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The Potomac Sporophore

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What's the ideal temperature for storing mushrooms? See page 3.

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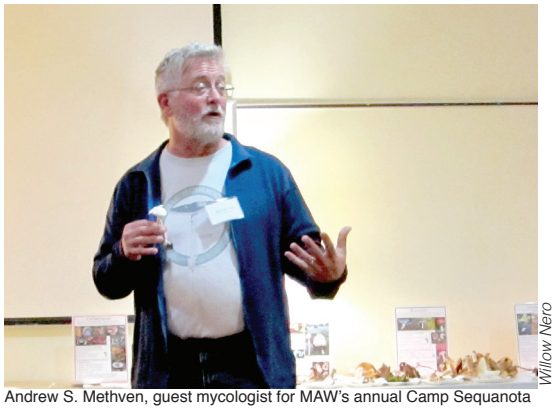
Sequanota Brings Lactarius News



Willow Nero

Andrew S. Methven, guest mycologist for MAW's annual Camp Sequanota foray, holds up an amanita.

Willow Nero
Sporophore Editor

Andrew S. Methven from Eastern Illinois University joined MAW as guest mycologist for the club's annual Camp Sequanota foray Sept. 26-28 near Jennerstown, Pennsylvania. Foragers were disappointed by the dry weather and sparse fungi, though at least 100 species were found and identified.

Methven's Saturday night lecture introduced foray participants to some members of the Russulaceae family in the genera *Lactarius* and *Lactifluus* and clarified some species that have changed.

Possibly the biggest revelation for foray attendees is that the mushrooms many have known as *Lactifluus volemus* (or *Lactarius volemus*, the beefsteak milky, or "bradley") *Lactifluus corrugis*, and *Lactarius hygrophoroides* are getting new names. Phylogenetic analysis reveals each of these well-known species might actually encompass three species.

"You all think you know *Lactarius volemus*, don't you," Methven said. "And that's part of the problem when we opened up this can of worms. When we opened up the genie in the bottle and let the DNA out, some of us wish we could put it back. Our lives were a lot easier before that happened."

The good news is *Lactifluus corrugis* holds together fairly well. *L. volemus* might only be found in Sweden and Russia, so the U.S. version would need a new name — or several names. If you've often been stumped and unable to tell *L. corrugis* apart from *L. volemus*, there's good news for you, too: There may be a natural hybrid between *L. corrugis* and *L. volemus*, Methven says.

During the table walk-through Sunday, Methven often gravitated toward the edible mushrooms, even though, he said, "I find as time goes on, I eat fewer and fewer mushrooms."

He quizzed

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From Field to Fridge and Beyond: Handling Fungi

Ray LaSala
MAW Member

Let's say that somehow you've found and correctly identified a nice patch of your favorite mushrooms. Now that the hunt is over, you've still got to harvest them, get them home, store them for later use, and get them ready for cooking in good condition or else all your efforts will have been for naught.

There are two ways to harvest mushrooms — cutting, and plucking. Cutting means harvesting the mushroom by severing it just above the base from the mycelium that produced it; plucking means detaching the entire fruiting body from the mycelium with the entire base intact. The rationale for cutting is it leaves the dirty base behind and doesn't disturb the mycelium; the rational for plucking (and subsequently cutting off the dirty base) is it's faster and easier. I'm a plucker. The evidence has not shown plucking the entire fruiting body harms the organism more than cutting it off close to the ground, as if something had chomped it off, as long as the duff or other surface covering the mycelium is replaced as it was. So I say, gently separate the fruiting body from the mycelium, and then cut off the dirty points of attachment. I like to break the connection between mushroom and mycelium by getting my fingers around the

George Chernilevsky

This basket of ceps (*Boletus edulis*) has been field-cleaned and is ready for transport, storage, and drying or cooking.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1 base of the stem and then gently rocking the mushroom as I lift it. Mushrooms that grow in grass, such as pink bottoms and shaggy manes, are often somewhat embedded in the ground and won't detach easily; those I remove by sticking the blade of my knife underneath them at a shallow angle with the flat part of the blade parallel to the ground and levering them up and out of the ground. Sometimes polypores such as hen-of-the-woods are so big and well-entrenched that the only way to get them is to work a knife down to the points of attachment and then slice along the surface of the substrate, freeing the mushroom in one or more pieces. Tip: turn golden chanterelles upside down to remove them more easily from grassy litter; that way they present a more streamlined surface that is less likely to get snagged.

abejorro34
Store mushrooms like a professional: Choose a shallow, permeable container.

