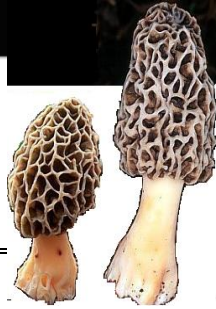


Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association

Spores Illustrated

**SPRING
2011**



President: Dianna Smith Diannasmith@optonline.net
 Vicepres. Kathy Americo (914) 737-1021
 Membership: Beverly Leffers (718) 636-6348 Morrarian@juno.com
 Treasurer: Donald Shernoff (914) 761-0332 Donshernoff@yahoo.com
 Editor: Rena Wertzner (914) 472-3575 Renawertzner@hotmail.com
 Webmaster: Ursula Hoffmann ursula.hoffmann@lehman.cuny.edu

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 20: Mycophagy with Damon Brunette – Culinary artist, mycologist, and chef Damon Brunette will place the focus on the kitchen in our first meeting of 2011. Damon will preface a cooking demo and mycophagy with information about preserving, freezing, cleaning, and braising mushrooms – preparation essentials that will let you get the most out of your mycophagous pursuits. From ideas on what shapes to cut mushrooms into to variations in cooking styles and presentation, this talk will review the essentials of how to get the most flavor from the species you collect.

Wednesday, May 25: The Natural and Cultural History of Polypores – Gary Lincoff, author of the popular *Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms* and recently released *The Complete Mushroom Hunter*, will present the “complete polypore.” Polypores suffer a share of disdain compared to morels, boletes, and truffles, yet there are a few great edibles and a lot of fascinating fungi in this ubiquitous group. Gary will explore a wide range of subjects: taxonomy, ecology, anthropology, herbalism, spiritualism, technology, paper-making, and art in reviewing the wonderful and ever-present world of polypores.

Tuesday, June 21: Mushroom Photography – Photographing mushrooms in the field can be an invaluable tool for learning about them. COMA President Dianna Smith, an accomplished photographer and videographer, will review cameras and photography in relation to the mushrooms we find. With the plethora of digital cameras with automatic and advanced capabilities, it should be easy to photograph fungi (after all, our subjects stand still for us). But why do some shots turn out poorly? Dianna’s illustrated presentation will focus on common pitfalls of mushroom photography and provide the technical knowledge and eye for aesthetics to help you take much better photos.

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.

Review of *From Another Kingdom*

Lawrence Millman

From Another Kingdom: The Amazing World of Fungi. Edited by Lynne Boddy and Max Coleman. 2010. 176pp. Edinburgh: The Royal Botanic Garden. 20 pounds.

American mycologists often seem to be so mired in the S.O.S. (Same Old Sequencing) that they've lost sight of any world beyond their immediate barcoding tables. Not so their colleagues abroad. Consider *From Another Kingdom: The Amazing World of Fungi*, published as a companion to the exhibition of the same name by Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden.

Accompanied by large format photographs, the book contains chapters on (among other subjects) fungal biology, fungal chemistry, fungal recycling, fungal conservation, and fungal monsters in science fiction. Each of its contributors is UK-based- Roy Watling, Harry Evans, and David Minter are among the more prominent names. If you turn to the book's index, you'll find five times more references to fungal interactions with insects than to DNA-based fingerprinting. A quite salient fact!

Granted, *From Another Kingdom* is designed for the non-specialist. In fact, it's one of the most user-friendly introductions to the world of fungi I know. Yet it's also a book that the specialist can enjoy, indeed learn from. For instance, how many mycologists are familiar with *Zeus olympius*, a small ascomycete found only on, appropriately, Mt. Olympus in Greece? The species is very rare, and in the words of David Minter, "vulnerable as the known colonies are near picnic sites and recreational trails." Dr. Minter argues passionately for its protection.

Words and phrases like "protection," "endangered," "conservation," and "climate change" occur throughout the book. In conjunction with them, several of the authors reiterate the crucial need for mycologists with field identification skills. Dr. Minter says: "To conserve fungi, it is first necessary to conserve mycologists." He goes on to recommend that mycology be "treated as a discipline of the same rank as botany or zoology." Lest you scratch your head at this statement, I should indicate that the Linnean Society, the oldest biological society in the world, still formally recognizes only animals and plants.

One of the chapters in *From Another Kingdom* is called "Fungi and Humanity." This could easily be an alternate title for the book itself. Urgently recommended to anyone with the slightest interest in fungi.

This review is reproduced, with permission, from the Boston Mycological Club Bulletin, Volume 66.

