

Fungus Fair 2002

This year's Fungus Fair will be December 14-15 at the Oakland Museum. There is much to do, and we need help from all MSSF members to help it succeed. Here are some ways you can pitch in:

Distributing Posters:

You can help publicize the fair by distributing posters. We'll have posters available for pick up at several points around the Bay Area by early November.

San Francisco: Randall Museum front desk. 10-5, Tuesday-Saturday. Call Ken Litchfield at (415) 863-7618 for more information.

East Bay: Oakland Museum. Call Doris Welch at (510) 238-6641 for pick-up arrangements.

South Bay: Home of Yu-Shen Ng in Palo Alto. He lives within three minutes of Highway 101 at 4148 Briarwood Way. Call him at (650) 793-1406 (cell) or (650) 812-0402 (home) to arrange a time for pickup.

Marin: Green Jeans Nursery, 690 Redwood Highway, Mill Valley, 415-389-8333

Volunteering at the Fair: You can volunteer at the fair itself or help with set up on Friday, December 13. See adjoining newsletter note for details, or call Lorrie Gallagher at (415) 467-1868.

Help with the planning:

You can help with last minute arrangements, e.g, planning displays, arranging programs, coordinating logistics. There will be a final fair planning meeting on Tuesday, December 3, at 7:30 pm. Contact Tom Chester for more information at (415) 665-7520.

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Myцена News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

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MycoDigest

MycoDigest is a section of the Myцена News devoted to the scientific review of recent mycological information

Mycomorphology Part 1: Why Do Mushrooms Look Like Mushrooms?

By Peter Werner

While fleshy fungi come in a variety of shapes, we usually associate higher basidiomycetes with variations on a characteristic parasol-like morphology, with an elevated pileus that bears various kinds of hymenophoral structures (gills, tubes, spines, etc.) underneath. But just why is a mushroom shaped like a mushroom, or to put it more technically, what is the adaptive significance of the characteristic 'mushroom' morphology?

If one understands that a mushroom is the spore-bearing reproductive structure of the larger fungal organism, the short answer to this question is obvious - a mushroom is adapted to drop spores into the flow of air underneath, ensuring dispersal away from the parent. However, to fully appreciate the degree that this morphology represents an optimal adaptation for basidiospore dispersal, we must first look at the mechanism by which spores are shot from the basidia and escape from the hymenophores of a mushroom.

The mechanism of spore release has been the subject of much study. What is clear is that spore release begins with the formation of a liquid droplet, known as Buller's drop, at the base of the spore. Buller's drop is formed when the spore releases a dense hydrophilic solution of mannitol and hexose sugars. This solution is so strongly hydrophilic that it literally draws water out of the air, causing the Buller's drop to grow.

About a minute after Buller's drop forms, the droplet rapidly spreads over the surface of the spore, an event that is immediately followed by spore release. Many different hypotheses about this phenomenon have been advanced and rejected over the last century, but recent consensus seems to be that the droplet plays two roles. First, the initial formation of Buller's drop displaces the center of gravity in the spore, rocking it along its connection with the sterigma (the basidial tip on which a forming spore rests), causing this connection to loosen.

More importantly, the spread of the droplet over the surface of the spore involves the breaking of surface tension. This breaking of surface tension apparently creates a net force that pushes the spore downward against the sterigma. The sterigma is an elastic but highly pressurized body, and the pressure of the downward force of the spore results in an equal and opposite force that is strong enough to launch the spore away from the basidium. This mechanism has been called 'the surface tension catapult'. The spore is launched far

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MSSF Fungus Fair Call for Volunteers

Oakland Museum

Saturday, December 14, 10 am - 5 pm

Sunday, December 15, 12 - 5 pm

The MSSF needs your help to produce another fantastic fair at the Oakland Museum. Volunteers are needed for a variety of functions. In addition to forays on Friday and fair set-up & mushroom ID on Friday night, volunteers can help on Saturday and Sunday with mushroom education, T-shirts & books, memberships, cooking demonstrations, medicinal mushrooms display, children's art, or general relief for mushroom table participants. We especially need devoted help for set-up on Friday night and clean-up on Sunday evening.

Shift obligation for free admission is Friday 3-7 pm or 8-11 pm, Saturday 10 am - 1:30 pm or 1:30-5 pm, Sunday 12-3 pm, 3-6 pm (includes one hour of clean-up) or 5-7 for clean-up.

Contact Lorrie Gallagher at (415) 467-1868 or lorriegallagher@hotmail.com to volunteer

Sneak Preview of Fair Speakers!

For those of you who like to plan your fungus fair schedule according to speakers, here is a sneak preview. Times and topics may be subject to change, though - double check the schedule before the fair.

Saturday, December 14:

- 11:30 Michael Boom, Secrets of the Mushroom World
- 12:00 Dennis Desjardins, Mushrooms of Hawaii
- 1:00 Bob Mackler, Mushrooms 101: The First Course
- 1:30 Taylor Lockwood, Treasures from the Kingdom of Fungi
- 2:30 Debbie Viess, Edible and Poisonous Mushrooms of the Bay Area
- 3:30 Paul Stamets, Medicinal Mushrooms
- 4:00 Dr. Mo-Mei Chen, Forest Fungi Phytogeography

Sunday, December 15:

- 12:30 Ken Litchfield, Creating Your Own Mushroom Garden
- 1:00 Clark Heinrich, Mushrooms Gods of Religion and Alchemy
- 2:00 Dorothy Beebe and Miriam Rice, Mushrooms for Color - Full circle
- 2:30 Paul Stamets, New Waves of 'Magic' Mushrooms
- 3:30 Scott Hajicek-Dobberstein, Use of Psychedelic Mushrooms in the Buddhist tradition

Fungus Fair Forays

Forays are scheduled throughout the Bay Area and beyond to collect specimens for the annual Fungus Fair. Bring cardboard boxes, baskets, waxed paper and waxed paper bags. Only serious rain will cancel or delay these fungus collections. Call leaders if necessary.