I like to keep my knife attached to my belt by a spring-loaded retractable key chain called a Key-Bak (available at hardware stores). That way, it's always handy but can't get lost.

I almost always remove the dirty bottoms of the stems and other such parts before I put mushrooms in my bag or basket, because otherwise that dirt could be transferred to clean surfaces and complicate cleaning later on. There are a few exceptions: Milky beefsteak mushrooms exude a copious amount of sticky, fishy-smelling white latex that makes a mess of anything it touches. The cuticle of the cap and stem is so dry and impervious that dirt won't adhere to it, and cutting the bottoms off would release that horrible latex. I also leave tight shaggy mane buttons intact until I get them home because there's so much meat in the deeply rooted base. Once home, I use a vegetable peeler to shave off the skin because the dirt is embedded in it and will not simply wash off. If you do pluck and field-clean, for heaven's sake don't leave the detritus in an ugly little garbage heap. It's disrespectful of the natural environment and reveals the location of your patch. Instead, strew the trimmings into the woods where they won't be noticed, or cover them up.

Mushrooms can give off a lot of humidity, especially if it's a hot day or if they're wet. It's important not to trap that moisture with the mushrooms because it promotes decay and causes dirt to adhere to them. Therefore, they should be carried in a container made of breathable material that allows water vapor to pass through it freely and escape. Don't pile fragile mushrooms such as pink bottoms more than 3 to 4 inches deep or the ones on the bottom will get crushed by the weight of those above them and will not be able to breathe, although cardboard spacers placed horizontally between layers will allow deeper piling. This holds true when you get them home, too.

In general, the less mushrooms are jostled, the better. Getting shifted around tends to damage mushrooms. To help protect them, keep them in something that is fairly rigid without being so hard as to bruise the surfaces of the mushrooms making contact with it. A wide, flat, shallow shape is preferred as it will hold the mushrooms without piling them too deep. Cardboard boxes are good, but they are awkward to carry. Brown paper shopping bags are OK in dry weather, but they tend to fall apart when they get wet (from wet mushrooms or the wet ground). The worst of all is to carry mushrooms in a plastic bag, which is neither rigid nor breathable.

Baskets with a loop handle over the top are traditional for carrying mushrooms, and they work pretty well because they are rigid and easy to carry. They are very breathable if woven from wicker or other natural materials or molded from plastic with lots of cut-outs. I've even seen a very nice foldable design that uses an aluminum frame and woven synthetic fabric. But baskets can allow a lot of jostling and, even worse, spillage unless protective measures are taken. Wrapping specimens in paper or a semi-rigid paper bag before putting them in the basket will help prevent jostling. Wax paper works very well for this; newspaper is also good, but it's too breathable for long-term storage. When I use a basket, I like to make it even easier to carry by fitting it with a shoulder sling so I can have both hands free for picking.

My favorite means of carrying mushrooms while picking is decidedly different. I use a crisp brown paper shopping bag with the top folded down by about one-third so it just fits inside a plastic shopping bag. This system works well even though it's relatively tall and narrow rather than shallow and wide like a basket. The paper bag is fairly rigid and does a decent job of immobilizing the mushrooms; the plastic bag protects the paper bag from getting wet and has handles, making it easier to carry. When the paper bag gets filled, it can be lifted out of its plastic sheath, placed in a cardboard box with other bags for transport home, and replaced with a fresh empty one.

Leave No Trace

The U.S. Department of Agriculture encourages mushroom hunters against leaving holes in the duff. It dries out the fertile ground underneath — and reduces mushroom fruiting. After picking or looking more closely at a mushroom, always put the duff back when you're done. Hide mushroom trimmings under the duff.

Be sure not to rake the duff to look for mushrooms — it's damaging to the mycelium.

