
NIYMS



New York Mycological Society Newsletter

Fall 2016

The sweaty summer has turned into a beautiful, chilly fall. Many of us are still relishing the wonderful bounty of edibles which is something of a marvel given how dry it's been overall. If any of you remember how dry last fall was, however, and how incredibly plentiful the *Grifola frondosa*, you won't be surprised that the hens can still be emerging. I am beginning to think that both chickens and hens are not as reliant on rain as the mycorrhizal mushrooms we collect for the table (do they take water from the host tree? Do they fruit as a stress reaction to drought?). But it hasn't been nearly as dry this fall as last, and there has been an abundance of honeys, aborted entolomas, *Agaricus* and according to some, *Hericium*. The club walks have been extremely well attended lately, and I hope that interest will continue even though the official walks have ended. There should be plenty of delicious edibles for some weeks yet, and as you will hear from Dennis Aita in this issue, we may have fall and winter "pop-up" walks in more deeply forested areas outside the city limits.



Corpinus ink on polypropylene. More on page 10.

I also hope many of you continue to come to the ID sessions which will be held semi-regularly at the Perlis/Bigelow residence. There is an advantage to having these meetings at our house which is

that the library of mushroom books can't be beat, and we often get to sample a tasty morsel of recent findings from our generous members. See you soon and happy hunting! — **Juniper Perlis**

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Submissions for the next issue of the NYMS newsletter must reach the editor by December 1, 2016. Various formats are acceptable for manuscripts. Address questions to Juniper Perlis, editor. See above for addresses.



Club Walks

Dennis Aita

After a highly productive mushroom hunt this past August in Stony Brook, there was a suggestion from Gary that we should think about a mushroom hunt there in the fall. And a number of newer members thought that a very good idea.

When I took over the walk schedule in the late 80's, most of our walks were not in or near New York City, but rather in places such as Stony Brook in Harriman State Park, from mid-May after the morel season until the end of November. But from my experience, it is only in the summer months in some of these northern places that we find lots of choice edible mushrooms as well as plenty of others to talk about. And most of them are summertime mycorrhizal species associated with oak, beech, birch, and hemlock (although less so recently as the hemlocks in our region are slowly dying because of the woolly adelgid). So a decision was made to have fewer walks far from the City as more of our members didn't have cars and the price of public transportation kept rising. Bus prices to places such as Doodletown near Bear Mountain and Arden in Harriman State Park rose to around \$30 for a roundtrip which makes for a very expensive day trip! Now, in the fall, we go to closer places such as South Mountain, Tallman State Park, and City parks and cemeteries. Places with older woods and trees, and therefore more of a chance to find choice edibles such as hen of the woods, oysters, chicken mushrooms, as well as giant puffballs and blewits that most of our members who come on the walks are seeking. Often we find plenty of things to study as well.

But if there really is enough interest to visit places a bit farther afield in the fall, such as Stony Brook or Doodletown, we should see if it rains there, and then schedule it as an additional walk. Or we can switch walk sites such as we did last year for the first time ever when we switched a Stony Brook walk (where the area was parched) to Alley Pond Park where it had rained significantly (and we had a great day mushrooming). But do note, we have had walks in Harriman State Park in rainy autumns, and while certainly there are sometimes interesting things to be found, often there can be far more action in nearby grassy areas, places that have *Agaricus* and giant puffballs.



Remember!

- Stay responsibly in touch with us.
- If your telephone number, mailing or email address changes, please contact Paul Sadowski, Secretary with your new information. On your membership form, please consider going paperless when it comes to receiving these newsletters. Newsletters sent via email (PDF file format) are in color, have live web links, help us contain costs, and use fewer natural resources!

- NYMS walks policy: We meet when public transportation arrives. Check the walks schedule for other transportation notes. Walks last 5-6 hours and are of moderate difficulty except where noted. Bring your lunch, water, knife, a whistle (in case you get lost or injured), and a basket for mushrooms. Please let a walk leader know if you are going to leave early.
- Leaders have discretion to cancel walks in case of rain or very dry conditions. Be sure to check your email or contact the walk leader before a walk to see if it has been canceled for some reason.
- Nonmembers' attendance is \$5 for an individual and \$10 for a family.