Note to COMA members: This issue of *Spores Illustrated* is being sent only as a hard copy 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.

Know Your Trees




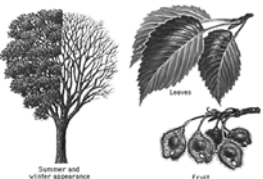
By Stephanie Scavelli



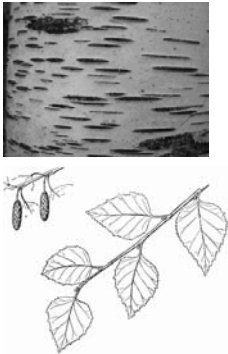
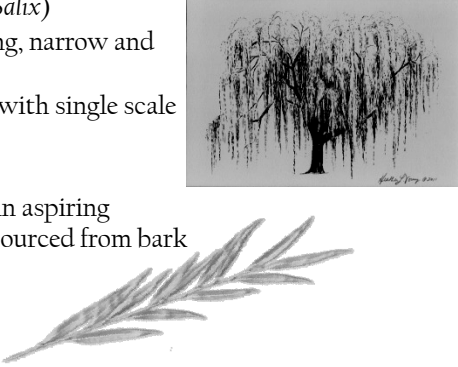


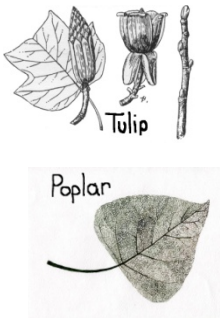

<http://stephaniescavelli.wordpress.com/>

This semester at Mushroom University Gary Lincoff is teaching about polypores. We often find our polypore friends growing on wood, serving the important ecological role of breaking down wood in the forest. By digesting the lignin and cellulose in wood, polypores help make nutrients stored in the trees available to soil life for further digestion. In this way, polypores aid in perpetually recycling nutrients within the ecosystem. Polypores prepare food for soil microbes similarly to human fermenting food before ingestion to make the extraction of nutrients easier for our intestinal flora.

We learned that the type of tree where the polypore is found, whether on a conifer or a hardwood, provides a basis for identifying the polypore. To clarify, Gary references “anything that is not our evergreens” as hardwoods, and our needle bearing trees and evergreens as conifers. Therefore, in learning polypores, as with other mushrooms, it is essential to know our trees.

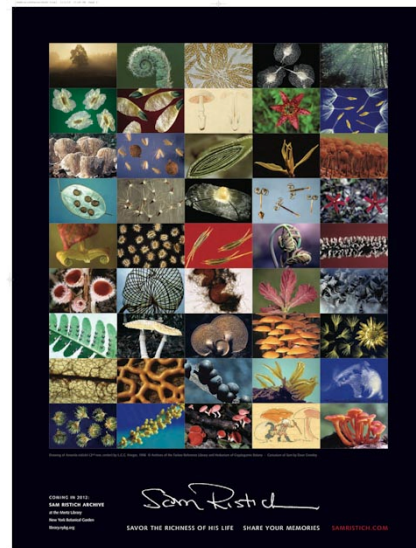
I have compiled a list of conifers and hardwoods to familiarize myself with this growing season. This list was created based on surveying knowledgeable friends about important trees to know in this area. I was also reminded that as wonderful as it is to know my trees, it is equally important to know how to properly use my field guide for accurate identification. Hence, two tree identification guides I recommend are *Trees and Shrubs* by George A. Petrides of the *Peterson Field Guides* series and *The Sibley Guide to Trees* by David Allen Sibley. Here I provide a description of twelve hardwood trees with a description of conifers coming next issue.

HARDWOODS	
<p>Maple (Genus: <i>Acer</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only tree with opposite 3 to 5 lobed leaves • Produce seed pods called “keys” • Types: Sugar, Black, Red, Norway and Silver 	<p>Cherry (Genus: <i>Prunus</i>)</p> <p>Leaves mostly single-toothed, oval with long pointed tips and glands on leafstalk</p> <p>Peculiar almond scent of broken twig</p> <p>Bark marked with numerous cross streaks</p> 
<p>Oak (Genus: <i>Quercus</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All produce acorns and have true end buds clustered at twig tip • Red (Black) Oaks: leaves usually bristle-tipped with pointed lobes and acorns that sprout in Spring • White Oaks: leaves usually with rounded lobes and acorns that sprout in Fall 	<p>Elm (Genus: <i>Ulmus</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves mostly feather veined a double-toothed with leaf base uneven or somewhat heart-sha • Bark greyish with vertical, base-weave-like ridges • Small seed surrounded by flat, wing 

