
Mycena News



The Mycological Society of San Francisco March 2009, vol. 60:03

Speaker for the March
17 MSSF Meeting



Mia Rose Maltz

A Summary of the Amazon Mycorenewal Project

Mia Rose Maltz works with BioRemedies, designing and installing mycological landscapes for industrial biofiltration. She has lived in Sonoma County for ten years and is currently completing her MS from Sonoma State University. Mia has been fascinated by fungi for most of her life and enjoys studying mycology and teaching about permaculture, mycorestoration, and bioremediation. She is a practitioner

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MycoDigest: Mushrooms and the Global Economy

Peter Werner

I've always had a fascination with ethnobiology, and with ethnomycology in particular. I first entered college as a anthropology/botany comajor, with the intention of becoming an ethnobotanist, or even better, focusing on ethnomycology. The trial by fire of upper division courses in anthropology and botany taught me that I really wasn't cut out to be an anthropologist, and that at heart, I was really more of a natural scientist than a social scientist.

Still, the varied cultural use of mushrooms remains a topic of interest to me, and hence, it was with great interest that I greeted the November 2008 "Special Mushroom Issue" of *Economic Botany*. Other than Wasson's pioneering (and, in truth, overly philological) work on the subject of entheogenic mushrooms, there's a paucity of literature on the topic. The abundance of articles in this issue takes a stab at filling this gap.

The volume is coedited by David Arora, along with ethnobotanist Glenn H. Shepard, with Arora contributing a number of articles and photoessays to the volume. The issue is divided up into geographic themes, with sections devoted to articles on ethnomycology in different regions of the world.

A common theme in the articles in this collection is the emerging regulatory control of amateur and commercial mushroom gathering, how different countries handle such regulation, and the inevitable conflicts between interested parties that drive such regulation. As *Economic Botany* is an applied science journal, many of the articles have a noticeable political slant on issues of resource management, and several articles, notably by Arora, protest the overregulation of



Boletus edulis. Photo courtesy of Mike Wood and Mykoweb

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MycoDigest is a section of *Mycena News* dedicated to the scientific review of mycological information.

PRESIDENT'S POST

As many of you may have heard by now, Golden Gate National Recreation Area closed Lands End to mushroom hunting last summer (we got the word a bit late). Prior to that, Lands End was the only place on GGNRA lands that was open to mushroom hunting. Sadly, this further restricts legal places in the greater Bay Area in which to collect fungi. Parks that are legal include Salt Point State Park, Point Reyes National Seashore, and a handful of local parks. All of them have limits, so if you intend to hunt there make sure you find that out. The fines can be hundreds of dollars.

When I tell my friends and acquaintances from Europe, Russia, and even from other states about this, they are shocked. The extent of mushroom hunting restrictions seem to be higher in California than in any other state, particularly in the Bay Area. This is clearly disappointing for those of us in mushroom clubs, not only because access to edible species is limited, but also because our opportunities for educating the public and new and potential members is restricted. Another unfortunate side effect of this is that the few parks that do allow mushroom hunting will be even more impacted simply by sheer numbers of people. I've heard this concern expressed by the rangers at Salt Point—some weekends are crazy up there. As a side note, remember to observe good mushroom hunting etiquette in those parks (see page 6 in the February Mycena News—thanks to Bob and Barbara for that submission). And by NO means be MWA (mushroomers with attitude). Alienating the few park managers that do not see us as a detriment would do no one any good.

So, what can be done? Well, I'm pleased to announce the formation of a new MSSF committee: the Committee for Public Land Regulation, chaired by Eric Multhap. This committee will explore ways to work within the system to gain access to parks and park systems. This may include aiding park staff in research efforts to assess the impacts of mushroom hunting, convincing managers that limited collecting can have minimal impact, securing permits for educational forays, etc. (my thoughts, not necessarily Eric's or the committee's). If you would like to help out you can contact Eric at mullew@comcast.net.

Good hunting (wherever you can actually do it)!