We ask that members refrain from visiting walk sites two weeks prior to the walk.

Warning: Many mushrooms are toxic. Neither the Society nor individual members are responsible for the identification or edibility of any fungus.

Polypores, Crusts, and Teeth, Oh MY!

A class with Tom Volk at Eagle Hill

Kay Spurlock

Eagle Hill is an amazing setting for studying nature. On the Maine coast in a lush, moss covered forest, there are week-long as well as weekend sessions in all manner of environmental and scientific study. The 2016 schedule included a number of mycology and related classes - Lichens, Edible and Medicinal Mushrooms, Slime Molds, and the class I attended. "Polypores and wood decay fungus" was taught by Dr. Tom Volk, professor of Mycology at University of Wisconsin. I had met Tom a few times in New York when he did walks with the NYMS and I knew he would be a fun and interesting teacher. Credit goes to Paul Sadowski for recommending the class and encouraging me to check out Eagle Hill. It indeed was a great experience.

Morning lectures and presentations preceded classroom microscopy. Tom's lectures are fascinating with a side of humor. He gave us tons of helpful information, references and handouts. He emphasized the importance of using macroscopic keys and gave assignments to practice that process. Microscopy starts with knowing what features you are looking for and how to prepare the slide to find those features. For example, polypores scope best by using a very thin section. Luckily, you can also use the 'chowder' method if you haven't perfected creating super thin slices. Chop, chop, chop and chop some more is a good way for newbies like me to view the individual threadlike hyphae we are looking for. We had plenty of time to practice improving our skills. Eagle Hill has a well-appointed lab with room to spread out specimens and equipment. We were encouraged to bring books and laptops to download sharable resources. Tom brought a large box of herbarium specimens for us to explore before getting into the woods to find our own materials. He reviewed the technique for creating a proper herbarium specimen starting with field identification elements such as substrate, species of tree, and locality. Some mushrooms require field notes on color, smell, and taste since these characteristics can change as the specimen dries. Tom also provided herbarium specimen labels for us to use for additional collections.



Hydnellum aurantiacum

In the class materials binder, Tom provided a section on Fungi Collecting Guidelines which I want to share. These are for students collecting for scientific research but are good guidelines for club forays also. It says: Do not collect rare or endangered species, and avoid collecting large specimens that are especially old. The reason being that 'Sustained collecting over the years reduces species diversity' and less interesting trails. It recommends causing as little scarring on trees as possible and notes that fine specimens can be found on

fallen branches and twigs. When checking the underside of a log for specimens, always roll the log back to the position it was found in. Good things to think about for a 'leave no trace' kind of mushrooming.

The accommodation choices ranged from camping to lodge rooms. There were lots of study areas and social spaces. Meals were simple, fresh and filling... with home-made baked goods and desserts. Special diets were accommodated. The dinner bell announced meals – so those folks hard at work at the microscopes wouldn't



miss lunch! The lobster dinner was a highlight- my first whole lobster!

Forays were organized in the afternoons. The trail varied from ridgetops to along the water's edge, in conifer forest as well as hardwoods. It had been a dry spell so not a lot of distraction was provided by fleshy gilled fungi or boletes and we could focus on the polypores and toothed fungi and crusts that we were studying. That's one of the reasons I love this group of fungi - they can always be found, no matter what time of year.

It was a treat to discover that many of my classmates were from the Boston Club which hosted NEMF (Northeastern Mycological Federation's annual Foray) this year. This class's relatively small size and longer duration gave me a chance to get to know folks that I hadn't met at NEMF.

As one might expect, my classmates had come to the class with different goals. Some had come with a general education perspective - to learn more about these fungi. Some were interested in the edibility and ID'ing for the kitchen (*Grifola frondosa*, *Laetiporus sulphureus*, etc). A few students were professionally interested in the wood decay aspect and how to recognize and prevent the loss of living forest and the preservation of historic structures.

I was pleased to see Patricia Buchanan and Carol Govan who had recently taught the illustration class at the NEMF foray. Their drawings and paintings of the specimens were beautiful. I appreciated the microscope work with fungal material which is an area in which I need a lot of practice. The lab was open after dinner for continued study and discussion of the day's finds.

