

nyms



Autumn 2006 New York Mycological Society Newsletter

Mushrooms Rocked the Summer of 2006

The year 2006 has been shaping up as a great one for mushrooms! While the early spring was rather dry, Gary Lincoff reports that June, July and August gave us six inches of rain each. Inside this issue are the reports from near (Central Park), far (Hinton, Alberta, Canada) and points in between on the summer mushroom finds. Gorgeous pictures accompany the articles and some of them tell the story of a thousand taste buds.

Right after Labor Day (and the NEMF foray in Quebec), we were treated to more exotic and also gorgeous pictures during Taylor Lockwood's talk at the Natural History Museum. As I left the museum after the lecture, the full moon was rising over Central Park, giving the night a feeling of lingering summer and the anticipation of a fall harvest.

The Catskills Weekend yielded a variety of delicious mushrooms. Claudine's report gives a brief wrap-up of that "take." The fall season continues on and the remaining walks will tell what we want to know about the rest of the year's forest happenings. We are in a good position to chart small and large ecological changes and challenges over the years as well. In the last issue, we reported some stories of fungicide plants introduced into forests and their possible deleterious effects. In this issue, the tales from the field are on a more promising note. Gary's account from Central Park has detailed information on the mushrooms right under our feet. I hope to continue to report on tree trends in our area in the future. Or, maybe to research the history of certain trees and the ramifications of their changes on the forests and the fungi, such as the elm and the American chestnut. If anyone is interested in writing tree reports or in contributing photos or drawings, I would like to hear from you.

On that note, our membership includes many artists, some of whom may be working with images of mushrooms or related themes. Maria and I would like to do a winter "art" issue. So, send us your printable art. Or, if you know of any artist whose work we might be able to use, feel free to connect us with it.

Inside this news-packed issue are Society notes and announcements, calls for reviews, memories, recipes and any other mushroom-related or NYMS-related articles. This issue is virtually completely member-written. It has been a tremendous pleasure to bring it from us to us.

Enthusiastically,
Pam

≡ *Inside This Issue* ≡

What I Did on my Summer Vacation—Reports from the forays: starting on page 2

Practical advice—tips for collecting to ID finds, what to eat, and not—reminder about Monday night Foul Weather Friends ID sessions

July in Central Park: Certain mushrooms certainly observed and counted

Looking ahead—Ideas for winter activities, reviews and art

Recipe—Sarah's chicken mushroom primavera

↘ *Upcoming Events* ↙

The most important upcoming event is *your* membership renewal—it's that time again! The membership coupon for 2007 is on page 11.

Details on the following events can be found on the NYMS web site.

Saturday, October 14
Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, N. Y.

Monday, October 16
Foul Weather Friends ID Study Group

Sunday, October 22
Tallman State Park, Rockland Co., NY.

Monday, October 23
FWF ID Study Group

Saturday, October 28
Bethpage State Park, Long Island.

Monday, October 30
FWF ID Study Group

Saturday, December 2
Winter Banquet, invitation to come



NYMS Newsletter

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All statements and opinions written in this newsletter belong solely to the individual author and in no way represent or reflect the opinions or policies of the New York Mycological Society.

Submissions for the winter issue of the NYMS newsletter must reach the editor by December 1, 2006. Various formats are acceptable for manuscripts. Address questions to Pam Kray, editor. See above for addresses.

BREAKING NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

WWW

We have a new website! Since our webmaster, Julie Falsetti, has moved away from our area, we have discovered new web talent in Gene Yetter. He agreed to redesign our site with the new web address: <http://www.newyorkmyc.org>. Bookmark the address!

Currently, the site's opening page welcomes the reader, whether member or general public, and links to pages on the New York Mycological Society, our walks and events, mycophagy, serious mycology, the mushrooms of Central Park specifically (see report in this newsletter issue also), archived newsletters, picture gallery (to which members can upload works*), and links to other mycology websites. Eventually, the site will also contain special pages for members only. Thank you, Gene, for making this happen. And, thanks and good luck to Julie in her new situation.

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The NYMS is looking for a replacement for Alice Barner, our treasurer, who is stepping down at the end of this year. We need a volunteer for this important position. Job description: manage the Society bank account: make deposits (membership, banquet and activity receipts, etc.), balance checkbook, pay invoices. The treasurer keeps the books, prepares annual operating statements for the business meeting and coordinates with the secretary in keeping the membership rolls in good order. Thank you Alice, for taking on these yeoman chores for these many years, from the entire Society.