<p>Apple (Genus: <i>Malus</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves usually egg-shaped, slightly toothed edge and white to grey-wooly beneath • White to pinkish blossoms in April to June, fruiting September to November 	<p>Sycamore (Genus: <i>Platanus</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 to 5 lobed, broad palmate leaves • Distinctive bark, irregular patches showing light green to whitish beneath • Most massive tree of Eastern US • London Planetree tolerates urban environments 
<p>Birch (Genus: <i>Betula</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves mostly double-toothed • All have conspicuous male flower catkins in early spring • Often white trunks in clumps with slender twigs • White Birch: white or bronze-red bark that peels in papery sheets • Sweet Birch: darker and rougher bark with bruised twigs of wintergreen or root beer odor 	<p>Willow (Genus: <i>Salix</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves mostly long, narrow and toothed • Distinctive buds with single scale (hood) • Multiple trunks • Main ingredient in aspirin (salicylic acid) sourced from bark 
<p>Beech (Genus: <i>Fagus</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All have smooth, light-grey bark like elephant skin and very long pointed buds • Leaves coarse-toothed and egg-shaped • Twigs encircled by stipule scars at each leaf scar • Often retain straw-colored leaves in winter 	<p>Locust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth-edged, egg-shaped, alternate, compound leaves; leaflets may even be compound • Bark with vertical ridges or vertical ski-trails • Seeds forms in long bean pods • Black Locust (<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>) has white, showy pea-like flowers 
<p>Poplar (Genus: <i>Populus</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toothed, mostly triangular leaves with 3 to 5 main veins meeting at base; long leaf stalk • Bud scale sits directly above leaf scar • Five types: white poplar, aspens, cottonwoods, balsam poplar, and swamp cotton wood • Yellow Poplar (Tulip-tree) is not a close relative of Poplars 	<p>Ash (Genus: <i>Fraxinus</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only tree with opposite, feather compound leaves • Types: White, Green, and Black 

MYCOLOGY WEBSITES TO VISIT-----*Dianna Smith*

In addition to his valuable contributions to the NEMF website (www.nemf.org), Gary Lincoff, author and educator, now has created his own website: www.garylincoff.com. It is exceptionally informative and updated frequently. Also, don't forget to consult our web site www.pbase.com/comafungi for lists documenting the fungi found on each scheduled walk as well as representative photos. Please promptly send me your photos from each walk and I will post the best online. And check in on www.fungiphotos.net for fungi education, articles by Bill Bakaitis and links to most of the best mushroom websites.



<http://SAMRISTICH.com>

A new website dedicated to the life and work of naturalist Sam Ristich has been created by his musician, filmmaker, and designer daughter Ruthie. A colorful poster with a selection of Sam's photographs is available for sale (18"x24") for your home, office, or classroom. The website also includes information on the archive being organized by David Rose, an interview David conducted in 1998, links to all the mycology clubs, conservation groups, and a link to the Sam Ristich Nature Trail. The interactive 'share' page allows you to place an iconic marker anywhere on earth and write an accompanying "Sam memory" to post for all to see. Please visit soon and share your stories

For more information please contact Ruthie at ristich54@gmail.com

FUNGI IN THE NEWS:

Do-It-Yourself Mushrooms

In a quiet corner of Bushwick Brooklyn, a half-hidden community garden sits at the corner of Linden Street and Broadway. On any week-end one is likely to find Kendall Morrison, 47 years old and semi-retired from the publishing business, in a shady grove of silver maples, cultivating eight varieties of mushrooms.

We might not be able to tell right away what Mr. Morrison is doing. He may be wielding a hand drill--boring holes into a salvaged oak log--or he may be pounding inch long dowels into the wood with a mallet, each little peg impregnated with shitake mushroom spawn.

“We started right around November,” Mr. Morrison said, referring to his 15 volunteers, “and we haven’t stopped. As long as we can work back there, we worked, even when there was snow on the ground.”

There are perhaps 200 billets now, stacked like Lincoln Logs. While the wood sits impassively, as logs will do, long strands of mycelium, are infiltrating the grains and starting to decompose it. Later this spring and in the fall, the logs should flush with fruiting bodies where the spawn went in. The reward is about a pound of edible mushrooms per log.