Eagle Hill is a great place for in-depth study and plenty of rest and relaxation, too. I will be keeping a watch on their calendar to see what interesting classes I can take next year. I highly recommend it!



all photos this article © Kay Spurlock

Molding Mushrooms

Reema Keswani

I was thrilled to receive Paul Sadowski's commission for fungal related jewelry as a gift for outgoing President Eugenia Bone. Despite limited experiments with molding mushrooms found on club walks, I signed on without thinking the entire proposition through. I have always collected all manner of seeds, acorns, buds & thorns on our walks, with plans to mold them for use in my jewelry.

My company, Golconda, is based in midtown Manhattan, in the heart of New York's diamond district. I specialize in fine and unusual gemstones, diamonds and pearl jewelry, all hand-made locally, using 100% recycled metal. While working with fellow NYMS member Fred Shinagel on an appraisal, I spied a set of mushroom related books and asked him about them. Incredulous that there were enough people to form a mushroom club, I signed up that night. My first walk was with Gary Lincoff in Central Park. I got off at the wrong stop, and missed the walk. I just set off on my own, thinking, how hard could it be to walk in the park and spot mushrooms?

The first mushroom I spotted was what I'm now pretty sure was a *Pluteus cervinus*. It was a perfect specimen. The weather was perfect. It had just rained so the park was alive. That was 2012. I haven't looked back since. I now use larger polypores as displays and am endlessly inspired by fungi.

Some of the experiments, with hard things like thorns and acorns, are easy and fun. Alas, the fungal world does not yield itself to mold making as easily. The mushroom must be able to withstand being immersed in a viscous liquid that will eventually harden. When the gills are too delicate (think *Russula*), they will collapse, or become significantly distorted, and will not yield a good mold. Typically, the mushrooms I collect are polypores, with pretty hexagonal pores. How-



ever, the natural desiccation process shrinks the pores. As a result, I didn't have any luck with molding dried polypore mushrooms with hexagonal pores approximately two to three millimeters wide. Three sessions later, only the *Trametes betulina* was usable. The success of the mold-making is evident only once we've injected the mold with a wax that will harden

to create a wax model. Then, the wax model is encased in an investment to create a mold. Once the mold is created, the wax model is burnt out, and replaced with molten sterling silver using a centuries old process known as lost-wax casting.

Luckily, the jewelry Gods love Eugenia Bone too, because the casting turned



out beautifully. The detail on the gills and the cap was crisp. After casting the mushroom in silver, I found a twig I liked for the cuff. After soaking it to make it pliable, it was molded as a wraparound cuff and cast in silver as well. Then, both the mushroom and cuff were soldered together, filed, cleaned and polished. Finally, the entire cuff was oxidized to a dark charcoal color. The gills were polished to a high silvery white in places in order to highlight them. Finally, the Golconda logo was engraved using a laser onto the inside of the cuff.

The cuff was presented to Eugenia on April 11, 2016. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of designing and making this bracelet and thank the Board of NYMS for this opportunity.

Next, I'd like to play around with *Dadaelea quercina*. I'm hoping to find a nice piece with large open lateral pores, because there isn't significant shrinkage over time, and it should cast beautifully. I can't wait to come across *Favolaschia calocera* (Mycenaceae) in my travels and only hope I'll have some mold-making supplies with

me. Next, I plan to experiment with encasing fragile mushrooms in a thin slip of acrylic to see if that opens up the fungal kingdom for me—hopefully I'll work with tiny russulas, marasmius & slime molds.

Please follow me on instagram @ [golcondajewelry](https://www.instagram.com/golcondajewelry) to follow my jewelry and myco-adventures with NYMS. My website is www.golcondajewelry.com and I may be reached via email at 'reema@golcondajewelry.com'.

Lemonade

Paul Sadowski

Thursday, July 28

Amid high 90 degree weather over 200 eager mushroomers arrived at Fitchburg State for this year's Samuel Ristich NEMF (New England mycological federation) Foray. In planning forays of this magnitude, one must find affordable accommodations for 200 people or more in a place near mushroom habitats at a time when rooms are available. Typical weather is but one factor in siting the foray. One can't predict the weather with any accuracy a year ahead anyway. This time, northeastern Massachusetts was in drought conditions, without any significant rainfall since early May.