MMM

The annual banquet is on the horizon. Mark the date: Saturday, December 2, 2006. The place: Giovanni's Atrium Restaurant in the Wall Street area of lower Manhattan. The restaurant serves Italian cuisine in the Roman style. Details and rsvp form will be out in the mail by mid-October. Dennis Aita (212/962-6908 or denaita@verizon.net) and Claudine Michaud (718/638-0118 or michaudhenri@aol.com) are the contacts for the eagerly-awaited event.

FOUL WEATHER FRIENDS

The Monday night ID sessions, aka Foul Weather Friends, have been in full swing since August. Most meetings take place at Maria Reidelbach's loft in Manhattan. Whereas in past years the ID sessions have started at 7 pm, this year we are meeting at 6:30 to try to get more accomplished earlier and leave room for tasting if that is possible. Definitely rsvp by Sunday for the following night to give an idea of how many people can make it. The appearance of mushrooms has been varying widely from week to week as you know. Rsvp and get directions by calling/emailing Maria Reidelbach (212/431-1887 or maria@hoopla.org).

COMING UP

Another year racing along...Watch for the winter lecture dates in the next newsletter. Also coming: memoirs and recollections of the New York Mycological Society from the early years, mushroom art, recipes, and more...

The Glorious Mushroom

NYMS member Frank Spinelli's new book is out—it's a gorgeous coffee-table tome with full-page photographs of our favorite subjects, shot as if they were haute couture fashion models. Frank adds identifying notes, info, lore, reminiscences and even a few recipes.

We'd like to run a full review in the next issue; if you're interested in writing it, please contact Pam Kray (pamkray@mindspring.com) and we'll get a copy of the book to you.

Dining Out

This winter, I'd like to start a group to go out to eat mushroom dishes at ethnic restaurants in the boroughs of New York City. We'd meet once a month on a week-night in January, February, and March. I participated in something like this once before and it worked out quite well. The meals were under \$25. If you are interested please email me: maria@hoopla.org. If there are enough interested people I will organize it.

Maria Reidelbach

July in the Park with Mushrooms

Gary Lincoff

Introduction

The month of July is usually very dry in the New York City area. This year we had over six inches of rain in Central Park. Not only that, but the rain was nicely distributed so that we had measurable-to-hard rain on July 2, 5, 6, 13, 18, 21, 23, and 28.

I made 19 forays into the park specifically to look for mushrooms. (These were on July 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31.) The importance of these dates has to do with the rainfall during July. I wanted to go before, during and after downpours to see how long it takes different mushrooms to appear and disappear.

Gene Yetter and Aaron Norarevian also came to the park to look for mushrooms. Together, we found more than 50 different kinds of fleshy mushrooms (gilled mushrooms, boletes, and puffballs) during July. On no day when the park was searched did we not find some fleshy mushrooms!

The incentive for this effort came from the 2006 Central Park Bio-Blitz, an event that took place during the 24 hours between noon June 23 and noon June 24. The Explorer's Club, the E.O. Wilson Foundation, and the Central Park Conservancy all sponsored the Bio-Blitz. We extended the hunt for mushrooms first by a week, and then by a month, because we know that mushrooms, unlike trees and birds, only appear when the conditions are right. We wanted to see what would appear after, even well after, the official end of the 24 hour Bio-Blitz. What we discovered was that the Bio-Blitz produced about 40 different mushrooms of all kinds, while the following month of our collecting produced a total of more than 120 different mushrooms.

While 50 fleshy mushrooms for July in Central Park sounds very good to me, it is important to remember that any single day of collecting in the woods north of the city, as during our mushroom walk on July 22 along the Stony Brook Trail in Harriman State Park, produced more species (80+) than an entire month of collecting in Central Park! That said, though, we can now look at Central Park to see what is special there and what else we can learn about the park's mushrooms. Because I live less than five walking minutes from the park, I can get to areas in the park nearly every day. Sometimes it's very early in the morning or near dusk. The biggest detriment to collecting there is the reality that it is a big city park. Park crews are always removing fallen woody debris (a good substrate for mushrooms), mowing the grassy areas, and otherwise manicuring the park. In addition, camp groups come to the park to play, and they play on mushroom sites, leaving the areas even bare of grass when they leave. Another difficulty is that mushrooms that come up in grassy areas shaded by trees, or in wood chip mulch, can be extraordinarily difficult to see. In many cases, you have to stand still and just stare at the ground, especially for the mushrooms that are hidden by grasses or that are the color of the wood chip mulch.