Thursday, December 12: Wunderlich Park, South Bay: Contact leader, J.R. Blair, for specifics (650-728-9405, jrbclair@outrageous.net)

Friday, December 13: Joaquin Miller Park, East Bay: Meet at Sequoia Arena parking lot at 10 am. Leaders: Mike Wood (510-357-7696, mwood@mssf.org) and Norm Andresen (510-278-8998, n.andresen@attbi.com)

San Francisco Watershed: Meet at Pulgas Temple entrance at 10:00 am. and finish by 3:00 pm. Entrance is limited to 35 persons, no infants and by reservations only. Call, e-mail or fax your request to the leader. No response indicates acceptance. We will enter near the Pulgas Temple entrance, now torn up for construction. Bring waxed paper bags, cardboard boxes, instrument for bringing up base of the fungi, lunch and fluids. Leader: Bill Freedman (650-344-7774, LOUFREED@aol.com)

Memorial Park, Peninsula: Close to the community of La Honda. Meet at the park entrance at 10am. Bring a lunch, basket, waxpaper. Leader: Fred Stevens (fstev@dnai.com. 650-994-1374)

Huddart Park, South Bay: Meet in the main parking lot just past the park entrance kiosk at 10 am, leave at 1 pm. Huddart Park is on King's Mountain road in Woodside. Leader: Wade Leschyn (wade@belmateo.net or 650-591-6616)

Santa Cruz Area: Meet at Marshall Field at UC Santa Cruz campus at 8:30 am. From State Hwy 17 south, take State Hwy 1 north. At Bay Street, turn right. Turn left on High Street, which becomes Empire Grade. Continue for about 2.8 miles. Park on the right side of the street where there is an open field on the right. Leaders: Tina and Thomas Keller (408-879-939, tkeller@worldnet.att.net)

Roys Redwoods, Marin County: Meet at parking lot at 9:30 am and foray till 1:30 pm. Take Sir Francis Drake (going west) through Fairfax and San Geronimo Valley to Nicasio Valley Road (immediately after golf course). Turn right and go uphill for about a 1/2 mile. Parking and entrance to the foray is on the right side. Bring wax paper and some cardboard boxes. Please call Thursday pm to confirm. This is in conjunction with the Marin Open Space District and its naturalist will be with us. Leader: Robert Mackler (510-799-6756, Rdmackler@aol.com)

The MSSF Mushroom Marketplace Returns to the Oakland Museum

Be sure to stop by the MSSF's Mushroom Marketplace at this year's Mushroom Fair. All items will be sold at little or no mark-up and all money goes to the MSSF. This year we will be selling the ever popular cookies and candies shaped like mushrooms as well as a selection of international grocery items that contain mushrooms. Plus, you can purchase Asian medicinal mushroom products or dried mushrooms such as shitake, maitake, wood ear, and stinkhorn. This is a great opportunity to buy inexpensive gifts for the holidays or try something new you've never had before.

We need volunteers! If you are interested in working at the Marketplace during the Fair, please contact volunteer coordinator Lorrie Gallagher at lorriegallagher@hotmail.com.

Mycomorphology

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enough so that before reaching free-fall it will be well clear of the hymenium (the basidia and cystidia, collectively) from which it originated, but not so far that hits the opposite hymenophoral wall.

Two critical microenvironmental parameters must therefore be maintained in the air spaces between the hymenophores. The first is that the air must be sufficiently humid for the hydrophilic compounds to draw moisture out of the air and form a Buller's drop. At the same time, liquid water must be excluded from this space, or the hydrophilic compounds will simply be washed away before they get a chance to form a Buller's drop. The second parameter is that the air in this space must remain absolutely still, both to prevent humidity from dissipating and to ensure that the free-fall of the spores between the walls of the hymenophores is not disrupted. The air beneath the pileus must also be relatively still so as to allow the spore to fall free of the mushroom and into the air-flow without being blown back up to the hymenophores.

The role of the characteristic mushroom shape in maintaining the first of these parameters is quite straightforward when one notes the resemblance of a mushroom to a sunshade or umbrella. Shading the hymenophores from direct sunlight helps prevent humidity from evaporating away, while preventing rainwater from reaching the hymenium prevents hydrophilic compounds from being washed away.

The role of the mushroom's shape in maintaining the second of these parameters, stillness of air in and around the hymenophores, is not quite so self-evident, but was illustrated quite dramatically by a recent experiment which involved the placement of mushroom caps in a low-speed wind tunnel. Plumes of smoke were blown through the wind tunnel and over a mushroom pileus fitted onto a wooden 'stipe'. Airflow was shown to decrease in velocity at all points close to the pileus, but with a particularly significant decrease in velocity beneath the pileus. (The airflow several millimeters above the pileus increased in velocity, which showed the pileus to be aerodynamically not unlike an airplane wing.)

Hence, a mushroom's characteristic shape makes it particularly well suited for ensuring the conditions necessary for basidiospore release and dispersal. It also illustrates why fleshy ascomycetes have such a different morphology. Asci disperse their spores through a much more powerfully explosive mechanism, firing their spores much further than do basidia. Because of this, the hymenophore of an ascomycete cannot be closely spaced, like the gills or pores of a basidiomycete. The asci must also face upward, or the ascospores would be shot straight into the ground. This is why fleshy ascomycetes typically have hymenophores that are variations on a cup or saddle shape, with asci found on top of the fruit-

ing body, rather than the underside.

