

Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association

Spores Illustrated

**SPRING
2010**



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COMA SPRING MEETINGS

Meetings at the **Friends' Meeting House** in Purchase, **7:30 p.m.** are open to the public. Bring samples of your fungi finds to all of our evening programs and we will help you with identification.

Wednesday, April 28; 7:30 pm

The Genus Leccinum – Bill Bakaitis, writer, mycology educator, and past president of the Mid-Hudson Mycological Association, will lecture on Leccinum, a popular genus of boletes. In this illustrated talk, Bill will review the macroscopic characters of Leccinum species commonly found in the Northeast and provide a flow chart to key out the genus. He will also discuss a recent case of poisoning caused by a species of Leccinum.

Tuesday, May 25; 7:30 pm

The Genus Psilocybe – Gary Lincoff, author of the popular *Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms*, will discuss some peculiarities of Psilocybe, a purple-spored mushroom genus with an out-sized reputation. Gary's exploration of Psilocybe in this talk will delve into the taxonomy, ethnomycology, and the history of spiritual and recreational uses of Psilocybe in American culture and around the world.

Thursday, June 24; 7:30 pm

What's in a Name? – Do scientific names give you a headache? Do you lie awake at night wondering why the mycologists are forever changing the names of your favorite mushrooms? COMA's David Rose will take the perplexity out of scientific nomenclature and show how to make this subject fun. This illustrated talk will analyze the names of common mushrooms that we find on our walks and review the history and current state of taxonomy of the Kingdom Fungi.

Directions to Friends' Purchase Meeting House:

From I-684 - Take 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.
From I-287 - Take Exit 8 (westbound) or Exit 8E (eastbound) and follow signs for Anderson Hill Road and SUNY Purchase. Take Anderson Hill Road to Route 120, turn left and go about 2 miles to the intersection with Lake Street. The Friends' Meeting House is on the right just before the intersection.

How to Improve Your Chances of Finding Morels

by JJ Murphy

On the way back from our COMA walk, I noticed most of the group was nowhere in sight. A few minutes later two of our members walked up behind me and said, “They found a patch of morels. It’s like a feeding frenzy.” The trail we took was easy to follow, so I knew the group would eventually catch up. But I had to wonder. What is it about morels that turns normally calm people into frenzied competitors?

The advice I’m about to share applies to every plant you remove from the forest. When heading out to the field, I always carry an extra container of sunflower seeds or granola, which I keep in the same pocket as my mushroom knife. Before I even spot my first mushroom, I take a minute to scatter some seeds or granola. The way I see it, if I’m removing a source of food from the forest, I should put something back. This may sound far-fetched, but every time I do this, I find a mushroom. Once I find a mushroom, I place a few seeds or a pinch of granola on the spot where I harvested. Needless to say, I keep finding morels.

I leave the smallest morels to grow and spread their spores. I take the largest morels I can find. Fungi are the only exception to my ten percent rule. I typically do not harvest more than ten percent of any wild plant I find. We tend to forget that the forests we visit are the homes of a wide range of wildlife. I’d be pretty upset if someone came to my house for a couple of hours, cleaned out my refrigerator and left. It’s important to think about stewardship. You want to be sure not to ravage and destroy the habitat, not only for the sake of the wildlife, but for sustainability.

The payoff has been that I find increasing numbers of morels every year. I spend time not just foraging, but sitting on a rock or downed log and really looking at the condition of the forest floor, the trees, evidence of animal trails. Instead of tossing leaves around and covering up the morels, I find that sitting quietly and really looking, studying the area from different vantage points results in larger yields. It’s great to find morels in areas where they are known to have been found in the past. But my goal is to develop the ability to “read” the earth and notice conditions that would be likely to result in finding these desirable mushrooms wherever I hike.