I think it's a good idea to keep the different species of mixed collections separate. However, if you know that you're going to cook them together, you might as well not bother. There is one absolute rule: NEVER put toxic or unidentified mushrooms together with edibles. It's a good idea to go over your collection a second time when you get home to make sure no bugs, slugs, or misidentified specimens have sneaked into your basket. Especially if you're a novice, save a complete specimen to confirm your identification — in case

there's a problem later on — and try to get a spore print.

You can sort the mushrooms into separate bags according to species, size, or stage of development (e.g., buttons, fully expanded, larger, smaller) as you pick them (just set up several bags in the basket or larger bag) or when you get them home and you're picking them over. Uniformity makes for better preservation and cooking, and it looks better, too.

Keep the mushrooms in a breathable container as cool and dry as possible (and out of the sun and rain) until they can be refrigerated. Cardboard boxes work well for this purpose. The lids from copier paper boxes are perfect for this, as are the flats that 1-liter soda bottles come in.

I also like to use cardboard boxes for storing mushrooms in the refrigerator, with a second shallow box inverted as a lid (or brown paper, newspaper, or wax paper if a cardboard lid is not available). Fresh brown paper bags also work well this way, although they allow moisture to escape a bit too quickly. It's OK and even a good idea to brush dry dirt off mushrooms before refrigerating them, but do not wash them until just before use. Keep them at a temperature just above freezing, 34° to 38° F or so, but do not let them freeze or else their tissue structure will be damaged. Most types will keep under these conditions for a week or so as long as they're not wet; polypores can last this way for two weeks or longer. Do not store mushrooms at room temperature or outside unless the temperature is within this range and they are covered and out of the direct sun; otherwise they will not keep longer than overnight. Do not keep them in a cooler for more than a few hours; even with ice packs, the temperature is not low enough, and the lack of air circulation will not allow their moisture to escape.

It's especially important that mushrooms not be enclosed in an impervious container such as a plastic bag while they are warmer than the temperature of their surroundings (as when first placed in the refrigerator), or else the water vapor they give off will be trapped and condense inside it, wetting the mushrooms. However, once they are thoroughly chilled (after several hours), they can be transferred to a lidded cardboard box, a breathable rigid container surrounded by a plastic bag, or even (as a last resort) a lidded rigid plastic container lined with paper towels, to keep them from losing too much moisture.

Several types of mushrooms need special treatment. I'll discuss them as well as how to clean and prepare mushrooms for cooking in the January *Sporophore*.

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Correction:

The January 2012 article "Mycological Survey of Woodlawn Plantation" by Larry Goldschmidt did not name survey participants Danny Barizo and Connie Durnan. Additionally, Jon Ellifritz helped write the article. We regret these omissions.

Determine MAW's Direction for 2015

Bruce Boyer
MAW President

Elections to positions on the MAW Board of Directors are coming up in December. That might seem like a long time from now, but the Nominating Committee has been assembled and would like your ideas about the directions the club should take, as soon as possible.

The board meets only four times a year, developing policy and coordinates upcoming events. Ten elected officers whose duties are spelled out in the MAW Articles of Association, March 1994 (By-Laws) are potentially up for election this year (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, culinary chair, newsletter editor, foray chair, membership chair, program chair, and NAMA trustee). Incumbents are listed at left.

Nominating Committee Members

☐ Bruce Boyer, bruceaboyer@cox.net, (703) 863-9633

☐ Heidi Kiene, hkiene@gmail.com, (202) 415-3469

☐ Martin Hindel, mhindel@gmail.com, (301) 222-7215

In addition, nine positions described in the by-laws are not nominated or elected at the annual elections. They are (incumbents noted): scientific advisor (Drew Minnis), car pool coordinator, digestor, hospitality (Karen Adams), library (Fred Seymour), media, market basket, mushroom display, and photography. Although these position titles are mostly self-explanatory, each of the Nominating Committee members (listed above) can discuss the duties of each position in more detail. We are also interested in listing those people interested in helping the elected Board Members fulfill their responsibilities, so please let us hear from each of you.

The committee is required to present an initial slate of recommendations at the meeting Nov. 4. If you would like to serve in any of the elected positions, or if you know someone who is a MAW member in good standing that you think would make a good board member, please contact one of us.