The areas we covered on a nearly daily basis during July include everything along or near the bridle path on the west side of the park from 86th Street (the southern end of

Cont. p. 8

IMPRESSIONS

Claudine Michaud

The summer has been bountiful: we learned about mushrooms and tasted many!

First, at the end of July, we had the Chanterelle Weekend in Vermont.

The record attendance of 20 mushroom lovers, plenty of chanterelles, good weather and the sumptuous scenery (the Green Mountains as backdrop to the last forest of red spruce was particularly interesting) yielded enough chanterelles for every one to take some home. We also had a lot of specimens to study and identify with Paul Sadowski on Saturday evening, and for the courageous ones—midnight bathing in the lake. The house could have been more up-to-date (plumbing, oven, etc.) but, to say the least, the good spirit of the people saved the day!

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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. An additional note for listserv users: please remember to set your spam filter to be able to receive listserv emails.

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 lunch, water, knife, and a basket for mushrooms. 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. Non-members' attendance is \$5.

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

The new, improved NYMS site:
www.newyorkmyc.org

Ursula Hoffmann's list of sites:
www.nemf.org/file/mycosites.html

Gary Embarger of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club has created a key to help identify fungi that grow on wood, including pored, gills, coralloid, etc. The key is accessible online at:

messiah.edu/oakes/fungi_on_wood/.

The site consists of descriptions and photographs of about 195 species of fungi, and a few slime molds, that are associated with wood. The url to this list is now on the NYMS Links page. 195 species is not a lot, but the quality of the photographs and the choice of common species represented will make this online key very useful. Visit the site directly or check out the link on our new website:

www.newyorkmyc.org.

Michaud, cont. from p. 3

Second, in August, NAMA foray, Hinton, Alberta.

Hinton in itself had really nothing to offer, but it's location at the foothills of the Canadian Rockies made the foray very exciting. Very little had been previously known about fungi in the region. NAMA has been part of larger study groups researching on bears, water, and health of the forest in the continuum of habitats from Yellowstone to Yukon. All the mushrooms found have been identified and classified in each possible environment. My understanding is that over 300 species have been entered into database for further study. I chose to go in the bogs, where sphagnum moss and black spruce battle to survive in a very wet environment. The spruce need the mycorrhizal mushrooms to survive, and I have never seen so many kinds of russula, lactarius and cortinariu covering the top of the moss. Marcus Thorman, who has been doing research at the University of Alberta on microfungi biodiversity in forests and wetlands, was leading the walk. We had numerous speakers to choose from and not enough time to enjoy them all. The mushroom that impressed me the most by its beauty and great numbers was the *Gomphus floccosus* (Scaly Vase Chanterelle), bigger and much brighter than the one we find around New York from time to time.

Third, beginning of September: the Sam Ristich NEMF Foray in the Saguenay-Lac St Jean, Quebec.

The boreal forest of black and white spruces and aspens, was incredibly scenic and offered a very rich diversity of mushrooms. With the water and forest intermingling at every corner, we found a lot of fungi of about the same kind as in the West: cortinariu, lactarius. What I found so interesting is the story and the survival of this millions of acres of black spruce that make Quebec unique in the production of wood for business. Apparently the black spruce produce the best paper quality. So many good speakers

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Collecting And Preserving Fungi

Linnea Gillman, A reprint from the Telluride Mushroom Festival, May, 1983

Always do steps 1 through 4. If the collection cannot be identified while it is fresh, complete steps 1 through 8 and it can be worked on any time, even next winter.

1. Dig up completely. Collect all ages.
 - A. Be sure to dig up the base of the stem.
 - B. Both young and old fruiting bodies are important. Do not collect if all are immature.
 - C. Do collect if there is only one fruiting body and it is mature.
2. Set up spore print
 - A. Do it while you are collecting. Do not wait until you get home.
 - B. Cut off stem of mature cap. Put cap gill side down on white paper. (1½ x 4 inches is always big enough.) [Others suggest doing spore prints on aluminum foil to be able to clearly see every color spore print, including white and off-white ones. Ed.]
 - C. Wrap up the spore print setup in a small piece of wax paper if the paper and cap might separate. Wrap up spore print with rest of collection.
3. Write label
 - Where—habitat and location
 - When—date
 - Who collected it
4. Wrap in waxed paper
 - A. Roll up collection and twist ends.
 - B. Include label and spore print setup.
 - C. Set in basket so spore print paper is down.
 - D. Never wrap in plastic (spoils rapidly).
5. Photograph
6. Write description
7. Give an identification number
8. Dry collection