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



Morel Art JJ Murphy

***Mushroom World*, by Steve Roberts (2009), CD. A collection of original mushroom songs for serious (and not so serious) Mushroom Hunters.**

Exuberance is beauty said William Blake, and this charming collection of folk songs about mushrooms has both in full measure. Steve Roberts is the exuberant singer, guitarist, harmonica player, and composer. A Tennessee resident, his rhapsody on the ways of mushroom hunting captures the intimate pleasures of the moment and the full beauty of the seasons. The title song of *Mushroom World*, rooted in plaintive melody, is a down-home tribute to autumn where the circumambient tone of falling leaves, a hint of frost in the air, and fungal earthiness provoke memories of good times in the woods on the mushroom trail. Mushrooms are the common focus of all ten songs here, and the entire effect is to redirect the listener to that “other world” where the mushrooms are calling us. That other world may be a favorite bolete hunting spot, or it might just be a state of mind. In any case, here is a set of tunes whose populist vision of mushrooming is informed by long experience in mycology and music, and the result is utterly splendid.

Anyone who has had the great good fortune of hearing Steve Roberts perform at a foray knows firsthand his spirited musicianship. Like other singer/songwriters who have worked in the folk arena, he has covered a wide range of subjects from the meaning of home and family to political critique. Steve is a bluesy improviser and knowledgeable chronicler of song. In *Mushroom World* one hears elements of Bob Dylan, John Prine, James Taylor, and Neil Young, but these influences are all subtly intimated in eclectic settings. Steve has assimilated everything from Johnny Cash to the Feelies and made it his own – *and he added the mushrooms!* His accompanists, who include his wife Toni and their daughter Addie, achieve a perfect balance in a production whose clarity is sustained throughout.

Steve Roberts knows his mushrooms; in *Mushroom World* he proves that he also knows the kinds of folk who are crazy about them: myco-gypsies, Johnny Appleseed types, cock-eyed obsessives with toadstools in their beards. Where else will one hear a musical reference to *Vibrissea truncorum* (“I even found one growin’ in a stream”) but in the songs of an experienced mushroomer? The cautionary tale of *Amanita virosa* (“The Angel”) is catchy and compelling (“*it’ll fry your liver!*”), and “The Old Mushroom Road” finds violin and harmonica in delicate counterpoint to piano seeking out that melancholy moment that, deep down inside, all of us surely know. Here are exuberant songs that are kid-friendly, funny, and wholly original – a toe-tapping elegy to your favorite patch of mushrooms. *Mushroom World* is just what the world has been waiting for! The mushrooms rule and the music rocks!

Find out more about *Mushroom World* at www.myspace.com/musicbysteveroberts and via email at wildmushroomman@netscape.net.

Note to COMA members: This issue of *Spores Illustrated* is being sent in hard copies only because of the inclusion of the walk schedule and the directions to the walks. For the summer issue we will resume the electronic issues for those who prefer them.

NAMA 2010 - 50th Anniversary Foray

August 12-15, 2010, at the YMCA Snow Mountain Ranch, Winter Park, Colorado
Information at [NAMA](#) and [CMS](#) (Colorado Mycological Society)

Co-Chief Identifiers: [Cathy Cripps](#), [Vera Evenson](#)

Faculty: [Scott Bates](#), Denis Benjamin, MD, [Michael Beug](#), [Roy Halling](#), [Rick Kerrigan](#),
[Michael Kuo](#), [Brandon Matheny](#), [Michelle Seidl](#), [Jack States](#), [Walt Sundberg](#), [Rytas Vilgalys](#),
[Tom Volk](#), Nancy Weber

The [Colorado Mycological Society](#) is delighted to welcome NAMA to the Centennial State for NAMA's 50th Anniversary Foray, August 12-15, 2010. The foray will be held at the same location as NAMA's memorable 1983 foray, [YMCA of the Rockies Snow Mountain Ranch](#), 14 miles from Winter Park, high on the western slope of the Continental Divide at 8,700 feet. Nearby [Rocky Mountain National Park](#) is celebrating its 95th Anniversary this year, and at least one of our forays is planned to study fungi in that area.

If you need any more information, please reply. We hope to see you in August!

Linnea Gillman

Colorado Mycological Society

NAMA 2010

See NAMA website for information and registration forms:

<http://www.namyco.org/events/index2010.html>

COMA

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