

Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association

Spores Illustrated

**FALL
2009**



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COMA FALL MEETINGS

All meetings will be held at the **Friends' Meeting House** in Purchase, NY [see directions below]. Meetings are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. and are open, free of charge, to the public. Bring samples of your fungi finds to share.

**Tuesday,
October 20;
7:30 pm**

Intergalactic Mushrooms: A Report from Telluride – The Telluride Mushroom Festival in Telluride, Colorado has been a fixture of popular culture for 29 years. The festival will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2010. COMA's David Rose will report on this year's festival in Telluride – the mushrooms, the happenings, the people, and the premier of the new documentary film, *Know Your Mushrooms*, which is taking the mycological world like a storm of swirling spores. Why is mycology becoming so popular? The Telluride festival and *Know Your Mushrooms* are part of the answer! Join us for this illustrated presentation on mushrooming in the Rocky Mountains.

**Tuesday,
November 17;
7 pm**

COMA's Year-end Banquet – Food, friends, fungi, festivity! Join us for our annual year-end banquet – a pot-luck dinner unlike any other. The COMA year-end banquet just gets better every year! All COMA members are asked to donate a dish (see flyer insert). Please join your friends and fellow mycophiles for this traditionally and inevitably enjoyable evening. Don't miss out on the fun! See you there!
See attachment or enclosed insert

Directions to Friends' Purchase Meeting House: From I-684 - Exit 2 to stoplight at Route 120 (Purchase St.). Turn right and go 1 mile to a sharp left turn (following Route 120). The Friends' Meeting House is on the left at the corner. House is on the right just before the intersection.

OUT OF SEASON MUSHROOMS: The Story of 2009 _____ by Gary Lincoff

The rains kept coming and we thought we had enough to bring the mushrooms up and keep them coming all summer. At least that's what the rain promises. So much for "All that the rain promises". Central Park measured 4.70" in April, about 5" in May, a whopping 10" in June, over 7" in July, and a measly 3.5" in August. That's over 30" in 5 months, more than enough to bring up every mushroom in tarnation.

So, where were they? Well, precipitation is just one of the conditions necessary for mushroom fruiting. Another is temperature. It was cooler than most summers, almost cold at times overnight, too cold for many summer mushrooms to fruit. As a result, despite the wet conditions few mushrooms were around when we were out looking for them. What we did find often surprised us. We found typical spring mushrooms appearing well into August, and we found fall mushrooms as early as late June. So, just what did we find, what didn't we find that we expected to find, and how do we explain all this?

For many of us morel season came and went much too quickly. They appeared early in some areas and were done by mid-May. With all the rain we expected an early onset of summer mushrooms. One of the earliest of the summer mushrooms is Mary Peck's *Russula*. We expect to see it in NYC the last week of June. This year it came up in quantity two weeks earlier. Another *Russula*, the one that stains black without first staining red, *R. albonigra*, typically flushes the last week of June. This year it didn't appear in Central Park until well into July and was the most common *Russula* the last half of July and early August. *Lactarius*, which is one of our most frequently seen genera in summer woods, and which allows us to fill our baskets with *L. hygrophoroides*, *L. volemus*, and *L. corrugis*, was almost totally absent in July, and barely present until later in August. [Further south, in West Virginia, people were picking normally huge quantities of these *Lactarius* mushrooms all through July.]

The genus *Amanita*, which is one of the most diverse and abundant genera in our area, was mostly absent this summer. Even boletes, which are a typical group of summer mushrooms, except for a flush in late June, were scarce until late August.

On the other hand, the tooth fungi were both diverse and abundant this year. *Hydnum repandum* (the Sweet Tooth or Hedgehog Mushroom) produced large and numerous fruiting bodies under hemlock in July, rather than fall when we expect to find it. A *Sarcodon*, which seems to be *S. underwoodii*, was common all summer under oaks and other hardwoods. It

looks like *S. imbricatum* but it's very bitter like *S. scabrosum*, but both of those grow with conifers. Long lines of the confluent caps of *Hydnellum scrobiculatum* were conspicuous under our summer hardwoods, hundreds even, and we rarely see it let alone in this abundance. *Hydnellum spongiosipes* was also common this summer, and we even found collections of two species of Phellodon. Hericium, the Bear's Head or Lion's Mane mushroom, which we look for in the early fall appeared over summer, as did the Northern Tooth Fungus, *Climacodon septentrionale*.

