreciated, so call me. I am usually available between 2:00 pm and midnight. Thanks in advance!

Your friendly Fair Chair,
Kim Gabaldon
Phone 303-297-2437
Cell 303-241-6717

(Identifying continued from page 6)

I advised her that mushrooms were almost certainly not the cause of the child's illness and gave her a couple more tests to do with the specimens, make a spore print, and check for one of the rather unusual characteristic of this mushroom, the ability to revive after being dried for a couple of hours.

Remember, while the internet can be a great boon if properly used by someone who knows how to interpret the information, and which web sites are dependably accurate, it can also lead the uninformed astray, and in this case leave them absolutely terrified.

A moment of comedy

What kind of room has no walls, no ceiling, and no floor?

Told to me by my friends' 4 year old son
Tim Celano. The editor.

Spores Afield

HAIKU

I trespass for shrooms
Fungi are much tastier
When I pick that way.

By Ellen Jacobson

HAIKU

No politico
Can dare command a mushroom
to grow or not grow

By Ruth Davis

Websters dictionary definition of Haiku is unrhymed verse having 3 lines of 5, 7, 5 syllables.

If you want to have your Haiku printed please send one or more in to the editor.

ANSWER: A Mushroom