J.R. Blair

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MSSF - QUICK START FORAY, SUNDAY, MARCH 15

Join members of the MSSF on a beginners' foray for members of the MSSF and their friends (who might like to become MSSF members). Using the MSSF Quick Start Guide to Mushroom Identification (to be provided), we will look for specimens in the wild and learn about the basic features of mushrooms. MSSF will offer Quick Start Forays from time to time at various locations around the Bay Area.

Part 1

Sunday, March 15, 10 am - 1 pm
San Francisco, Meet at Sunset Blvd. and Lincoln Way, on the Golden Gate Park side of the street.
See a map at <http://tinyurl.com/djfqro>

We will walk for about two hours, then gather for lunch to discuss our finds, complete the Quick Start Questionnaire, and compare our finds to various field guides.

Bring a collecting basket, a small knife, a garden trowel, a pen or pencil, bag lunch and, if necessary, rain gear. Also good to bring if you have them are field guides, wax baggies (no plastic), a magnifier, and a small camera.

Part 2

Tuesday, March 17, 7 pm
Randall Museum, San Francisco
<http://www.randallmuseum.org>

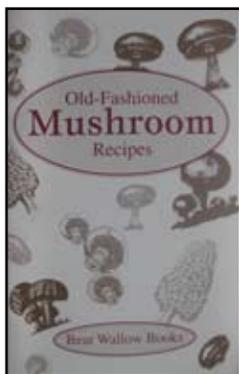
Bring your finds along with your completed Mushroom Identification questionnaire to the monthly meeting of the MSSF where you can show your finds and discuss their features with other members of the MSSF.

For more information, please send email to asun1@pacbell.net

**Deadline for the November
2009 issue of *Mycena News* is
October 15.**

**Please send your articles,
calendar items, and other
information to:
mycenanews@mssf.org**

What's Bookin'?



This month I am presenting a great new little cookbook that was discovered by Liana Hain. The title is *Old-Fashioned Mushroom Recipes*. The author is J.S. Colletter of Nashville, Indiana. It is published and printed in the USA by Bear Wallow Books of Indianapolis, Indiana. This book is just one in a collection of 36 Old-Fashioned Recipe Books.

This book begins with the basics and explores many combinations of mushrooms with vegetables, eggs, meats, and a variety of seasonings. Weather you try a comfort food like Cream of Mushroom Soup or Mushroom Meatloaf, or get a bit more ambitious and try the Sour Cream Mushroom Onion Pie or Mushroom Cheese Bread, you are sure to find some wonderful combinations among the 75 recipes for appetizers, soups and sauces, salads, breads, main dishes, side dishes and sandwiches.

This book will be available for \$5.00 at the next MSSF General Meeting. Don't forget to mention you are an MSSF member in good standing and receive your 10% discount.

I have also recently discovered a few new books that were for sale at the Santa Cruz Fungus Fair, and I am working on obtaining them for sale to the MSSF membership.

~Curt Haney
MSSF Book Chairperson

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



One of the participants in last week's beginning mushroom hike sent me this photo of the group of mostly international participants. I'm holding a *Phaeolus* to show them. These weekly hikes from November through February tend to attract participants from varied backgrounds and cultures. Many have joined MSSF at the Oakland Mushroom Fair and come on the hike to experience their first guided foray.

~Terry Sullivan
biologyhikes@aol.com



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Contributors:

J.R. Blair, David Campbell Pat George, Curt Haney, Mia Rose Maltz, Alice Sunshine, Terry Sullivan, Peter Werner

Editing and Layout:

Jeffrey Fisher

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To subscribe, renew, or make address changes, please contact Alvaro Carvajal: alvaro.carvajal@sbcglobal.net or (415) 695-0466.

Past issues of *Mycena News* can be read on-line at www.mssf.org.