Meeting File

Aug. 5 — Tovi Lehman Describes Some Common Mushrooms and Their Mycorrhizal Partners

Tovi Lehman, a scientist with the National Institute of Health and a MAW member spoke at the monthly meeting Aug. 5 about why some mushrooms grow in relation to particular species of trees or on certain substrates, including dead trees.

Lehman invited the audience to engage in observing fungi in their natural habitat, and explore and understand their fascinating life cycles.

Danny Barizo

Tovi Lehman talks about common East Coast mushrooms and the trees they grow alongside.

Sept. 2 — Galerina Enthusiast Anna Gerenday Searches for a Long-Lost Swamp Mushroom

Willow Nero
Sporophore Editor

Many amateur mycologists hope to stumble across a new mushroom in the field, but the majority acknowledge the low odds of such a serendipitous find. Anna Gerenday, MAW's guest speaker for the Sept. 2 monthly meeting, took a different approach — and she's still looking for a "new" *Galerina*. In her studies, she carefully read up on sphagnum-loving galerinas, ensuring she fully understood the literature, not only the portions she needed to cite. And lo and behold, one mushroom in the literature stuck out: *Galerula lasiosperma* Atk. In Gerenday's presentation, "Searching for *Galerula Lasiosperma* Atk: A Mushroom Cold Case," she traced her steps, illustrating the possible gap in knowledge dating back to 1917 and inviting MAW members to join her to find the elusive bog mushroom.

The Sherlock Holmes story starts with Gerenday, an amateur mycologist from Minnesota with a background in mathematics and chemistry, studying sphagnicolous galerinas, particularly *Galerina tibiicystis*. Gerenday took a trip back in history to read what A.H. Smith and R. Singer said in their world monograph of the genus (1964), Robert Kühner's *Le Genre Galera* (1935), and George Atkinson's original descriptions from the early 1900s. Right next to Atkinson's description of *Galerina tibiicystis*, Gerenday spotted a description for *Galerina lasiosperma*, which seemed almost to be a twin of the former, with slightly shorter spores.

Following Atkinson, Kühner also described the sphagnum galerinas but did not describe *G. tibiicystis*. (He later corrected his mistake in 1969 but published in an obscure journal, never changing his original collection.) Strangely, Smith and Singer didn't identify *G. lasiosperma* as a distinct species either, which is curious considering Smith's legacy as a splitter (a mushroom expert who is more keen on

Willow Nero

Amateur mycologist Anna Gerenday describes the physical features of the long-lost *Galerina* species she hopes to find.

Upcoming Events

Oct. 7 — monthly meeting. Dr. Jill Demmers, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Mycology and Microbiology Laboratory, will explain the quarantine of rust fungi intercepted at the ports on ornamental plants.

Oct. 19 —mushroom fair. Invite your friends and introduce new people to fungi at MAW's annual fall mushroom fair, held this year in Rock Creek Park. MAW always needs volunteers.

Nov. 4 — monthly meeting. Lawrence Millman, adventure-travel writer and mycologist.

Dec. 2 — monthly meeting. Dr. Jonathan Reisman, physician and expert of fungal diseases on humans. Voting for MAW's board of directors.

Jan. 6 — monthly meeting.

Unless otherwise noted, monthly meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at the Kensington Park Library in Kensington, Maryland. Meetings begin at 7 p.m.

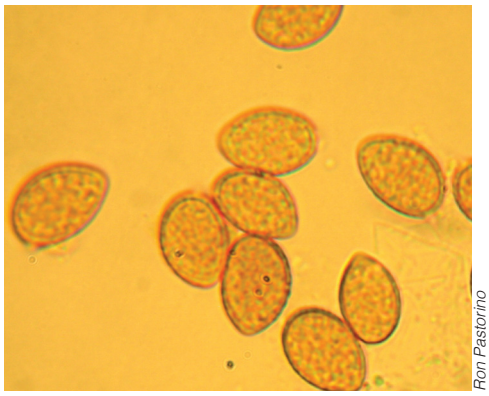
Forays

MAW regularly holds forays in the District and the surrounding areas. Many forays are announced on short notice. Check the listings at Meetup.com/MAWDC-Public or email forays@mawdc.org to receive email notices. Members also can network with one another and volunteer to host impromptu forays via Meetup.