I will also note that in order for a mushroom to properly ensure the efficient release of basidiospores, the surface of the hymenophore must be exactly perpendicular to the ground. Mushrooms have a highly intricate set of adaptations for ensuring this. The story of how mushrooms keep themselves upright (and how they even sense 'up' and 'down') will be the subject of my next column.

Further reading:

Deering R, Dong F, Rambo D, Money NP. 2001. Airflow patterns around mushrooms and their relationship to spore dispersal. *Mycologia* 93(4): 732-736.

Ingold CT. 1992. The basidium: a spore-gun of precise range. *The Mycologist* 6(3): 111-113.

Money NP. 1998. More g's than the Space Shuttle: ballistospore discharge. *Mycologia* 90(4): 547-558.

The 6th Annual SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp

The Camp, to be held at the Boy Scout camp in Navarro, Mendocino Co., will take place on Martin Luther King weekend, January 18-20, 2003.

It's a benefit for SOMA, and will have mushroom forays, classes, workshops, slide shows, speakers, specimen tables, and great wild mushroom cuisine and camaraderie. The main speaker and guest mycologist will be Dr. Rod Tulloss, who is one of the world experts in the genus *Amanita*.

The fee, with on-site rustic lodging, is \$180 for non-members and \$165 for members. To register, please obtain and send in a registration form. Forms may be printed from the SOMA website (www.SOMAmushrooms.org), or obtained by calling 707-773-1011, or e-mailing to: lamorr@pacbell.net. For general Camp information, contact the SOMA Camp coordinator at 707-887-1888, or charmoon@sonic.net.

**For the most current
Calendar information,
call the MSSF hotline at
415-759-0495 or check the
MSSF web site at:**

www.mssf.org

Newsletter Exchange

The Mycena News is sent each month to nearly 50 mycological societies in North America and we receive their newsletters in return. The idea is to share news and help members plan their trips to include mushroom events and make contact with mushroomers. The best way we can provide access to the newsletters is to make them available for browsing at the regular meetings.

Alas, in my current spell as Librarian I haven't seen a single issue of a single one of these newsletters!

To help this change, if you are one of the people in another society receiving the Mycena News on behalf of your society, could you please make sure that you send your newsletter to,

Mycological Society of San Francisco - Attn. Librarian
c/o The Randall Museum
199 Museum Way
San Francisco, CA 94114

If you are someone in our society receiving the MSSF copy of one of these newsletters could you please contact me or make sure the sender is given this address?

In fact I recently sent a questionnaire to all the societies in our exchange program to ensure information is up-to-date and to assess interest in the program. Many thanks to those who sent in the 20 responses I have received so far. Everyone is enthusiastic for the program to continue. A couple of respondents heap praise on the Mycena News. If you are one of the 23 who have not yet replied could you please respond as soon as possible? Contact me if for some reason you haven't seen the questionnaire. At some point, if I don't hear from you I will have to assume that your interest is low and we will stop sending you the Mycena News.

But there is a question of whether we are networking with the right group. The number of societies is – well – mushrooming. The current NAMA directory lists 63 affiliated ones in the U.S. and 8 in Canada. It is hard to say how many more are not affiliated because there is no other source of names. One indication is that seven in our program are not on the NAMA list. However, at roughly \$10 each per year for printing and mailing, it is simply too expensive to send our newsletter to every society. Electronic distribution is an attractive alternative because it is free and provides access to more people. Several groups, including our own, are now publishing on the web. Nonetheless, this is not an option for us because our current policy confines the newsletter to members by means of a password.

John Lennie

Wine And Wild Mushroom Dinner

Lalimes Restaurant in Berkeley will be holding their 7th annual wine and wild mushroom dinner in conjunction with the MSSF Fungus Fair on Tue/Wed, December 3rd and 4th. The MSSF will set up a display table. The 5 course pre-fixed dinner costs \$42. Head chef Stephen Jaramillo is a frequent and somewhat fanatical wild mushroom forager. Lalimes is located at 1329 Gilman St. in Berkeley. Reservations can be made at 510-527-9838.

Mendocino Regional Foray January 24-26, 2003

NAMA is holding a regional foray on the Mendocino coast January 24-26, 2003. The Albion Field Station is located on the North Coast just south of the town of Mendocino, 2.5 hours north of San Francisco. Darvin DeShazer of SOMA will be the foray mycologist, and will give a talk on Saturday evening.

Cost of \$115 includes all meals from Friday dinner through Sunday breakfast. Rooms are heated. Participants should bring bedding. To see the facility, check www.puc.edu/Albion/.

Half of the 60 spaces for this foray are reserved for non-local NAMA members, so local NAMA members (from FFSC, MSSF, SOMA, Humboldt Bay) need to sign up soon or take their chances for a last minute add-on. For further information, contact Debbie Johnson, debjean@cruzio.com, (831) 459-9530, 214 Fairmount Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062. A check for \$25 payable to 'NAMA Forays 03' reserves your place, with the balance due 30 days prior to the event.

THE MSSF ARCHIVIST NEEDS . . .

This month the Archivist's focus is on collecting old notices mailed to members of the Culinary Group giving the dinner theme and menu and cooks. Our collection's first item announces the December Dinner at Tilden Park for all MSSF members. From then until 1983 the Collection has many gaps, and I would appreciate any fill-ins anyone might have. Please e-mail elmiller@rahul.net with your most welcome offers, or send them to me at 3890 La Donna Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306, phone 650-493-7589. Thank you sincerely. Emmy Lou Miller, MSSF archivist.