MSSF Officers 2008-2009

President: J.R. Blair
(650) 728-9405
jrblair@mssf.org

Vice President: Dan Long
(925) 945-6477
danlong@astound.net

Secretary: Phil Brown
(510) 526-4325
towltek2000@msn.com

Treasurer: Henry Shaw
(925) 551-8243
hshaw@yahoo.com

In Quest of Oregon Truffles

David Campbell

Everyone around here has been saying Oregon Truffles have no flavor. Others, mostly from Oregon, tell me Oregon Truffles possess quality of the highest caliber. On a recent trip to Oregon, I attended the Oregon Truffle Festival in Eugene, where I learned plenty, and then stayed on afterward to build upon my fresh knowledge and further indulge my interest in these locally prized hypogeous fungi. My quest was to track the Oregon Truffles in their native plots, collect them, and determine for myself their culinary qualities. My quarry was a trio of seasonally available species, the Oregon White Truffle (*Tuber oregonense*), the Oregon Black Truffle (*Leucangium carthusianum*), and the relatively rare Oregon Brown Truffle (*Leucangium brunneum nom. prov.*), respectively. Each of these truffles occurs naturally, hosted in mycorrhizal relationships by relatively young Douglas Fir trees (*Pseudotsuga mensiesii*).

Europe has a different set of truffles. *Tuber magnatum*, the White Alba Truffle, the world's most expensive truffle, is predominantly used only as fresh shavings on hot pasta or eggs and such. Any actual cooking would blow away all that is so good about them, that being their essential volatile gases. It was explained to me in Italy that the world's most expensive truffle actually has no flavor, the punch line being, "It's all in the nose." Other European truffles, notably Black Perigord Truffles (*Tuber melanosporum*), have the wherewithal to combine inherent flavor with aroma, as evidenced by the broader range of treatments and recipes they inspire.

More than just the truffles themselves are different in Oregon, however, compared to what I saw on my recent truffle tour in Italy. The Oregon truffle industry, in general, drastically lacks the organization, tradition and long range vision that Italy enjoys, in which everyone—top to bottom—seems to be pretty much pulling in the same direction for the well being of the truffle industry; for now, and for the future.

Oregon truffles have been marketed for only about two decades, during which time elements of greed, anarchy and opportunism have plagued the industry. The result often being that immature and flavorless, or foul truffles are harvested and sold, with a generally unreliable quality sent into distribution, thus undermining the value that properly harvested and handled truffles would otherwise demand. By virtue of this unfortunate

history, Oregon Truffles have earned a poor reputation. Fortunately, there are currently a few players in the Oregon Truffle industry well aware of the need to instill proper quality standards for their product, people who believe they have superior, world-class truffles to offer. Their task is daunting, trying to establish worthiness against a bad reputation, but as I discovered for myself, they do indeed have some fine material with which to work.

Understanding of the product is the main hurdle for collectors, processors and consumers of Oregon Truffles. As I initially attempted to approach them, as hunter and consumer, they seemed counter-intuitive and abstruse, as unfathomable as their underground habitation would suggest. I realized I was going to need a little help from my friends in my quest. For openers, truffles buried in the ground are obviously not easy to spot, and they certainly don't just grow anywhere, or everywhere....

I was fortunate to be invited for truffle hunting with Jack Czarnecki, an accomplished truffle hunter, proprietor of the Joel Palmer House Restaurant in Dayton, and producer of a new line of authentic Oregon

Truffle infused olive oils. I originally met Jack when he was a guest speaker for MSSF many years ago. We renewed our acquaintance last November in Spoleto, Italy while attending the 3rd Congresso Internazionale sul Tartufo, thus setting the stage for getting together with him at his home in Oregon, and a pair of forays into the truffling woods.

Truffles are generally collected in Oregon by raking the forest floor. As near as I was able to discern, there's proper raking, and there's improper raking. It comes down to not damaging the tree roots in the truffle beds, and not moving so much earth that the habitat is compromised. The use of dogs to hunt truffles is just coming into vogue in Oregon, and Jack suggested to me that their black truffles may be more suitable for dog truffle hunting than their white truffles, due to their more scattered and decidedly sparser fruiting pattern, and generally larger size.