It was clear that the fleshy mushrooms would be hard to find. But given my interest in polypores and crust fungi I would know no disappointment. There were sure to be plenty of these uncharismatic characters.

In looking over the program, I found a new name to me: Karen Nakasone. Her name was put forward by Larry Millman, familiar to our society for his interest in cryptic fungi. Karen has worked at the Center for Forest Mycology for over 30 years. This is the place where Tom Volk worked for 6-7 years under the polypore and crust expert Hal Burdsall. Burdsall also mentored Ms. Nakasone.

Friday, July 29

Ms. Nakasone gave her morning lecture introducing the assembly to the wood decay fungi. She explained how white and brown rotters work to break down woody material in succession, leading to the complete decomposition of wood. The brown rotters consume cellulose leaving behind lignin; the white rotters consume lignin, leaving behind cellulose. In the course of her work, Nakasone utilizes microscopy and cultures to identify species. Her long experience, training and employment have equipped her with a rare vantage point to understand the role of these fungi in our forests.

After lunch, I joined the walk at Willard Brook State Park, a mixed woods habitat of Hemlock, White Pine, Beech and Birch. My seat on the bus was across the aisle from Karen Nakasone which provided an opportunity for a conversation about professional mycological collecting methods and field assessments. I have always been a bit mystified by the sketchy note-taking by mycologists like Alexander Smith. Karen was familiar with this and explained that the more detailed observations are noted in a journal or accession book. Ah ha! When we arrived at the park, I set off into the woods with Kate Pavelle of the Western Pennsylvania

Mushroom Club. There were no mushrooms to be seen so we got down right away to turning over branches to see what might be hiding there. We found the usual denizens of the "under" world: mycelial rhizomes, hispid patches of white paint, washes of translucent grey, resupinate white polypores and crusts. After an hour we had twenty collections in our basket. There was an hour remaining before the bus departure. I sat beneath the hemlock canopy at a picnic table dappled with mid-afternoon sunlight to voucher our specimens.

After the evening program, there was a social where we had the chance to see old friends over a cold beer. Then off to bed, this time with a fan that Kay Spurlock and Vicky Tartter picked up for me at the local Walmart. The fan moved the air enough in the sauna-type conditions to make sleep possible.

Saturday, July 30

I found a seat in a jam-packed classroom to hear David Hibbett of Clark University speak about "Evolution of Wood Decaying Mushrooms at the End of the Carboniferous." He succinctly explained the process of evolution of the white- and brown-rot mushrooms as evidenced by molecular analysis of these fungi in the fossil record. Hibbett fleshed out some ideas first suggested to me by Tom Volk. Tom said that brown-rotters predated the white-rotters. Once the white-rotters made their appearance, they cleaned up the lignin component in wood. This brought an end to a period of incomplete wood decomposition that resulted in lots of undigested lignin, which ultimately morphed into coal, deep underground. Thus, as Volk said, the formation of coal is a one-shot deal: the white-rot fungi digest lignin. No mo' lignin, no mo' coal.

The afternoon workshop of interest to me was a microscopic "Introduction to the Surprising World of Crust Fungi." Karen Nakasone had prepared 16 stations each with a collected specimen, micrographs, illustrations of microscopic features and tissue from the collected specimen mounted for observation with the microscope. The experience was not unlike visiting an art gallery with a guide to the paintings, but in this instance, Karen was our docent showing us microscopic *Objet d'arte*.

So my visit to NEMF in even the severest conditions shows how, when you get the mycological equivalent of lemons, one can indeed make lemonade.

Next year: Stratton Mountain Resort for a NEMF Chantrelle Weekend July 27-30, 2017. See you there!

Chanterelle Weekend

Vivien Tartter

July 22-24 was this year's Chanterelle weekend, the second I have attended. New York City was unbearably hot, so, mushrooms aside, it was delightful escaping to Winhall, Vermont, especially when Saturday night thundershowers ushered in almost-crisp New England weather for Sunday's foray.