Tricholoma equestre

The following is taken from the September 2002 issue of *Occhio al fungo*, the newsletter of the mushroom club AVIS in Bologna, Italy. 'Last year another species in France was designated 'mortally poisonous'. *Tricholoma equestre* was considered to be choice but seems to have caused many cases of poisoning since 1992, including 3 deaths. In the worst cases, the mushroom had been eaten over a prolonged period (as much as 10 days)... From this comes an important indication: do not eat mushrooms at many successive meals.

T. equestre had been on the list of commercial mushrooms but the Ministry of Health has recently put out an ordinance prohibiting the collection and commercialization of this species.'

Translated by Bob Mackler

Mycena News Submissions

Rose Flaherty, co-editor of the Mycena News, would like to remind people that photos/drawings/illustrations appear best in the newsletter if she can scan them in, as opposed to JPEG format. Whenever possible, please send them by snail mail to her, at 5368 Valley Ridge Drive, #2, Redding, CA 96003.

The Foragers' Report

By Patrick Hamilton
MYCOCHEF@aol.com

Warm and heavy rains, our first of the season, continued to pelt the Cotati Plain on Thursday and Friday the second week of November and The Foragers' reporter felt the strong urge to plan forays up and down the Sonoma and Mendocino coasts.

Like anadromous fish returning to their home streams and migrating birds flying to and fro us mushroom folks are called back to the patches of our pasts each year when the rains come.

But these rains do not dampen our spirits. Unuh. Our souls soar in direct proportion to the amount of precipitation poured upon us. We never say, 'Don't put a damper on (whatever).' We spout, 'Let's hope things get damper.' And our non-mushroom friends (still have any?) continue to not understand our desires to get really wet and yet not miserable.

Do all of us still wait like poor parched Plains people hoping this or that drought will finally be over, each year in November? It's as if we have no recollection of years before. It almost always rains now and the season is good and we are at sweet peace with our fungal centers.

Right on time and plenty of it, was what happened again this year. When you read this column, baskets full of Kings and Queens and Shrimps and early season chanterelles will surely have been found and the world be once again all cold and cozy. Just the way we like it. Unless I am misjudging the rain gauge this does look to be a fine beginning to our season of giving, and taking mushrooms.

Up 'til now not much news of many finds has found it's way to this information center. A few *Paxillus involutus* and *Lecinum scabrum* were seen under planted birch trees. The usual Sulphur Shelves did their spectacular appearances and several unidentified to species Cortis were discovered by a frozen waterfall near dry Sonora Pass last weekend.

For those of you who are new to mushroom hunting and desire to leapfrog over much of the pack of your fellows I suggest that you bribe some more seasoned (read--'salty') pickers to take you out with them. Or, even easier, purchase the special secret map collection the MSSF keeps hidden deep behind the library book shelves which can guide you to certain mushroom hunters special patches--ones that they have taken years to locate and now protect by 'farming' them every few days during the season (so that others will not know that they are in a patch).

A map set can be yours by simply sending in a self-addressed stamped envelope along with a check for whatever you think it might be worth to pick in, say David Campbell's or Mike Boom's or, heck, even my personal best places. Some of us forget from year to year just what guiding flora leads to bolete spots. Remember the California Coffee Berry (*Rhizoglyphus californicus*). Where it grows one can find that special little mini-habitat replete with a few tan oaks, pines and Spy mushrooms.

What also usually works for me is that early in the season I know that the Kings will be out in the grasses strutting their stuff all puffed up. Later you need to look hard by the boles of the pines

and find them a bit scrawnier and less apt to be showing off. Queens can lurk in their finery under the madrones, close in or further away--they don't seem to care just as long as someone notices them.

December's Mushroom of the Month has been identified as the King Bolete. It is *the* fungus that causes the most aberrant trespassing behaviors amongst normally proper property respecting folk.

Spot one across a prison fence and people escape in.

There is no excuse too outrageous--no outrage inexcusable--surrounding the picking of porcini. An accepted Penny Bun custom is that guys can knock down gals if they get in-between them and their mushroom. Fun-loving women will gladly wipe the mud off, spit duff out of their mouths, and smile warmly at their energetic, but zany, guys.

This is not a sport for the meek. Some hunters even carry weapons--sticks that can poke you in the eye and impale you elsewhere. Misdirection is a common tactic and if some unwary tenderfoot gets lost after asking a Salt Point regular where the mushrooms are, all the better in this unruly sport. More better if the result is a night spent alone wet, freezing, and pondering over what went wrong. All part of the game, the game of kings.

Tempura style, roasted, grilled, grated raw for a salad, put in a sauce or baked in a pie; it doesn't matter. *Boletus edulis* is agreeable to any good technique but a favorite and most simple method is to slice 1/4' slabs from stipes and sauté them in very hot very good extra virgin olive oil until crisp and brown at the edges, turn once and cook until golden brown on the perimeter and custardy-soft in the middle. A sprinkle of gray French sea salt, fresh ground black pepper, toasted Pugliese bread slices rubbed with garlic and, if your partner is still speaking to you after a day of good fun abuse in the forest, some Pinot and a fire and other stuff too.

To see a photo and description of *Boletus edulis*, visit http://www.mykoweb.com/CAF/species/Boletus_edulis.html.

That's all for now folks.