We drove to a young Doug Fir plantation and before long our rakes were earnestly deployed. Keying on rodent diggings, we gently pulled back section after section of the fir-needle duff



Oregon Black Truffles. Photo courtesy of David Campbell

layers, exposing multitudes of glowing white gems tucked neatly in the damp earth; *Tuber oregonense*. Oregon White Truffles tend to run rather small; walnut to marble to pea size seemed the norm. Their outer surface, or peridium, is fairly white when young, developing orange/brown tones with maturity. Each specimen needs to be checked for distinct firmness. Softness indicates deteriorated flesh or wrong species. Any soft or dark spots should be chased with a knife. The inner flesh, or gleba, of the Oregon White is initially white, developing marbled tan coloration as spore production ensues. When the spores are ready, the truffles broadcast odiferous attractants to incite forest varmints to come and eat them. This clever, if inelegant, basic strategy the truffles employ is all about species propagation. The truffles are eaten by the critters they attract, and those critters by others, and all the critters involved defecate randomly throughout the forest, wherever they may roam, depositing viable truffle spores as they go.

Tuber oregonense matures in late fall to mid winter, its season typically done by the end of February. The closely related Spring White Truffle, *Tuber gibbosum*, was being collected in small quantities during my early February visit, but not yet yielding mature fruiting bodies. Specimens of this truffle are sometimes collected as early as December, but *Tuber gibbosum* typically does not reach proper marketable maturity until May.



Oregon White Truffles. Photo courtesy of David Campbell

Oregon Whites are extremely aromatic. Driving around with my carton chock full of white truffles stowed in the cooler, I kept thinking I might need a gas mask for protection from the truffle fumes inside my van. I packed a smorgasbord of eggs, cheese, butter, and cream into the cooler; essential items for capturing the ambrosial “truffle fog” to the various fats for later culinary enjoyment... works like a charm.

We hunted Oregon Black Truffles the following day in a slightly more mature Doug Fir plantation. My back and hamstrings were plenty sore from the previous day's efforts; clearly I was not in shape for this surprisingly strenuous activity.... Not only were these black truffles fewer and farther between than the Oregon Whites had been, but their absolute blackness was a near perfect match for the soil in which they reside, contributing to an ongoing angst that even if I did unearth the black jewels, I could so easily miss them in the rubble I had amassed while raking the duff in search. I finally achieved limited success by plunging my hands directly into the soft earth and humus, allowing my fingers to see what my eyes could not. Back home, I had to chuckle with pride that I found only one camouflaged

rock in my precious little black truffle collection...

The *Leucangium carthusianum* season, along with *Leucangium brunneum*, spans the winter months, with collections tapering by early spring as soils begin to warm. Black Truffle specimens, as with the other truffle species, need to be carefully manicured, removing any suspect flesh, and finely excavating each insect hole to verify bad things have not happened inside.

I did not harvest any Oregon Brown Truffles, and not surprisingly, given their rarity. I was, however, able to purchase a few from Jim Wells, Oregon Truffle purveyor extraordinaire, owner of Oregon Wild Edibles, in Eugene. Cinnamon-brown with a marbled grayish interior, they emanated an aroma of profoundly ripe Camembert cheese. Served in melted butter on sliced baguette, they reminded of buttered lobster.

Truffles at the table have a knack for being subtle or elusive in one instance, then knocking one over the head the next. Jim advised I should smell each truffle in a given collection of the same species, and note how each is distinct from the other. Further, truffles in one's possession should be sniffed each day, not only to assure their well being, but also to detect the subtle developments of ripeness that progressively alter the odor/flavor profile of the specimens, and may therefore, influence one's menu plans.

Jim went on to explain there are three time-lines to consider in terms of understanding an individual truffle's 'progress'. The first, *maturation*, is a biological process that takes at least a couple of weeks, sometimes as long as 6 months, to achieve. The maturation process ensues after sporocarp (the truffle fruiting body) formation and progresses until sufficient viable spore production is achieved. Darkening of the interior flesh (gleba), resulting from tannins produced as the spores become viable, and coincident development of marbling patterns, caused by the contrast of the dark pockets of mature spores interspersed with white veins of sterile tissue, are indications of truffle maturity. Knowledgeable collectors time their forays seasonally to increase the percentage of mature truffles they will encounter.