The weekend was organized expertly – although this was his first – by Ethan Crenson, with assists by Laura Biscotto (who did the finances), Tanya Radford (who shopped for the meat), Karen Schlechter and Rachel Simon (who shopped for the wine) and many veteran participants who arrived with fixings: buckwheat pancake batter for Saturday breakfast (Charles Luce and Leslie Bryon), marinade for the chicken and mushroom flavored vodkas (Alex Getmanov), pickles and preserves (Tanya) and chicken mushroom jerky and sourdough bread doughs (myself). (A joy of the weekend in fact is the community embraced in independent but collaborative foraging, team cooking and cleaning.) And of course oversight and advice, by organizer emerita, Claudine Michaud, who, with husband Henri, was the guest of honor for Saturday's banquet.

Already this article seems to be primarily focused on food, and so it should be given the quality of food and the chanterelles. So, to continue in that vein: Friday night's arrival buffet was provided by Ethan, a wonderful chili with cornbread, and lots of fixings; Saturday's dinner – that team effort - was corn, bean salad, potato salad, herb-marinated barbecued chicken and a tour de force chanterelle risotto by Jacques Morir. He also gets a shout-out for the traditional, and fabulous chanterelles and scrambled eggs for Sunday's breakfast.

Normally, I am most taken with the club's finding and identification activities – and indeed while in the woods I and others looked for more than chanterelles. The Saturday late afternoon ID table was covered with some sticks, crusts and shelves, but many many fleshy mushrooms, especially boletes (including boletus edulis!) and amanitas. Paul Sadowski ran the ID session while many folk listened as they cleaned chanterelles. The ID session lasted more than an hour, and chanterelle cleaning longer than the ID!

Saturday night's dinner ended with a presentation by Paul for next year's NEMF: to be held in Winhall Vermont (no chanterelle weekend next year because of the overlap) with the promise of chanterelles.



Mycommentary

Ethan Crenson

Without looking particularly hard, one can find the bright yellow mushroom, *Leucocoprinus birnbaumii*, in New York City. I am accustomed to encountering it in my email inbox, in late summer, as an image attached to a message from a friend. "I found this yellow thing growing in my potted plant," they usually write, "It's a mushroom, right? What is it?." It's a hothouse curiosity that often makes it into the field guides, even though it's not growing in the field. But now, during at least two pop-up walks in city parks this summer, we seem to have found *L. birnbaumii* growing "in the wild". It was in Forest Park on August 7th and Inwood Hill Park on August 21st. It turned up as a result of our "Bolete Patrol" walks – a series of pop-up walks intended to fill in the gaps in our New York City mushroom lists. The gaps in our lists occur because most mushroom hunters flee the city looking for edibles in greener pastures (and woodlands) during the summer months. Someone MUST stay behind and count the mushrooms that routinely flush in our parks when no one else is looking. That someone is the Bolete Patrol. But *L. birnbaumii*? Has it been here, routinely flushing in NYC parks? Has it been popping up in the same way that *Xerocomus tenax*, a bolete new to our 5-borough list, has likely been doing unnoticed for decades, or centuries, or millennia? Probably not. This wild sighting has all the hallmarks of an arriviste -- an invasive brought here by our changing climate and other human agency. But perhaps it gives our "Bolete Patrol" another important task. We must also patrol for the arrivistes.

As fuller evidence of the progress the Bolete Patrol is making please note the following:

The NYMS Bolete Patrol visited Forest Park in Queens on three occasions this summer, June 5th, July 23rd, and August 7th and added 11 new Boletes to the list for the park – among many other fungi!

Boletus (Hirtiboletus) campestris

Boletus (Xerocomellus) chrysenteron

Boletus (Lanmaoa) pseudosensibilis



I made the Coprinus ink by letting the mushrooms decompose in a jar. I never strained it. I liked the viscous quality of it. I waited a few weeks before I tried it, and at first I only made tiny drawings on Christmas cards with it. The odor was still strong, so the cards had an added element to them. One year passed after collecting the ink. I brought it up to the Adirondacks with me along with my brushes and paper and plans to make some drawings. The drawing on the front page of this issue is on a synthetic paper which brings a slippery quality out of the ink.

Corpinus ink on polypropylene. © Jessica Langley



Leucocoprinus birnbaumii © Ethan Crenson

Boletus (Xerocomus) tenax

Boletellus chrysenteroides

Gyroporus castaneus

Leccinum (Hemileccinum) subglabripes

Phylloporus rhodoxanthus var. *leucomycelinus*

Strobilomyces floccopus

Tylopilus badiceps

Tylopilus sordidus grp.