Membership and Subscription Information

To Join the MSSF and receive this newsletter, send a \$25 check, payable to MSSF (\$20 for seniors 65 and over and full time students), to MSSF Membership, 2750 Market St., Suite 103, San Francisco, CA 94114-1987, Attn: David Bartolotta. Please include contact information: home and/or work phone numbers and e-mail address. New and renewal memberships will be current through December of 2002. To change your mailing address, please notify David. MSSF members may also join or renew membership in the North American Mycological Association at a reduced rate by including with their MSSF check a separate check for \$32 payable to NAMA. Send it to David at the same address. For further information, e-mail David at david@bartolotta.com or call at (415) 621-3166.

Culinary Corner

By *Al Carvajal*

For our October meeting, the Culinary Group celebrated Italian cooking with a dinner dedicated to the flavors of Italy. The first useful thing to know about Italian cooking is that there is no such thing, 'Italian cooking' is an expression of convenience, rarely used by Italians. The cooking of Italy is really the cooking of its regions, regions that until 1860 were separated, independent and usually hostile states. The unique features of each region can be easily observed when traveling through Italy today. These differences appear in the physical look of the people, in their temperament, language and most clearly in their cooking. Although Palermo and Venice are both seashore cities that specialize in seafood, their cooking is so different that there is not a single authentic dish from one table that is found at the other's.

But it is not only due to changing political frontiers that the regional cooking has taken its many ways. Even more significant has been the influence of the geography, especially the mountains and the sea. In the North, the Alps separate Italy from the rest of Europe. At the base of the Alps spreads the Po river valley, Italy's only extensive plain. This is Italy's dairy zone, and the cooking fat is butter, and the staples are rice and corn mush (polenta).

The northern plain gives out before touching the Mediterranean shore, where it reaches the foothills of the other great mountain chain of Italy: the Apennines. This chain extends from the north to the south of the whole length of the country. It is composed of gentle, soft rounded hills sloping to the seas on the eastern and western flanks. In its central crest are tall stone peaks. Huddled within are countless valleys, isolated from each other until modern times, which gave birth to cultures and cooking styles profoundly different in character. To a certain extent, the Apennine range determines the variety of climates that gave rise to the cooking diversity. Turin, the capital of Piedmont, has very severe winters, while just a few miles away the Ligurian coast has the mild, pleasant, climate that made the Riviera famous. Here flowers abound, the olive begins to flourish, and the fragrance of fresh herbs invades nearly every dish.

On the eastern side of the same Apennines lies the Emilia-Romagna, the richest gastronomic region of Italy. Its capital, Bologna, is the only Italian city whose name is instantly associated with food. The Emilia-Romagna has an extraordinarily fertile land that grows plenty of wheat and perhaps the finest produce in all Europe, a fact that explains why, in Bologna, is almost a crime to sit down for a meal without pasta. Italy's best hams and sausages are made here, as is its greatest cheese: parmesan.

In crossing Emilia-Romagna's southern border into Tuscany every aspect of cooking changes. Out of the Emilian kitchen comes a cooking that is exuberant with precious ingredients. In Bologna, they will sauté veal in butter, stuffed with the finest mountain ham, coat it with aged Parmesan, simmer it in a sauce, and smother it with the most expensive truffles. By contrast, in Florence they will take a steak and grill it quickly over a blazing fire, adding nothing but the aroma of olive oil, ground pepper and basil.

From Tuscany down, the Apennines spread nearly from coast to coast so that the rest of Italy is almost entirely mountainous. As a result, two major changes take place in cooking. First, olive oil supplants butter as the dominant cooking fat. Second, as we get away from the rich wheat field of the north, soft, home made egg and flour pasta gives way to the more economical egg-less macaroni, the staple of the south. South of Naples the climate becomes considerable warmer. The harsh sun bakes the land and inflames the temper of its inhabitants, and ignites

their sauces. At the tip of the peninsula and in the heart of Sicily there is little rain and then only in the winter. The lands are parched by harsh, burning winds and the temperatures are high. The food is as extreme as the climate. The colors of the vegetables are intense and violent, the pastas are so pungent that they often need no topping of cheese, and the sweets are of the most overpowering richness.

A capacity crowd of sixty came to the Culinary Group's celebration of Italian cooking. We started the evening with antipasti or appetizers brought by almost everybody. We had a very rich variety and we put them down with an excellent wine and fruits punch made by Carol Hellums. The punch is typical of the southern part of Italy where it is used as refreshment on hot summer days. We follow with a stacciatella, which is Italian for egg drop soup, made David Bartolotta. This soup is typical of Rome but is also made in Marche and Emilia-Romagna. In some areas bread crumbs and flour are added to the eggs, then used in the same way. The soup was served with an Italian bread loaf that John Garrone provided and accompanied by pasta with a morel sauce crafted by Fred Kron. For the pasta, Fred used macaroni, something that comes from the south. The morels grow only on the Alps, in the north. However, this is Fred's 'signature dish'. What can I say? Fully Italian! It was divine!



Photo by David Bell

After a brief break, we started with pollo alla cacciatora con porcini (*Boletus edulis*) cooked by Luccia Paulazo, Alvaro and Sherry Carvajal. Alla cacciatora is Italian for 'hunter's style'. It refers to game (or chicken) sautéed, then slowly cooked with mushrooms and wine, and usually onions (shallots), tomatoes, sweet bell peppers and garlic. Although people now take chicken for granted, in the past chicken was a festive meat for Italians who didn't live on farms, and even those who did only ate hens that sickened or were too old to lay eggs. No one knows why this dish is called hunter-style, except perhaps that in the Renaissance those who could afford to enjoy poultry were the well-to-do, who also enjoyed the sport of hunting. This dish was developed in central Italy and has many variations, with the amount of tomatoes and peppers used increasing the farther south of Italy you travel. The chicken was served with David Suuraball's roasted potatoes, red onions, green beans and chanterelles with rosemary vinaigrette. Simple but delicious, and because it was made with new potatoes, fresh-picked green beans and Oregon chanterelles, the dish was a crowd pleaser and a visual treat. His recipe came from Emilia-Romagna. At the same time we served Edwin Caba's fagiolini verdi (or green beans) that were perfectly steamed and flavored with a touch of olive oil, herbs and garlic, just the type of dish you'll find in Tuscany.