It's maitake season. *Grifola frondosa*, also known as hen-of-the-woods, maitake, or ram's head, should be out in the woods soon along with the typical spate (rain-permitting) of fall fungi we all love. Share your finds on Facebook (www.facebook.com/MycoDC), Meetup.com, and/or the MAW-Mail Yahoo group (find the link at www.mawdc.org).

Join the board. MAW's board of directors is always open to input from members and would be happy to see new faces chairing events and working on official club business. Talk with any board member or the nominating committee (see page 3) for details.

separating similar specimens than having several variations fall under the same species). Gerenday hypothesizes the younger mycologists working under Smith might have noticed this oversight but allowed the aging expert to maintain his position while leaving a few clues in the literature about a similar but noticeably distinct short-spored *G. tibiicystis*.



Ron Pastorino

Galerina spores typically are ornamented, as seen in this specimen of *Galerina clavata*.

All this conflicting reading along with some encouragement from European mycologists led Gerenday to believe *G. lasiosperma* is still out there — and nobody has seen it since at least 1964 but possibly as long ago as 1918. With today's DNA analysis techniques, it would be relatively simple to determine once and for all whether *G. lasiosperma* and *G. tibiicystis* are different and their relation to another common sphagnum galerina, *G. hybrida*.

The mushroom in question was originally spotted in September 1917 in at Teet's Farm and Cranesville Moore in western Maryland. Nearby, Atkinson also found *G. tibiicystis* in a spruce moor near Miller's Run, 3 to 4 miles north of Oakland, Maryland. Both mushrooms are typical of the sphagnicolous galerinas, growing in beds of peat and sphagnum moss within bogs and poor fens. The mushrooms have long stems to raise their caps above the dense mats of sphagnum. Mycologists hoping to preserve specimens should carefully separate the sphagnum to eventually lift out the mushroom with some of the sphagnum attached. Microscopically, the species has ornamented spores and cheilocystidia on the gill edge. Their long, often "bellied" cystidia end in a spherical head with verrucose spores.

Gerenday did hunt for sphagnicolous galerinas when she was in Maryland in September, but she reports the bogs she visited have been damaged, overgrown with alder, or flooded, making the conditions less than ideal for sphagnum moss and galerinas.

Sequanota (cont.)

Continued from page 1

the audience on the lycoperdons (puffballs), saying he once cooked them in a spaghetti.

"Don't do that. It was really disgusting. They were like marshmallows in spaghetti sauce. It was gross. I thought it would add something to it — and it did."

Methven acknowledged stinkhorn eggs are edible but pretty unappetizing, a sentiment quickly countered by MAW President Bruce Boyer, who happily reported many MAW members ate stinkhorns when he served them at a tasting.

"I'm glad I missed that," Methven said.

The Cikotas family brought back one of the most impressive finds at the foray, an immense haul of chicken-of-the-woods (both *Laetiporus sulfureus* and *L. cincinnatus*), which they shared with attendees. MAW Treasurer John Harper organized two groups to cook both species in an identical preparation to determine which was better. The results were as variable as personal taste.

"I guess that's the good news," said Methven. "I guess it doesn't matter."

Methven also helped clear up confusion about spore print colors. For your average person, he said, *Galerina* and *Pholiota* spore prints are both brown. To mycologists, they're rusty brown and dark brown, respectively.

"The way we (mycologists) agreed to talk abut colors is we called them 'mycological colors' — they're not really those colors," Methven clarified. "Does that look pink to you?" he asked, examining a blewit (*Clitocybe nuda*) spore print. "That looks pinkish brown. OK, it's mycological pink."

Rock Creek Park Rangers, Hikers ID Fungi

Willow Nero

MAW Foray Chair Jon Ellifritz grins as he shows hikers a specimen growing on dung. Several seasoned MAW identifiers joined Rock Creek park rangers and hikers Aug. 17 for a short mushroom identification walk in the park.

Don't Miss the Mushroom Fair

Invite your friends, family, and neighbors to MAW's mushroom fair at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center Oct. 19. Bring fungi from home or join a foray. See if you can stump our experts!