Spring gilled mushrooms, like *Conocybe lactea* (the White Dunce Cap) and *Panaeolina foenisecii* (the Lawn Mower's Mushroom) and various wood chip species of *Agrocybe* and the wood-chip loving Wine Cap *Stropharia (S. rugoso-annulata)* kept appearing in the parks into late July. Typical fall appearing mushrooms like the Big Laughing Gym (*Gymnopilus spectabilis* complex) and the Giant Puffball (*Calvatia gigantea*) and the Sulfur Tuft (*Hypholoma = Naematoloma fasciculare*) all appeared in early summer this year. Blewits and even Hen of the Woods were reported in July, even some fall *Tricholomas*, like *T. autantium* were up. The Ringless Honey Mushroom (*Armillaria tabescens*), which often flushes in huge bouquets in September, had an early August bloom.

For those who just look for summer Chanterelles and Black Trumpets, they weren't disappointed this year. July and August provided collectors with enough of both to keep them busy eating, drying and processing their harvests. Perhaps collectively we found more chanterelles and black trumpets than in any recent year.

The COMA Foray the last weekend in August must have seemed like a dream to most people. Where did all those mushrooms come from? Week after week over the summer people went out looking but not finding much. Then, kazowie!, everything appeared as it was supposed to – lots of everything – over 300 species, and the display tables were full of mushrooms.

So, what happened? Well, it warmed up. We didn't really have typical summer temperatures into the 90s and upper 80s until about the 10th of August. Then, rain or no rain, after all that late spring and early summer rain, the mushrooms followed, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Now let's see what the fall has in store for us.

By the way, for those who pick berries this was the best berry-picking year in memory. Juneberries, strawberries, mulberries, blackcap raspberries, wineberries, blueberries and blackberries. There were gallons of elderberries available for those who make wine and endless black cherries for jelly. And the harvest continues.

Clark Rogerson Foray: A Newbie's View

by JJ Murphy

A mushroom foray is typically a combination of collection and identification, lectures, educational programs, mushroom tasting and fun events.

Many mycologists who took the initiative to establish mushroom clubs for people like me to join have passed on. COMA named its annual foray in honor of Clark Rogerson who was our scientific advisor. I never knew him but am grateful to those he taught, who now teach me.

I had no idea that [Blewits](#) and [Lobster Mushrooms](#) could be cultivated. That's what I learned in the kitchen at this year's [mycophagy](#).

I did spend time in the field, despite the relentless rain. I was rewarded by finding a mushroom I really love, the Parasitic Bolete which parasitizes *Scleroderma citrina* .

(*Pseudoboletus parasiticus*):



Some amazing fungi come into the sorting room at forays, but that's not the same as finding the mushrooms in the field. I'm intrigued by the fusion of a poisonous mushroom and an edible mushroom.

My photos of *Lactarius indigo* do not show its lovely blue color. But that mushroom is on my list of what I hope to find in the field, now that I know to look where oaks and pines grow.

I'd also love to find *Astraeus hygrometricus*, another mushroom on display in the sorting room, which did not photograph well.

The sorting room is where mycologists verify the identification of every mushroom attendees find in the field. This foray was blessed with the presence of Jerry and Sandy

Sheine, Roz Lowen, Rod Tulloss, John Plischke, Noah Siegel, Leon Shernoff and many more people mentored by Clark Rogerson, Sam Ristich, Ed Bosman and people I will only get to know through their legacy of writings, drawings, photographs and mentoring skills.

It takes a lot to impress a mycologist, so I was tickled when George Johanson's find of *Asterophora lycoperdoides*, got a "nice collection" comment from Noah Siegel. This unusual mushroom parasitizes other mushrooms in the Russulales. Here it is on a blackening Russula .



I hadn't really given much thought to amanitas, but listening to Rod Tulloss has given me a new appreciation for this adaptive, resourceful genus.



Rod also taught me that mature amanitas have a protein smell, which is why he's often called when a [dog has eaten a poisonous mushroom](#).

If I understood what Sandy Sheine and Roz Lowen told me, many fungi have as much protein as beans. I never thought of mushrooms as protein before.

Back in the kitchen, I was too late to get a photo of the complete collection of Chicken Mushrooms (*Laetiporus sulphureous*) which filled the trunk of this car. Noah Siegel was running off to the sorting room with the biggest and best sample as I snapped this photo.



At a foray, each mushroom discovered is identified, its location documented and then added to the count of individuals and species collected during the foray. It's a lot like a bird count or a bioblitz. I'm all for counting the chicken mushroom. I just hope it turned up in the cooking pot while it was fresh.

The Clark Rogerson foray is embraced as a family event. Leon Shernoff's award for mushroom finds to attending children warmed my heart.

As I understand it, one of the main challenges in mycology is that while we're all running to test the DNA of every species, we are not encouraging good field identification and taxonomy techniques. The problem is that you can end up with a DNA sequence, but have no idea of the mushroom it represents.

The last day of the foray is when mycologists review the fungal finds and explain some of the features of each group of mushrooms. As Bill Yule talked about boletes, I was delighted to see an 8-year-old test a bolete for color change. These kids were not bored, they were engaged. I'm hopeful that these future mycologists will bring back the tradition of strong field identification.