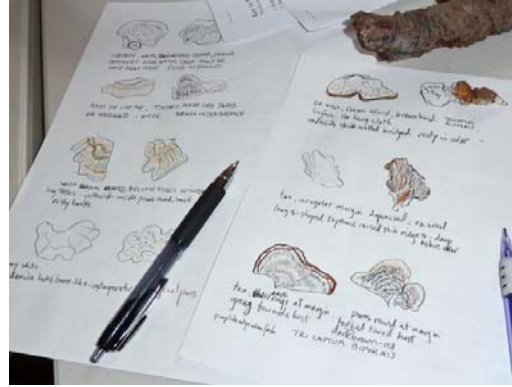
Mr. Morrison hopes to distribute this harvest to his many helpers, and his non-profit group, EcoStation: NY, will be selling to neighbors who drop by the Bushwick Farmers’ Market held at the garden from May through Thanksgiving. More mushrooms are growing in burlap sacks stuffed with wood chips. There are 250 of these bags stacked three feet tall that snake around the garden pathways.

If small-scale mushrooming is indeed a movement, Mr. Morrison seems to have a growing number of comrades nationwide. “Plug spawn sales are increasing dramatically,” said Paul Stamets, a prominent mycologist and founder of Fungi Perfecti, the Washington State company from which Mr. Morrison orders many of his spawn and supplies. “Mushroom kit sales are increasing at maybe 24 percent per year for the last three years.”

Mr. Stamets attributes this new popularity to the magic of mushrooms. The mushrooms, seemingly invisible erupt into view in a few days. Some mushrooms can break through concrete and some form fairy rings. People are curious about this.

New cooking shows and food magazines are very popular and new farmer’s markets are increasingly appealing to people interested in healthy eating.

Adapted from an article by Michael Tortorello, *New York Times*, 4/14/ 2010

MUSHROOM U 2011, by Dianna Smith*Robin Burkhardt's polypore notebook*

For the past six winters on alternate Saturdays from late February to mid-April, our mentor, Gary Lincoff, has committed to teaching us mycology. In past years we have tackled boletes; russulas; lactarius and even LBMs. This year we are concentrating on polypores. Because our seminars are in the dead of winter, we typically don't have specimens to examine. Instead we study from field guides, monographs and photos. We are still learning that way, but because so many polypores and crusts are visible throughout winter, we have stacks of material to work with. I say "stacks" because at least one table is home to delicately balanced multi-layers of Chinese take-out containers filled with specimens, lovingly collected mainly from Gary.

Our workshop has 24 COMA members in it, including Gary and his wife Irene. Many of us, like Diane Alden, Rena Wertzer, Ursula Hoffmann, Mayia Mileva, Karen Spiak, Stephanie Scavelli, Mike Arkins, Kathy Americo, Zaac Chavez, JJ Murphy, Peter Russell, Jennifer Hansen, Lisa Rerinitz and I are in our second, third, fourth, fifth or sixth year of MU. New to the class in 2011 are veteran COMA members like Lou Tartaro, as well as newest members Robin Burkhardt, Carol and Allen McLeod, Walter Kolbiaka, Sonia Smith, Dorothy Shergalis, Yvonne Lynn, Paul Sadowski, and Claude Martz. Both Paul and Claude from the NYMS joined our club this year just to be part of this year's program.

Participants join COMA's Mushroom University for a variety of reasons: Walter Kolbiaka has had an interest in medicinal mushrooms and wants to learn more about the well-documented medicinal characteristics of polypores. Sonia Smith, like Carol and Allen McLeod, is a beekeeper and gardener. All three have an abiding respect for and interest in nature and by extension in mycology. Ursula Hoffmann, who has been a student of MU since its inception, is here because she adores Gary as a teacher and promises to be a continuing student as long as he is willing to be our professor. Like everyone else, JJ Murphy is here because she wants to deepen her understanding of mycology in general, and polypores in particular. She credits the friendliness of COMA members as the initial impetus for her interest in studying mushrooms. Mycorrhizal mushrooms and their interaction with trees fascinate Stephanie Scavelli. She also wants to learn more about polypores. Mike Arkins' passion for learning about mushrooms was the discovery of numerous giant puffballs. Since then his interests have gradually evolved to include inedible mushrooms. Mike aims to know everything so that perhaps some day he can go on Jeopardy and beat the likes of champion Tim Jennings. On questions related to mycology. I'll put my money on Mike!