The second time-line, *ripening*, is a process of metabolic deterioration that occurs over a period of several days, or longer. By design, truffles release fragrant gases as they ripen to attract critters to eat them. Proper ripening cannot occur

Truffles continued

until the sporocarp reaches a viable level of maturity. Truffles continue to ripen after having been harvested. Really good culinary truffles are those that have properly matured and then achieved a subjectively desired degree of ripeness.

The third progressive time-line is *age*. If properly stored, Oregon Truffles may have a shelf life of 2 or 3 weeks, dependant upon how far they were along the ripeness time-line when harvested. There comes a point, however, when they've just been around too long, and they lose their luster. Truffles that begin to sweat, or truffles losing firmness of flesh, are exhibiting senescence, and their end is near.

Proper storing entails packing the truffles inside sealed containers in clean wadding (uncontaminated cloth or paper), maintaining them at 36 to 42 degrees Fahrenheit, and giving them a daily breath of fresh air. Lower degrees in that temperature range should be employed to slow ripening, as needed. The wadding should be changed out when it becomes saturated with moisture, a natural by-product of truffle off gassing. Truffles stored for ripening should always be protected from dehydration, as that would stop the ripening process, and otherwise usurp their quality.

Cooking of truffles will rapidly exhaust desirable aromatic gases, thus, raw consumption is the norm for serving most truffles. The White Alba Truffle of Europe is typically shaved directly onto hot foods at the table, thereby gently releasing and amplifying the truffle aromas in the presence of the diners. Unlike the "Alba", however, Oregon Truffles generally have a little "body" to complement their ethers, and are, therefore, potentially suited for light or brief cooking methods, if so desired, employing techniques similar to those used in preparing the Black Perigord Truffle.

Oregon Black Truffles are surprisingly well suited for dessert applications, especially during earlier stages of ripeness, when aromas of green apple and pineapple predominate. Jim especially recommends Oregon Black Truffle whipped cream. While enjoying the Czarneckis' hospitality, we ate lots of truffles with everything, including Oregon Blacks with ice cream and cake for dessert, and I indulgently substituted them for jam on my toast at breakfast...

Back home, we did Oregon White fettuccine, and truffle infused eggs sunny-side up, gently cooked in truffle butter, with fresh shaved truffles, ala the classic Italian dish. *Molto bene...* We made crab salad with the Brown Truffles, pasta carbonara, pizza pies, and infused vodka with the Whites, topped steaks with the Blacks and Browns, had a Black Truffle risotto to die for...

All in all, I found the Oregon Truffles enigmatic, intoxicating,

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MycoDigest continued

mushroom picking in the western United States.

Arora's article "California Porcini" and Rebecca McLain's "Constructing a Wild Mushroom Panopticon" note that amateur and commercial mushroom gathering has exploded in popularity in the last 30 or so years, but at the same time clashed with an increasingly "museum under glass" approach to public land management based on overreaction and precious little science.

Arora bemoans the resulting "tragedy of no commons", where the majority of accessible public land has become closed to mushroom gathering and other types of foraging. This has turned mushroom gathering from an enjoyable public, and often family-based, foraging activity in the wilds to a largely illegal and furtive activity, and one that's less likely to be passed onto another generation. Arora blames an ideology that is openly hostile to any human utilization of protected lands (even largely human-constructed urban landscapes, such as the Monterey pine forests of San Francisco) that has come to dominate many conservation groups, as well as land management agencies, whose funding is often dependent on political advocacy by such groups. Both of these articles question whether such a degree of regulation is in fact justified given the fact that several studies have so far failed to demonstrate that mushroom foraging at all endangers mushroom populations.

In what I imagine will be a controversial statement for the mushrooming community, Arora also lays part of the blame on local mycological societies such as our own, stating that much of the prohibitive regulation we all now have to deal with has its roots in mycological societies' activism against commercial mushroom gathering in the 1980s, a move that backfired and led to the widespread prohibition against foraging on the majority of California's public lands.