We finished the evening with MaryAnn Swazo's wonderful tiramisu and Remo Arancio's wonderful Coffee. Tiramisu, also known as 'Tuscan trifle', is a dessert initially created in Siena, in the province of Tuscany. The occasion was a visit by the Grand Duke Cosimo III, in whose honor the concoction was dubbed zuppa del duca (the 'duke's soup'). The erstwhile duke brought the dessert back with him to Florence, and it eventually made its way to Venice. Stories are told

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Cultivation Corner

By Ken Litchfield, © 2002

It's that most fun time of the year again - Fungus Fair time - when we get to share our educational mission with the public with wonderful displays and booths full of mushrooms and all things fungal related for looking, learning, talking, and tasting.

We'll be having a cultivation booth with a mushroom garden display and the raised woodland display at the entrance to the exhibits area. Both of these as well as the ID and other specialty tables will need, not just mushrooms, but all kinds of duff and related materials.

When you are out and about on personal forays and on the society sponsored forays on Friday for the fair be sure to bring in more than just mushrooms. Duff like pine needles, oak leaves, humus, as well as mossy logs and cool gnarly stumps especially with polypores or other mushrooms growing on them, fresh branches of oak, pine, fir, manzanita, etc., ferns, liverworts, lichens, and other moisture loving woodland denizens, all make beautiful additions to the collections of mushrooms on the tables and the floor displays. Polypores and other dryable mushrooms are especially good because they can be used again and again at future shows. Some of the living stuff you bring in may be rescued from logging or development areas but all of it will be saved from the fair. It will be put into the mushroom garden, and be made available for Mushroom Day at the Randall in January

And when you do find those extra choice mushroom specimens we would like to have the most outrageously huge, gaudy, colorful, weird, and wonderful for the big raised woodland display that introduces the public to the exhibits area. We would like dibs on the biggest boletes, hugest *Gymnopilus*, multitudes of muscarias, nastiest impudicus, juiciest jellies, smelliest *Clathrus* - you get the idea. It is a great spot for a photo opportunity. Please be sure to bring more than one specimen of these choice fungi, so that the ID tables and specialty tables, like edibles, will have something to show for the species also. And be sure it goes through the ID process to get catalogued.

During the day on Friday we'll be setting up the woodland display so that the mushrooms can be plugged in when they come in. If you can't attend one of the Friday forays but would like to help out with setting up and filling out the display, especially if you have a truck or hauling vehicle, give me a call to volunteer. And if you go foraging you can help add your mushrooms to the displays when you get back to the museum.

At the Cultivation booth we'll have an expanded area with a bunch of equipment and cultures from the Presidio lab to demonstrate lab methods and techniques and some of the composting and remediation projects we're experimenting with. We'll have cultivatable mushrooms on display, a mushroom garden display, and some new and interesting mushroom displays, and spawn for sale.

See ya at the fair.

Mz. Myco-Manners

THANK YOU FOR SHARING

Gentle Readers: Mz. Myco-Manners wishes to express her gratitude for being let in on all the scuttlebutt of the MSSF. However, she would prefer to be told in person, over a cup of fine tea (or pony of beer), rather than see postings in the Yahoo group. This Yahoo group that we have is a marvelous tool for dissemination of information pertaining to fungi. It has also become a marvelous tool for private information from one to another broadcasted to the world at large.

Our e-mail messages have a horrid button, easily selected, called "Reply". The fact that so many of you fine folks have pressed that button to tell a posting friend some dirt about another member, thrills me. Seeing the depth of this social gaffe triggers unlady-like bursts of belly laughing that set my neighbors complaining. I must admit that I glow for days after finding an unkind fact about a dear, close, friend. But, everyone else finds out as well, and some of that glow is rendered neutral.

If you have a piece of gossip to share, true or untrue, it is always considered proper etiquette to slash and trash the victim in private. What could possibly be better than knowing you were selected as "special" to hear what an SOB a colleague is? Knowing all about the adulterers in the club is most fun, provided you think that you are the only one with the knowledge. Please don't spoil the Act Of Sharing this information by inadvertently sending it to the entire Yahoo group. At that point nobody feels special with the presentation of the hate filled gossip.

The proper manner to send vile words about a good friend is to type the intended recipient's e-mail address in the "To:" field of the standard template. This will assure that the message reaches the right person. There is no greater gift than to make a person feel honored as a confidant to know the smut you have to tell.

With that advice I will wish all of you a very Happy Holiday season. Please share your mushroom pickings with friends over dinner, and give Thanks that we are able to exclude others who will be the topic of convivial conversation. This is surely the best time of the year.

I remain,
Mz. Myco-Manners

Culinary Corner

Continued from page 6

about how tiramisu was the favorite of Venice's courtesans, who needed a 'pick me up' (the literal translation of 'tiramisu') to fortify themselves between their amorous encounters. True? Probably not. But it makes for a colorful history.