Volunteers will be needed to organize mushroom displays and interact with the public. Remember, you don't have to be an expert to get people excited about fungi. Most MAW members can answer general fungal questions. Contact NAMA Trustee Connie Durnan at namatrustee@mawdc.org to volunteer your time.

Joint Foray Mycologists Uncover 150 Species Despite the Dry Weather

Willow Nero
Sporophore Editor

Amateur mycologists from MAW and the New River Valley Mushroom Club (NRVMC) met for the Third Joint Appalachian Foray at the 4-H Center in Front Royal, VA, Aug. 8-10. The area proved incredibly dry, but participants still found and named 156 fungal species.

George Chernilevsky

George Chernilevsky

(above) Patrick Leacock helps foray participants identify fungi collected over the weekend. (below) Jay Justice checks out an enormous chicken-of-the-woods found prior to the foray. (top right) This *Trametes sp.* grew in an abnormal pattern.

During the final table display walk-through, guest mycologists Jay Justice and Patrick Leacock showed off their favorite specimens and helped participants learn the distinguishing characteristics of the different families and genera.

Some of the most interesting finds from the weekend included:

☐ Uncommonly large fruitings of the green stain fungus *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*. While this diminutive cup fungi isn't likely to give you much of a show, others might. "If you sneak up on a big cup fungus sometimes you see a big cloud come out," Leacock said.

☐ The slender *Xylaria longipes*, for which Leacock said he's promoting the common name "dead lady's fingers."

☐ *Terana caerulea*, the cobalt velvety crust fungus.

☐ *Loweomyces fractipes*, a somewhat rare Appalachian species.

☐ *Perenniporia ohiensis,* a small ivory-pored polypore that is smaller than a quarter.

☐ *Gloeoporus dishrous,* a polypore with a magically stretchy gelatinous pore layer.

☐ *Clitocybe odora*, a faint blue-green clitocybe that smells like anise. It was plentiful for the foray, and mycologists don't recall having seen much of it in previous years.

☐ A trametes from the elegans group that showed growth in multiple directions as though the log it grew from had rolled over time. "Think about it," Justice said. "You've got an organism that's just some cells, very basic, but it knows which way is up."

Only a few lucky people found chanterelles, and Justice said there are all kinds of reasons one year's flush can vary so differently from another's. "It produces a lot one year, but maybe it needs to regrow the colony," he said.

A few deadly amanitas also graced the display table. Many amateurs avoid the entire family, and the mycologists at the joint foray agreed it's important to really know your amanitas before trying to eat any. "The best way to learn *Amanita* is to divide and conquer by section," Justice said. "The morphology will help you decide which section it belongs in."

The foray also included presentations from both of the mycologists. Leacock introduced MAW and NRVMC members to the mycoflora program he's helped develop in the Chicago area. He says the Illinois Mycological Association has been instrumental in finding new species and adding to the Field Museum's collection of fungi. They primarily collect on a few 0.1-hectare plots.

"When you have a bunch of people out looking, you tend to find a lot more than a couple of people out looking for rare things," he said, emphasizing that he never stops finding new things. "It doesn't matter if you visit the same area again," he continued, "you're not going to run out of things to find even in the same place. You're not going to see everything in one year or even five years."

Justice sought to clear up the confusion over chanterelles in his presentation "Looking Beyond Your Granny's Chanties." He began with a description of the family Cantharellaceae and then introduced the species in the *Cantharellus* and *Craterellus* genera as well as two related species in neither genus.

Typically chanterelles are vase-like with wrinkled or furrowed ridges or veins underneath their caps. They tend to have a slower growth rate than other mushrooms. They're associated with both hardwoods and conifers. All are edible, though a few cause gastric upset in some individuals. Species in *Craterellus* have funnel-shaped, hollow stems. Some notable (and delicious) chanterelles East Coasters might want to learn include:

☐ *Cantharellus lateritius*, the most common East Coast species with a smooth underside or blunted veins.

☐ *Cantharellus appalachiensis,* the Appalachian chanterelle, a small species with a noticeable brown spot on top.

☐ *Craterellus ignicolor*, which has lilac gills.

☐ *Cantharellus roseocanus,* a species with potentially the largest range in North America (California to Michigan, New York, and Massachusetts) and the closest lineage to *C. cibarius*.