As if the above wasn't enough for one article, Arora also delves into taxonomic issues around California porcini. The distinct species identity of several members of the California *Boletus edulis* group was something that had been noted in Francisco Camacho's unpublished molecular studies of the group. Arora gives these species the thorough morphological description and valid publication they've been in need of. Our *Boletus edulis* is now renamed *Boletus edulis* var. *grandedulis* (though, it still has not been definitively established whether this is a distinct taxon or simply an environmental variant), California *B. aereus* is renamed *B. regineus* (its also pointed out that *B. regineus*, is quite different from European *B. aereus*, unfortunately lacking that species flavorful and aromatic qualities), and our Sierra *B. pinophilis* is renamed *B. rex-veris*. (For discussion of Arora and Dunham's work on California chanterelle species, I refer you to

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MycoDigest continued

David Perry's December MycoDigest article ("An Old Friend Gets a New Name," *Mycena News* 59(09):1,6).

Nicola Sitta and Marco Floriani's "Nationalization and Globalization Trends in the Wild Mushroom Commerce of Italy with Emphasis on Porcini" gives a similar combination of social and natural history for the *B. edulis* complex in Europe. The authors give a very interesting history of mushrooms that have been esteemed in Italy over the centuries based on a search of early literature. Species that are rather obscure today were once highly valued, and porcini, in turn, was not quite so ubiquitous throughout Italy. In Calabria, *B. edulis* and the like were not even consumed until the 1940s, when woodcutters from northern Italy came to the area to work. Before then, *Suillus luteus* was the bolete of choice! The article also notes that Italian porcini are almost entirely consumed domestically, and any "Italian" porcini that are exported today are likely to be of Balkan, East European, or Chinese origin.

The article divides the *B. edulis* group into two subgroups, a "mesophilic" group that fruits in areas with winter rainfall and is less aromatic, and a "thermophilic" group, that is more aromatic (and somewhat more valued from a culinary standpoint) that fruits where there is a warmer rainy season. *B. edulis*, *B. pinophilis*, and, according to Arora, most California porcini species, including *B. regineus*, are mesophilic. European *B. aereus* and, according to Arora, *B. barowsii* are mesophilic porcini. The effect may be as much environmental as cladistic, as *B. edulis* proper can sometimes be more aromatic and "mesophilic" in areas that are warmer during its fruiting season.

Arora's article "The Houses That Matsutake Built," details the very real economic benefits that an internationally-linked commercial mushroom industry can bring to remote areas of the developing world. In this case, an otherwise-poor Tibetan-speaking region of Yunnan. Here, commercial mushroom hunters often make several times the regional average annual income, which in many cases has financed the building of "matsutake mansions" and spurred a diverse local economy of goods and services based upon this foundation of matsutake money.

Several other articles cover more modest commercial wild mushroom industries in several countries that primarily cater to local markets. In Central Mexico, public market mushroom vendors, typically indigenous women, sell some 60 species of wild mushrooms as food, including some like *Russula sanguinea* which most American mycophiles would think of as edible. In a pair of articles by Jim Trappe and others, the Australian and Kalahari indigenous traditions of gathering a wide variety of desert truffle species is discussed.

Gaston Guzman is best known as the godfather of *Psilocybe* systematics, but is also quite knowledgeable about the ethnomycology of psilocybin mushroom use among the indigenous peoples of Mexico. In "Hallucinogenic Mushrooms in Mexico: An Overview", he fills in some areas of Mexican entheogenic ethnomycology left blank by Gordon Wasson, detailing which *Psilocybe* species are used by which groups, and offering *Psilocybe caerulescens* as the likely candidate for at least one of the species called *teonanacatl* by the Aztecs. He also presents some intriguing reports that some native groups may use certain species of *Cordyceps* and *Elaphomyces* as a hallucinogen.