During the month of December the MSSF will have two events where the Culinary group members are expected to help: The Holiday Dinner and the Fungus Fair. For the Holiday dinner, we need volunteers to prepare the dinner appetizers. For the Fungus Fair, we need volunteers to help feed the MSSF volunteers working at the fair. If you can help, please call me (415-695-0466) or drop me a line at alvaro.carvajal@att.net.

Forays Re-visited – Morel Hunts 2002

Messages gleaned from the MSSF internet and compiled by Tom Sasaki

Calaveras Big Trees - Darby Fire (4/20-21, Before and Thereafter)

“The big trees foray was well attended, we started with 20 car loads, warm during the day, cool/cold at night, very muddy roads, steep slopes made this trip a taxing one for attendees. Saturday was a very mixed bag as far as yields go, most folks found little but couple of fellows collected 50-60 lbs. As often is the case in morel hunting, we didn't find really good habitat until late Saturday afternoon, by which time many folks had tired of the hunt. Sunday the leaders were able to take the remaining 4x4s to a good location with yields in the 10-15 lbs range for a couple of hours work.

One of the big problems we had was the failure of many drivers to follow the standard protocol when driving on back roads, “each driver is responsible for the car behind”, at every intersection. You stop at every turn until the next car can see you. This allows for slower drivers to catch up and all to arrive. At least two groups returned early and got temporarily lost. Apparently these folks had not made notes on the intersections and turns, or had improper maps. In future trips, people without maps, compass and ability to find our location on the map may be turned back at the onset of the trip.

We also enjoyed the wild life we saw, a really big bear, some turkeys, a fox, deer and other small critters. In the final analysis, it was an adventure in a breathtaking place with good fellowship and fun. Good hunting.” -Norm Andresen

“The Darby fire is not an easy one, to put it mildly. Roads conditions on Friday when considerable snow was still in meltdown were gut wrenching. The roads do not follow the fire, but rather wind for miles and miles in and out of the burn which stretches along multiple fingers of the Stanislaus watershed.” -Peter Werner

“Foray attendees were many and all had a riotous good time at our Saturday night potluck feast. Plenty of morels were shared and our campfire was mighty. Thanks again to Norm Andresen for researching and spearheading the initial scout efforts without which we all likely would have suffered considerably greater hunting frustrations.” -David and Jeanne Campbell

“We arrived in Avery on Friday night. Saturday morning, nervous, but game, we decided to tackle the muddy, wet conditions in search of the elusive morel. Gene & I took the Outback and Tom & Steve (Note: Tom Sargis and Steve Werner) took the 4x4. About 17 miles into the deep mud, we decided to ditch the Outback and jump into the 4x4. We forded the river and arrived at our destination a few more miles down the road.

At first, there was nothing but burned trees and charred logs on steep hills. Then Gene found about 30 black morels from 2” to 4” high at the base of a charred fir. Then, we were all finding them. Moving to another spot, we did even better. We were really excited. We also found a small creek where Sierra dandelion

leaves and watercress were abundant. Tom and I picked some for a salad with dinner. By this time, it was getting late and we still had to ford the river and get up the muddy hill.

Well, it was an exciting experience. Gene & I hopped back into the Outback, hoping to slog successfully up the muddiest spot. But, of course, the thick, red, mucky, clay just kept building up on the tires until we were stuck. Backing down into a better position, Tom & I pushed on the downhill side to prevent fish-tailing, and Gene made a run at it. Tom & I then pushed from behind and after three more fishtails, the worst was over. We only had about 17 miles of muddy road left.....but we made it.”
-Judy Christensen, SOMA President

“Add a broken muffler and axle to the Darby damage toll, other than that, a wonderful weekend in the woods.” -Ron Bosia

“\$60 is a bargain compared to the cost of the 2 lbs. we got at Calaveras last weekend. Here is the per lb. price that we ended up paying:

\$870	Cracked oil pan
\$55	Rental car while my car was being repaired
\$40	Gas
\$15	Campsite
\$50	Food and misc expenses
\$1030	Total

This works out to about \$515 per lb. I hope to do better this weekend. Don't feel too bad for paying \$60 per lb. You got a very good deal at Andronicos:-)” - Mark Thomsen

Evergreen Road Foray (4/27-28)

“We had a great group of about 20 people out to the Evergreen area last weekend. The weather was cold and damp and we had some rain Friday night. Everyone found at least some morels, enough for a good meal or two. A few people found boletes. I think the prospects for this weekend are good, especially if it warms up a bit. Mark Lockaby checked out the creek burn, but it did not look promising. Also, the rangers say it's mostly private property. We found the morels mostly in the slash areas. No big hauls like at Darby, but at least the road's good and you don't need a 4x4” -Tina and Tom Keller

San Jose Family Camp Foray (5/3-5)

“Found only about 20 morels and 1 perfect porcini at San Jose Family Camp. I am happy with my small stash. Weather was perfect....just sparse fruiting. Thomas and Tina Keller led us to a splendid new morel spot and I discovered a spectacular ancient Stone Garden way back in the woods. We had fabulous prime rib for dinner one night and people shared great selection of wines....and a slide show of a Himalayan trek by one of the members.” (Note: David Eichorn and Jeanette Larsen).” -Lynn Marsh

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MSSF Calendar, December 2002

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Friday, December 13, Fungus Fair Set up: Set up for Fair at Oakland Museum, see volunteer specifics inside newsletter.

Saturday-Sunday, December 14-14, Annual Fungus Fair: Oakland Museum, 10-5 Saturday, noon-5 Sunday.

Tuesday, December 17: No General MSSF Meeting - See you at the Holiday Dinner instead!