A full report of all new fungi found by the Bolete Patrol will appear in the next newsletter

Peck, Peck, Peck...

Claudine Michaud

Have you heard this name before?

Charles Horton Peck (1833-1917) was a great mycologist of the late 19th century/early 20th century who served as New York State Botanist from 1866 to 1915. During his tenure he described over 2,700 new species of fungi and just as many mosses, flowers, etc. In brief, he was the perfect botanist. For this reason, his name was given to the Peck Foray, which was held this year in Huguenot, NY, the crossroads of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania from September 23rd – 25th. We were not looking to identify as many fungi as Peck did, but the spirit of research/identification was there. About 20 students were participating with their teachers and microscopes. It was a very exciting time as the young and the restless searched the wood relentlessly, and spent hours at their microscopes. A very rare fungus found and identified was *Tylopilus atronicotianus* which looks a lot like *T. plumbeoviolaceus* but with a sweet taste instead of a bitter one. (Unfortunately it could not be cooked, as it had too many worms).

Our own Paul Sadowski and Professor Kathie Hodge of Cornell University organized the amazing foray this year. (The last one that the NYMS hosted was seven years ago.) They took us to Stokes State Forest to hunt, and much to our delight, we found a great number of edible mushrooms including, *Laetiporus sulphureus*, *Grifola frondosa*, *Hericum*, and *Armillaria mellea* as well as many other specimens for study.

The YMCA in Greenkill provided a perfect setting with lakes, beautiful woods, very decent food, comfortable lodging, convenient places for activities, and plenty of fresh air.



***Tylopilus atronicotianus*. Paul Sadowski**

And, of course, we had a delicious mycophagy. Vicky brought an addictive chicken jerky, Paul Sadowski prepared an astonishing chicken tempura a la Dennis Aita, and with the collaboration of Jitka and Vicky, broiled oysters and small puffballs, deep fried *Hericum* a la chef Jacques Maran and a Honey mushroom and onion frittata. It was like a mini NEMF. We even had a brief lecture by Terry Delaney from the University of Vermont on mushroom poisonings and Basidia, with clarification on the purpose of the Buller's drop in the projection of the basidia spores.

There were a fair number of mushroom events this particular weekend and all of them were tempting, but the Peck Foray was an excellent and stimulating choice. Don't miss the next one!

New York City Fungi Survey and Mushroom Lists

Dennis Aita

With Gary's idea to do a NYC fungi survey, our club has had considerable interest in surveying our local fungi. At this point, we have recorded close to 800 species with more to join the list as more need to get recorded (my personal list of NYC fungi, for example), and of course even more will be collected (but not always identified!). And we should all thank Don Recklies for his yeoman work in recording our fungi for all the NYC parks that we now visit year round.

I have also been recording fungal finds on our other club walks (as well as my own personal walks) since the late 80's, concentrating on more of the obvious macrofungi.

Some of these lists and checklists should be available on our website this fall: Don's composite list of NYC fungi including common names, and a checklist which I made (without the common names). I will also create another checklist for fungi that we are finding outside of the City. In order to keep the list manageable, this will not be an all-inclusive list of everything that we find in all the sites in which we hunt. (The emphasis will be on fungi that can be identified with their more obvious field characteristics.) These lists and checklists all use Gary's user-friendly idea of grouping similar looking fungi such as the gilled fungi, toothed fungi, corals, and the boletes.

Bring these lists on our walks to help learn the names of the mushrooms that we find.

There is a major difficulty with many of the mushroom names. Many of them are changing, and it requires an almost full-time job to keep up with these changes! We have kept, and used, many of the older names on these lists in order for everyone to easily find their collected fungi on the list and in the books that many of us have. The new names are usually referred to in parentheses. These lists will be revised often so let us know when you see mistakes and offer suggestions for improvements.



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I hereby release the New York Mycological Society, any officer or member thereof, from any legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred during or as result of any mushroom identification, field trip, excursion, meeting, or dining, sponsored by the Society.
Your signature(s): _____
Date: _____