Finally, no discussion of this volume would be complete without discussion of David Arora and culinary historian William Rubel's "A Study of Cultural Bias in Field Guide Determinations of Mushroom Edibility Using the Iconic Mushroom, *Amanita muscaria*, as an Example". The article notes that *A. muscaria* can be an edible and tasty mushroom when thoroughly parboiled, and that *A. muscaria* actually has a long tradition of being consumed this way in parts of Japan, and to a lesser degree, in Europe and North America. (In a particularly fascinating account, Arora recounts that it was reportedly sold as an edible mushroom in a public market in 19th Century Washington DC.) In what is sure to be a controversial claim, Arora states that *A. muscaria* should be listed in field guides as an edible species, with appropriate caveats as to how to correctly detoxify it. He reasons that this would be consistent with the fact that many of the mushrooms we describe as good edibles, such as morels, are actually quite toxic when raw and the feared toxicity of *A. muscaria* is simply a result of cultural bias.

What I've discussed is but a handful of the articles in the *Economic Botany* mushroom issue. It represents a significant contribution to the field of ethnomycology and will hopefully serve to stimulate more work in this fascinating area. Arora's articles in particular I think are sure to touch off a number of debates. In particular, it is my hope that the articles by Arora, McLain, and others rekindle the debate on land access for foragers, and whether or not the "museum under glass" model of public lands is necessarily always the best model for sustainable use of public lands. ☘

Speaker continued

and certified teacher of Permaculture Design and a fellow of the Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy. She has taken several classes with Paul Stamets, founder of Fungi Perfecti. Mia is a co-founder of AMP, the Amazon Mycorenewal Project, and the RITES Project, a nonprofit organization focused on research, education and community development. ☘

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

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MSSF Calendar, March 2009

Monday, March 2, 2009, 7 pm, Culinary Group Dinner. As usual, we meet at the Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park, 9th and Lincoln, San Francisco. Reservations are required. For this dinner/meeting, please make your reservations with Dave Bell, 408-410-6390 or by e-mail webmaster@mssf.org. Reservations must be made no later than Friday, Feb. 27th. Our dinner will feature fish with appetizers, side dishes, dessert and coffee. Remember to bring your own tableware, favorite beverage and an appetizer to share.

Sunday, March 15, MSSF Quick Start Foray. See page 2 for details.

March 17, 2009. MSSF General Meeting. Randall Museum. 7pm, mushroom identification and refreshments provided by the Hospitality Committee. 8pm, Mia Rose Maltz will discuss the **Amazon Mycorenewal Project**.

Friday, May 1–Sunday, May 3. Annual San Jose Camp Spring Morel Foray. Cost is \$120 / person for members, \$140 for non-members, half price for children 4-12 years old, and free for children 3 and under. The fee includes a tent cabin for 2 nights, Friday dinner, all meals on Saturday, and breakfast & lunch on Sunday as well as all activities. To reserve, send checks payable to MSSF to Phil Harben, 817 South G Street,

Livermore, CA 94550. Please include an email address for reservation confirmation and follow-up details.

Truffles continued

elusive, delightful, difficult, demanding, arcane, metaphysical, and delicious... generally ever so worthy of *la grand mystique* legacy enjoyed by their European counterparts for eons. It is rather amazing that such a profound food item could only just now be coming into the spotlight here in America. As things now stand, Oregon Truffles appear conspicuously undervalued in comparison to the prices commanded by the inarguably different, yet more or less equal, European truffles.

There are two publications I would recommend for those wishing to advance their truffle knowledge. My long time friend, and world-renowned truffle expert, Dr. Jim Trappe lectured on desert truffles (a completely different set of truffles) at the recent Oregon Truffle Festival. He, along with Matt Trappe and Frank Evans, has recently published "Field Guide to Truffles of North America". It contains pertinent information on indigenous truffles of the U.S., and lots of pictures, including photos of the Oregon Truffles. Also presenting at the Truffle Festival was New Zealander Gordon Brown, one of three authors (along with Ian Hall and Alessandra Zambonelli) of the recent outstanding book "Taming The Truffle: the History, Lore, and Science of the Ultimate Mushroom." ❀