At the NAMA Foray, Hinton, Alberta

Paul Sadowski

Traveling through the Canadian Rockies brings one to breathtaking vistas of glacier-topped crags posing in gravity-defying profiles. The glacial waters descend these mountains to form pools of jade and turquoise at their feet. Our party of four tented in the Kananaskis Country southwest of Calgary, Alberta, later moving northward to Yoho National Park to camp near the foot of the Athabasca Glacier at Wilcox Creek, visiting spots where we viewed mountain goat, mountain sheep and black bear.

Our descent from these heavenly altitudes at Jasper, Alberta, to the foothills of Hinton brought us back to a place where man, not nature, is most obvious.

The NAMA Foray was held at the Hinton Training Center, a school where young foresters learn their skills in fire fighting, forest ecology and management. The modern campus provided views of the mountains that we had visited in the distance, the foothills filling the intermediate range. It is here that the forest rangers do their work. As explained at the opening night dinner talk by Ranger Rich McCleary, the Foothills Model Forest Program is a nexus of government, community and industry (mining, gas, oil and lumber) groups to better manage forest resources and ecology. These lower lying areas bear the scars of decades of exploitation. The Foothills Program is working to optimize activities in this boreal forest.

The boreal forest is an intercontinental band of trees delimited by the arctic air mass to the north, where it gives way to the taiga and tundra, and the temperate forests to its south. This ecosystem is marked by moderate rainfall and a short growing season of but a couple of months. Black and white spruce, lodgepole pine, some fir species, aspen and poplar dominate the hills. The trees do not tower above one as they do here in our area. Rather, trees appear rather stunted; a 200 hundred year-old black spruce might stand only 30 feet tall.

The fifteen forays organized by our hosts, the Edmonton Mycological Society, took us into this forest in many elevations and transitional circumstances. We found the forest floor to be cloaked in moss and lichen. It was amid this vegetation that we found the best mushrooming. Of the 300 species found during the weekend, cortinarius, tricholoma, lactarius, russula and suillus dominated. Not one amanita was found and only one collection of Cantharellula umbonata, the greyling, represented the chanterelle family!

Speakers included Steve Trudell, who revealed the role of mycorrhizal fungi in the boreal forest; Paul Kroeger, who presented a program on the culture, history and fungi of the Queen Charlotte Islands/Haida Gwaii, an archipelago off the panhandle of Alaska; and Leonard Hutchison, a mycologist from Thunder Bay, Ontario, who presented a catalog of mushrooms of the Northern Rockies. Cathy Cripps, the chief mycologist, entertained the Friday night assembly with her research in alpine fungi and Dr. Bryce Kendrick, author of *The Fifth Kingdom*, gave the Saturday night diners a view of familiar and unfamiliar fungi through the lens of the microscope. The weekend program included workshops and lectures in mushroom poisoning, the role of mushrooms in peatland, Gulf Coast mushrooms, mushroom photography, medicinal mushrooms and even mushroom paper making. Our New Jersey neighbor Ursula Pohl, led a group of cooks who prepared mushrooms for our culinary pleasure.

By the time we mingled with our fellow mycophiles at the closing Saturday-night social, we had come to know a precious corner of Canada through its people, its forests and its fungi.

Whether you are a beginner or an experienced mushroomer, you will find these forays an economical way to see the world and meet like-minded people, eh, and mushrooms! 🍄



Chris Jordan, photographs





Sarah Bassin's

Chicken Mushroom Primavera

2-3 Cups raw chicken mushroom, cleaned and broken into bite-sized pieces

3 small carrots peeled and sliced thin

1 small red onion, coarsely chopped

1 large clove garlic, crushed

6-8 Tbsp butter (or more if needed)

1/2 Cup frozen or fresh peas

1/4 Cup cream (can substitute 3Tbsp sour cream mixed with 2Tbsp half and half)

3 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley

salt to taste

1/3 lb dried penne or riggaton, cooked al dente

grated Parmesan cheese

Sauté mushroom pieces in butter 10 minutes on medium-low. Add carrots and sauté approx. 6 minutes. Add onion and garlic sauté 10 minutes more. Cover and cook 10 minutes adding a bit of water if needed. Stir in peas, cream and half the parsley. Cook another 3-5 minutes. Stir in remaining parsley and salt to taste. Toss into warm pasta. Serve garnished with plenty of Parmesan cheese.