Monday, January 13, 2003, Culinary Group's Monthly Dinner: 7:00 pm. Come and join us for the monthly culinary group dinner at the Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. For reservations or information, please contact Karin Roos at (510) 235-3471 or marmalade@toast.net.

Saturday-Monday, January 18-20, 2003, SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp: (Fee) Mendocino, Martin Luther King weekend, see description inside.

Sunday, January 19, San Francisco Watershed for Beginners: Meet at the end of Edgewood Road at the Phleger Gate into the watershed at 10 am., leave at 12 noon. Group is limited to 25 persons by reservations only, no infants. Call, e-mail or fax your request to the leader. No response indicates acceptance. Leader: Bill Freedman (650-344-7774, LOUFREED@aol.com).

Friday-Sunday, January 24-26, 2003, Mendocino Regional Foray: (Fee) NAMA regional foray on the Mendocino coast, Albion Field Station. Darwin DeShazer of SOMA will be the foray mycologist. A fee of \$115 includes all meals. For further informa-

Request for *Amanita phalloides* Samples

I am exploring the biogeography of *Amanita phalloides*, the death cap mushroom. I am interested to see if the American population originated in Europe, if the West Coast population derived from an East Coast population, and if *A. phalloides* is invasive in the state of California. Samples from anywhere in North America or Europe would be welcome.

I am looking for specimens with caps that are olive, yellow-olive, or yellow-white with olive hue, typically with innate darker streaks, 3.5-15 cm wide, free cream-colored gills, pendulous annulus, and thin white membranous sac-like volva.

A poster with photos may be downloaded from <http://plantbio.berkeley.edu/~taylor/ftp/Aphalloides.pdf>

Mushrooms or pieces of mushrooms may be dried at low heat. Please include a description of where, when, and under which trees you found the mushroom.

Samples may be sent to:

Dr. Anne Pringle, University of California, Plant and Microbial Biology, 111 Koshland Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720-3102. Phone: (510) 642-8441, E-mail is apringl@uclink.berkeley.edu.

tion, contact Debbie Johnson, debjean@cruzio.com, (831) 459-9530, 214 Fairmount Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062.

Monday, February 3: Culinary Group's Monthly Dinner: 7:00 pm. Come and join us for the monthly culinary group dinner at the Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. For reservations or information, please contact Karin Roos at (510) 235-3471 or marmalade@toast.net.



Photo by Dong Lin, Copyright 2002, California Academy of Sciences

Photo taken last week in China's Yunnan Province. Nine scientists from the California Academy of Sciences were participating in a research expedition. Because of a new road that was recently completed, the scientists were able to access areas of this 'biodiversity hotspot' that had never before received scientific attention. Watch for more information on this topic in future issues of *Mycena News* or visit http://www.calacademy.org/science_now/wild_lives.html.

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MSSF Calendar, December, 2002

Tuesday-Wednesday, December 3-4, Lalimes Mushroom Dinner: (See note in newsletter).

Saturday, December 7, Wild Mushroom Walk: 10 am. to noon, a foray through the Presidio, meet at the Main Post Officers' Club; directions sent with confirmation. Free, registration required call (415) 561-7752. Instructors are Bill and Louise Freedman, co-sponsored by Crissy Field Center and the MSSF.

Saturday, December 7, Nevada City Foray: The foray into the Yuba watershed will be led by Jerry Bloom and Daniel Nicholson. For details, contact Daniel Nicholson, 530-265-9328.

Sunday, December 8, S. F. Land's End Walk: Meet at 9:30 am. in the parking lot in front of the WWII monument to USS San Francisco at the north end of El Camino del Mar. To get there, take Geary Ave, which becomes Point Lobo Ave at the west end. At El Camino Del Mar, turn right and proceed to parking lot. Foray Leader: J.R. Blair (650) 728-9405, jrblair@outrageous.net.

Monday, December 9, MSSF Annual Holiday Dinner: 7 pm., Snow Building at the Oakland Zoo, located at 9777 Golf Links Road, Oakland. For information, please contact David Campbell at 415-457-7662 or yogidog@attbi.com. To reserve a place, please mail a check, payable to the MSSF, for \$30 per person to George Collier, 1535 Church Street, SF, CA 94131. (See flyer in newsletter).

Thursday, December 12, Thursday Foray for Fungus Fair: Wunderlich Park, foray leader will be J.R. Blair (650) 728-9405, jrblair@outrageous.net.

Friday, December 13, Forays for Fungus Fair: (See expanded list inside newsletter).

Huddart Park, South Bay: Leader: Wade Leschyn (wade@belmateo.net or 650-591-6616).

Memorial Park, Peninsula: Leader: Fred Stevens (fstev@dnai.com. 650-994-1374) .

Joaquin Miller Park, East Bay: Leaders: Mike Wood (510-357-7696, mwood@mssf.org) and Norm Andresen (510-278-8998, n.andresen@attbi.com) .

Santa Cruz Area: Leaders: Tina and Thomas Keller (408-879-0939, ttkeller@worldnet.att.net) .

Roys Redwoods, Marin County: Leader: Robert Mackler (510-799-6756, Rdmackler@aol.com).

San Francisco Watershed: Leader: Bill Freedman (650-344-7774, LOUFREED@aol.com) .

Salt Point State Park: Leader: Anna Moore (510-231-9584, amorel@uclink4.berkeley.edu) .

Nevada City: Venture into the Yuba watershed. Leaders: Daniel Nicholson (530-265-9328, danmadrone@yahoo.com) and Jerry Bloom (530-265-9544, luddite@jps.net).

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