☐ *Craterellus fallax,* the most common East Coast "black trumpet," which has yellowish salmon spores.

Everyone should note *Cantharellus cibarius* does not occur in North America.

An interactive species list with more species photos from the foray can be found at http://mushroomobserver.org/species_list/show_species_list/602.

MAW Chefs Share Culinary Gems

Willow Nero

MAW's 2014 fall culinary event was more intimate than in years past, and attendees enjoyed a chance to chat, cook, and sample dishes from around the world the evening of Aug. 16. The event again was held at the George Mason University Nutrition Kitchen facility in Virginia.

The dishes included:

☐ Cashew mushroom cream soup

☐ Chicken-of-the-woods and shiitake in black bean sauce

☐ Chicken-of-the-woods pidpenyok (see recipe below)

☐ Portoabello cheesesteak sandwiches

☐ French cream of mushroom soup

☐ Grilled marinated king oyster mushrooms

☐ Maitake naan

☐ Mixed mushroom bai kapow/ kaprao

☐ Portobello tamales

☐ Shiitake coconut masala

Phillips Mushroom Farms provided the cultivated mushrooms.

Willow Nero

Willow Nero

(above) Gerry Rafats stirs a pot of French cream of mushroom soup. (left) MAW Librarian Fred Seymour fills a bowl. (below) MAW President Bruce Boyer auctions off some of the extra mushrooms.

Pidpenyok

2 tablespoons butter
⅛ cup chopped onion
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 cups mushrooms, cleaned, washed, drained, and sliced or chopped
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup sour cream
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon fresh (or dried) parsley
1 tablespoon chopped dill (fresh or dried)

Sweat the onion in butter in a skillet, adding the garlic for the final two minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook them on medium heat for about five minutes.

Blend the flour with some of the cream to make a smooth paste. Stir in the remaining sour cream, and add the mixture to the mushrooms. Cook, stirring until the mixture boils.

Willow Nero

Add the remaining ingredients except for the dill. Lower the heat, and simmer, covered, for five minutes.

When ready to serve, stir in the dill. The dish is good with kasha, stuffed cabbage, or potatoes.

(Prepared by Ray LaSala for the 2014 MAW mushroom tasting. Recipe from Mary Best (Gashek), from *Hot Off the Grill: Family Favourites* (2013), a cookbook from the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Parish in Sydney, Nova Scotia.)

Inside Phillips Mushroom Farms

Anthony Waisanen
MAW Member

I owe a big thanks to Cody Waisanen, MAW culinary chair, for allowing my wife and I to collect the gourmet mushroom contribution for our August tasting.

Kristine "Tina" Ellor, the technical director for Phillips Mushroom Farms, very graciously spent several hours giving us a very detailed tour of the farms, answering our questions, and then apologizing for having to increase the poundage of mushrooms we were received (to 44 pounds!) Tina studied mushrooms as undergrad and did master's research with oyster mushrooms. She was particularly excited about being recently named to a 25-person U.S. Department of Agriculture council for food and vegetables.

It's hard to decide what we learned that was most valuable: why (some) wild mushrooms will taste better than commercially grown, why commercially grown never see sunlight, why sunlight can change the flavor of mushrooms (and what you can do about it).

What first caught our attention was Tina's comment about oyster mushrooms, also known as, "the beast that ate your house." They don't get that nickname for nothing.

☐ Oyster mushrooms are highly adaptive and can be grown on most everything.

☐ Oysters begin producing spores when they pin!

☐ In a damp basement, spores can embed in floor joists and begin decomposing the wood.

☐ Long-term exposure can be harmful to the respiratory tract resulting in "farmer's lung." At Phillips, workers in oyster growing areas wear respirators and are moved to other work areas if they show sensitivity to spores.

☐ Though easy to grow, oysters have a challenge to commercial production; they produce an unidentified product that retards/prohibits growth of mushrooms. After a couple years, oysters will not grow in a location where they've previously been grown. (Other mushrooms will not grow there either).

January's newsletter will include more of our Q&A with Tina.


WHEN IT COMES TO 8 MONTH OLD MUSHELLE... YOU ARE THE FATHER.
AND THE MOTHER!
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