Foul Weather Friends Turns into

Major Mushroom Tasting

Dennis Aita

We resumed our Monday night mushroom ID sessions on September 11 after a hiatus of many weeks due to dry weather. The four of us at Maria Reidelbach's that night (Claudine Michaud, Arlene Jacobs, Maria, and myself) looked at all the mushrooms for a short while before we made the decision to eat some of them. Foregoing the opportunity to eat the common choice edibles such as chicken mushrooms, hen of the woods and honeys, we decided to try some of the less common mushrooms of our area as all of them are considered to be good to excellent edibles. Our tasting produced some surprising results.

For most of the mushrooms we decided to cook them simply sautéed with olive oil and butter with some salt and pepper. Only the two species of puffballs were treated differently. We cut them thick (at least 2 cm.) and cooked them like cutlets—dipped in egg and bread crumbs and fried in plenty of hot olive oil just enough to crisp the crumbs (note: cooking at low temps will allow the puffballs to absorb lots of oil and over-cooking takes away their juiciness and causes them to get tough).

Below are our tasting notes (thanks to Arlene for helping with the notes).

1. *Lactarius subpurpureus* (Variegated milky): good but not distinguished—good texture. The least of the evening's mushrooms.
2. *Lactarius camphoratus* (Aromatic milky): "promised more than it delivered." Wonderful maple syrup aroma—not as sweet as expected—tasted chalky—very slight bitterness detected by some—but still good with a rich odor and taste.
3. *Lactarius lignyotus* (Chocolate milky): mild scent—nutty and sweet when cooked (with stems)—hazelnut flavor—nice texture. (We really liked this one! We kept coming back to taste some more until they were finished).
4. *Clitocybe odora* (Anise-scented clitocybe): sweet taste—rich—strong smell of anise—really delicious—complex, unexpected richness. Another of the night's winners.
5. *Agaricus silvicola* (Woods agaricus): toasted almond scent and taste—rich, sweet

and highly aromatic. The other big winner. Back in the 1980s the Danish Mycological Society rated this one their favorite! They preferred it over *Boletus edulis*, chanterelles, morels, etc.!

6. *Agaricus bernardii* (Salt-loving agaricus): earthy—typical agaricus taste, but with strong briny quality—chewy, meaty texture. This one needed something. (I like it best with garlic, parsley, and olive oil but not with tomatoes.)

7. *Entoloma abortivum* (Aborted entoloma): tender, juicy—mild flavor—well-balanced—sweet—very good after taste.

8. *Fistulina hepatica* (Beefsteak polypore): (raw) fragrant, slightly acidic, flowery flavor. We sauteed it quickly in olive oil topped with plenty of black pepper. Reminded one of peppered pastrami. (We liked it best when cooked; the olive oil and pepper complements the acidity of the mushroom.)

9. *Calvatia craniformis* (Skull-shaped puffball): (brown skin) good texture and flavor when deep fried.

10. *Calvatia gigantea* (Giant puffball): undecidable fragrance (I always love its smell—especially when uncooked—none of us could agree on the words to describe it.) “Grassy”—similar to above (there were mixed opinions as to which was best; I admit I over-cooked it or it might have come out on top). 🍄

Michaud, cont. from p. 4

presented, too. *Hypomyces lactifluorum* (lobster) was one of the more spectacular mushrooms found in abundance: I’ve never seen so many good looking ones!

Finally, mid-September: the wonderful weekend in the Catskills. Beautiful weather, beautiful people and then, beyond all expectations: mushrooms, mushrooms!!!! The dream came true in the form of *Boletus edulis* all over. We picked up more than 60 of them all together. Not many other kinds of boletus were around, but a great variety of others: *Rozites caperata* (Gypsy rozites), the three varieties of *Hericium*: *H. coralloides*, *H. erinaceus*, and *H. ramosum*; fresh *Coprinus comatus* just ready to be tasted; and last but not least, one that most of us tasted for the first time: the corn smut with its subtle taste found in the polenta prepared by Paul Sadowsky. Christine found them in Maria Reidelbach’s farm where you can pick your own corn. Rain did not stop us from going to the field! And there they were, the strange mushrooms indeed so much loved by the Mexicans and now maybe by some of us. One final lasting memory: the splendid meal prepared by our chef Paul with the collaboration of everyone. Another weekend not to be forgotten! 🍄

Mycophagy—Eating Them!