JJ Murphy is a freelance nature writer, photographer, forager, and aspiring mycologist giving nature a voice at www.WriterByNature.com

Amanitas at the Clark T. Rogerson Foray—2007-2009 by Rod Tulloss

Don't get me wrong. I'm not really saying that COMA forayers have found a Siamese amanita in Connecticut. I think it would be more accurate to say that John Wheeler found a mushroom at the 2008 foray that is probably undescribed and intermediate between the U. S. Gulf Coast species, *Amanita levistriata* Dav. T. Jenkins (originally described from Mississippi) and the Thai species *A. siamensis* Sanmee et al. This undescribed species was one of the most unusual finds from all the COMA late-summer forays of which I know. The find is a first record ever of a very curious species belonging in *Amanita* section *Amanita*. The collection came from the north sector of the Salmon River State Forest in mixed woods.

In 2007, Connie Borodenko provided the wonderful discovery of a new location for the very poorly known mushroom *Amanita recutita* sensu Coker, a very strange member of *Amanita* section *Caesareae* with teardrop shaped gills, a rather small cup-like volva, and a stipe that cuts like balsa wood. Coker originally found this mushroom and photographed it in the Chapel Hill area of North Carolina in 1915. For COMA, it was a wonderful find because the mushroom had dropped out of the taxonomic literature after 1917. Now there is at least a web page for it on the *Amanita* Studies site. Connie's find was a new record for Connecticut. The associated tree appears to be an oak.

Connie shared the locality information with me; and, in 2008, I was able to collect the species again. This time there was a bonus. The fruiting body had a buddy growing right next to it—*A. cylindrispora* Beardslee originally described from Florida and previously known to occur in the Atlantic coastal plain as far north as New Jersey. The find near the Salmon River was apparently a first record for Connecticut. The stipe of *A. cylindrispora* (sometimes the entire fruiting body) occurs buried or nearly buried in sandy soil. The associated tree seems to be an oak; and the species appears to belong in *Amanita* subsect. *Limbatulae*, a grouping within sect. *Lepidella* that may, loosely speaking, have produced the ancestor to *Amanita* sect. *Amidella* (type species, *A. volvata*).

I think the discovery of material of *A. subsolitaria* (Murrill) Murrill in 2007 was a first record of that species in Connecticut. Perhaps someone will correct me on that. At any rate, this mushroom (with a long, carrot-shaped bulb, yellowish cream gills, and plenty of white floccose stuff to come off on your fingers) was originally described from Florida. Cape Cod is the most northern known site for *A. subsolitaria* as far as I know. The species was found again in 2009; it is a member of sect. *Lepidella*.



Fig. 1. Unusual amanitas from 2007-09 Clark T. Rogerson forays (left to right): An undescribed species of sect. *Amanita* similar to *A. siamensis* and *A. levistriata*, *A. recutita* sensu Coker, *A. cylindrispora*, and *A. subsolitaria*.

In the last three Rogerson forays, the count of amanitas has ranged between about 30 and

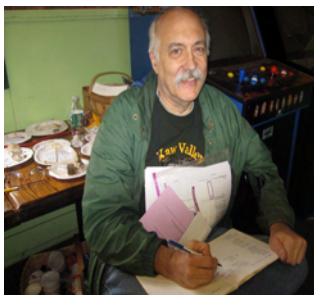
about 40 species per year. Species that appear to be new to the foray list keep appearing year after year. Undoubtedly, the extended rainy periods in the present year contributed to the diversity of material collected. Evenly distributed, frequent rains are one of the projected consequences of global warming in the eastern U.S. Maybe we are seeing some of the impact of this on local fungal diversity.

Amanita sect. *Vaginatae* is probably the most diverse section of the genus in Connecticut. However, this great diversity is masked from most collectors because of the frustrating lack of names for the taxa. How many different species get called “*A. vaginata*”? A dozen? More? Truly striking species are being collected in the *Vaginatae* at the Rogerson forays. Moreover, the set of species varies from year to year very interestingly.

In the last two years, collectors have brought in some species (I’m not sure exactly how many at this point) that have their stipe extremely deeply inserted in dark loamy soil. Apparently, in order for the mushroom to penetrate soil from a considerable depth [133 mm (5.25 inches) or more!] these species have evolved an unusually firm umbo that suggests a mountain (approximately conic with a rounded tip). This umbo reminds me of the perforatorium used by species of *Termitomyces* to “blast” their way out of concrete-like termite mounds in Africa and southern Asia. It is greatly to the credit of several COMA foray collectors that they obtained the entire stipe *and* the basal volval sac of these very large mushrooms—even though the volva appears to be very loosely connected to the stipe base in mature specimens. Felipe Wartchow (visiting from the University of Pernambuco in Brazil) and I were amazed by the size of the largest specimens of these “perforating” amanitas. I’d love to see more material of this sort extracted with the kind of care that was afforded to the best large specimens we saw in 2009.