Amazingly, COMA's Mushroom University is in its sixth year. It all started with a plan to offer members a chance to deepen their understanding of mycology and to encourage them to become comfortable identifying the mushrooms found on our walks. Our workshops take place at my home from about 9:30 am to 2:00pm when the dining room/living room are transformed with the setup of four long tables surrounded by 24 chairs. In addition to the lectures, discussions and slide presentations, the other highlight is lunch. Everyone brings a favorite dish and we all feast on everything from salads to walnut pie! Next time we meet we plan on going together to a local forest to see how many different things we can identify.



Some of the things we are learning: When looking for fungi on wood, take along binoculars, a hand lens, a camera, and a knife. While most polypores have pores, some have ‘gills’, some have a maze-like pore surface, some have tooth-like spines, some are jelly-like, and at least one looks like a bird’s nest. Most polypores are saprotrophs or parasites, but some are mycorrhizal. If you want to know more, shadow a Mushroom University student on our walks this year and ask questions. Join the fun next year!

LATE SUMMER FORAYS

The first weekend in August is the date for the NAMA foray in western Pennsylvania (www.namyc.org). The second weekend in August is the NEMF Foray in the Adirondacks (www.nemf.org). Check out both of these sites for detailed information on the exact dates, location, faculty, program offerings and registration forms. They both promise to be spectacular fun with tons of mushroom species to collect and identify including many walks, lectures and workshops.

COMA’s Clark Rogerson Foray is changing its location this year from *Cave Hill Family Resort* to *The Hemlocks*, mainly because the price for staying there, including food, is \$80 less than what we paid last year at Cave Hill. We hope that all of our members will take advantage of the price reduction and sign up now to join us from Friday Sept. 2nd to Monday, Sept 5th. Our awesome faculty consists of Chief Mycologist Gary Lincoff, Roz Lowen, Rod Tulloss (and his grad student), Leon Shernoff and Noah Siegel. Gary is author of the ‘Audubon Guide to Mushrooms of North America’, ‘The Complete Mushroom Hunter’ and other publications. He is also an instructor at the NY Botanical Gardens and Mushroom University. Roz Lowen is an ascomycete specialist, author and educator. Rod Tulloss is a renowned expert on amanitas. Leon Shernoff is a writer as well as editor of ‘Mushroom the Journal of Wild Mushrooming.’ Noah Siegel is well-known for his mushroom photography and identification abilities. Plan on joining us for our friendly foray over Labor Day weekend. You will be amazed at how much fun COMA forays are, and by how much you can learn over four days with a faculty of this caliber. A registration form is included in this issue and is also available at our website, www.comafungi.org.

Get *Wild* at The Wild Center

For those of you who are planning to attend the Northeast Mycological Federation (NEMF) foray August 11-14 at Paul Smith's College in the Adirondack Mountains, there's a nearby attraction that shouldn't be missed – *The Wild Center*. The Wild Center is the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks, and it's located right in the heart of the Adirondacks, its geographical center, in fact. Located in the town of Tupper Lake, the Wild Center is nestled in a rolling landscape with an adjacent pond (lapping directly against the museum building) and several acres of woodlands that slope downward to vistas that overlook an expanse of marshlands and meandering waterways. The museum and the park surrounding it hold many attractions, all very children-friendly, and the museum itself is a "green museum," incorporating the idea of sustainability directly into its design and programs.

The Wild Center museum features exhibits of wild animals (otters and reptiles) and presents an excellent overview of the natural history of the Adirondack region from geological and biological perspectives, including an exhibit of mushroom models that are fairly unique in museum programming. Everyone knows that mushrooms are often overlooked and neglected in museum exhibits, but the Wild Center appreciates the fungi, and the mushroom models on display are conspicuous and true-to-life. There are plenty of fungi to be found in the surrounding woods as well. For more information on the Wild Center, see its web site at www.wildcenter.org to learn more about the full range of exhibits and educational programs. If you're attending the NEMF foray in August, a short side trip to the Wild Center is definitely worth considering.

March 6, 2011 / David Rose / Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association (COMA)

Note to Walk Leaders: As a condition of COMA's insurance policy all walk visitors (non-COMA members) are now required to fill out and sign a membership application for each walk that they go on. They have seven days to submit the form with their membership fee, or they can choose within that time to reject the opportunity. Therefore, as a walk leader, you will need to have on hand for your scheduled walks both the waiver or responsibility form and several membership forms. You can download both forms from our website at www.comafungi.org. Please remember to put them in your car. It is a little extra work, but it is important that we do not forget to follow these procedures.

Inserts in this Issue:

**2011 Walk Schedule
Directions to Walks**

2011 COMA Foray Registration Form



COMA
8 Coralyn Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583