Once again in 2009, I brought home several collections that I knew were likely to be undescribed taxa that I could not relate to past collections. This has led me to spend some time in the last few days (early September, 2009) trying to get my undescribed material from the Northeastern U.S. in better order. I think that COMA will benefit from this because, after this effort, it will make sense to put a Connecticut checklist/picturebook on the *Amanita* Studies website. This checklist will include color illustrations of (1) undescribed taxa known only by numbers, (2) provisionally named taxa, as well as (3) the described taxa that have been collected at the Rogerson foray and other forays I have attended in Connecticut going back to the early days of NEMF.

COMA continues to be a great learning experience for me. I thank all the attendees of Rogerson forays for their collecting, data, attentiveness, and informative conversations. The quality of the collecting is constantly improving...even with those “immense” species of sect. *Vaginatae* this year. What a terrific bunch of folks! Thank you! I also thank Mary Tulloss for helping me with revisions of this note.



Rod Tulloss at the Foray

Myco-Haiku

by David Rose

pulling up to the curb,
two squirrels
munching on russulas

lavender-tinged edges
of *Trichaptum biforme*,
effuso-reflexed!

gibbous moon, nuthatch
tapping in crotch of oak –
lichens and irpex

cumulonimbus
thunder and muscaria
soma towers under the pines

Baltimore side street:
Ganoderma curtisii –
the ghost of Edgar Poe



A Note on Sam Ristich

The following email was recently received by David Rose from Dr. Ronald Ward of Rockville, Maryland:

I am an entomologist who graduated from Cornell University in 1950. Yesterday, while reading the spring Cornell Alumni News I saw the death notice of Sam Ristich. I entered Cornell in the fall of 1946 as an entomology major, one of the few in this class who was not a WW II vet. The entomology department was rather small, with about 15 undergraduates and 20 graduate students who all attended a variety of entomological events with one another. During my summers, I remained at the university and became quite friendly with Sam. On the side, Sam had a project studying the behavior of digger wasps. These are rather large wasps that nest in the ground and collect various insects as food for their larvae. Sam asked me if I wished to help him in the study and I was quite honored, I recall that I spent many hours during my junior year summer labeling each wasp with different painted dots as markers and recording when the wasp would leave and re-enter the nest and identify the prey. After graduation I saw Sam from time to time at various annual meetings of the Entomological Society of America, but lost track of him after he retired. But of all the graduate students during that era, I have the fondest memories of Sam. I had no idea of his prominent role in mycology until I searched the internet earlier today. You are welcome to share this note with your members.

The following recipe, Amy's contribution to the famous chochka auction, was a great hit at the Clarke Rogerson foray.

Sweet (or Black) Birch Syrup by Amy Wan-sau wong_____

It is like preparing a cup of strong herbal tea...

1. Peel off the bark or cut up the twigs into small pieces to fit in to a pot
2. Pack the pieces tightly together
3. Pour hot water to cover the bark and twigs
4. Steep for 15 min or until it is cool enough to touch and strain
5. Add brown sugar until it will not dissolve any more
6. Keep in refrigerator
7. For every 2 L bottle of seltzer, replace 2 cups water with the syrup

*The preliminary checklist for the 2009 Rogerson foray is on the COMA website (www.comafungi.org). Many thanks to Ursula Hoffmann, our webmaster, for her extraordinary work.

*Please send in your reservation forms for the annual dinner by Oct. 15th. It is attached to this issue, or it is an insert if you have a hard copy. It can also be downloaded from our website, www.Comafungi.org.

***Membership** Please renew your membership in a timely fashion. See attachment or insert. **All membership renewals are due now.** The form is also on our website.

*Don't forget to visit Dianna's wonderful site www.fungiphotos.net. It's amazing.
Thank you, Dianna!

FORAY FOTOS



Carol Levine with wild rice



Noah Siegel and Bill Yule



Roz Lowen



Connie Borodenko and Leon Shernoff

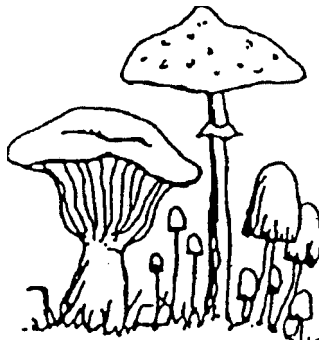


Zack at the sorting tables



Mycophagy with Joe and Kathy Brandt

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ALL RENEWALS ARE DUE NOW**

See enclosed membership Form.



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Deadline for Winter Issue December 15th