Auntie Fungal

The illness of a neophyte NYMS member has reminded me that not everyone knows “the rules” for eating wild fungus. You don’t want to spend the night getting cozy with a toilet, or worse! Here are the guidelines that I’ve adopted, *which are not foolproof*, merely safer:

- Identify the mushroom in at least two reference books, or with the assistance of an expert. If a mushroom has a toxic look-alike, I don’t eat it without expert help.
- Don’t mix different mushrooms in your basket.
- Eat only fresh mushrooms.
- The first time eat only a little of one kind of mushroom, and don’t drink alcohol. Even if a mushroom is not known to be toxic, edibles, including some of the “choice” ones, can cause stomach upsets in some people, unfortunately. Take it easy.
- Almost all wild mushrooms should be well-cooked.
- Save some samples to ID later, just in case there’s a problem.
- If you think you might be poisoned, get medical help immediately. Take your samples with you!

These are only my suggestions, they are *not* NYMS rules. There is more information about eating wild mushrooms in the *Audobon Guide to North American Mushrooms*, pp. 871-880, and in other authoritative books. 🍄

Lincoff, cont. from p. 3

the Central Park Reservoir) to 102nd (the northern end of the Central Park Pool and Loch, where the waterfalls are). A checklist is one way to represent what was found, and this is a good way to learn about what came up during July.

Another way is to track a few of the mushrooms as they appeared and disappeared during the month. A question I had at the beginning was: what kinds of patterns, if any, would be revealed by a systematic search for mushrooms in this very small area of the park? Other questions that presented themselves as the work proceeded were (1) how does this area differ from other areas in Central Park, (2) how does this area differ from other parks in New York City, (3) how does this area differ from woodsy areas outside the city, like Harriman State Park. Comparing the area searched with other areas in the park, it seems that it was the best area I could have chosen. Even the Ramble was disappointing compared to the area I chose along the bridle path. Comparing the area with other parks in the city, for example, on the NYMS walk in Van Cortlandt Park on July 16, the diversity of mushrooms was different but the species count was about the same for a given day: about 35. Comparing the area with areas outside the city, Harriman State Park, because it is a densely wooded natural area, produced much more abundance and species diversity on the day of our mushroom walk there (July 22). But it should be pointed out that the same walk along the Stony Brook Trail that we did on the same weekend in July last year, produced almost exactly the same checklist for the Stony Brook Trail as this July's walk, the only difference being that this year, with the same species recorded, there was a greater abundance of mushrooms.

The Central Park Checklist of Fleshy Mushrooms for July, 2006

(Classification below based on *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms*.) Photographs of many of these mushrooms can be found in field guides, like the *Audubon Guide*, or on the web by using GoogleImage. Caveat: Always compare a photograph with a good description of a given mushroom. There is no guarantee that the images seen on GoogleImage are correctly identified; indeed, some are clearly incorrectly identified.

Polypores

Laetiporus cincinnatus

Boletes

Boletus campestris

Boletus chrysenteron

Boletus pulverulentus (?)

Boletus subvelutipes

Gyroporus castaneus

Inocybe abundans (?)

Inocybe albodisca

Inocybe caesariata

Inocybe fastigiella (?)

Inocybe rimosoides

Crepidotaceae

Tubaria furfuracea

Pluteaceae

Pluteus cervinus

Russulaceae

Lactarius subdulcis (?)

Lactarius oculatus (?)

Russula aeruginea

Russula albonigra

Russula amoenolens

Russula crustosa

Russula cyanoxantha

Russula eccentrica (?)

Russula foetentula (R. subfoetens)

Russula fragrantissima

Russula mariae

Russula ochroleucoides

Russula ochrophylla (?)

Russula pectinatoides

Russula pulchra (?)

Russula silvicola

Russula variata

Tricholomataceae

Collybia luxurians

Marasmius epiphyllus

Gilled Mushrooms

Agaricaceae

Agaricus bitorquis

Leucocoprinus (Lepiota) cepaestipes

Lepiota americana

Amanitaceae

Amanita flavorubescens (flavorubens)

Amanita rubescens

Amanita vaginata var. grisea

Bolbitiaceae

Conocybe lactea

Conocybe sp.

Coprinaceae

Coprinus atramentarius

Coprinus plicatilis

Coprinus cf. plicatilis

Coprinus quadrifidus

Panaeolina (Psathyrella) foenisecii

Psathyrella candolleana

Psathyrella sp.

Cortinariaceae

Colorado Bounty

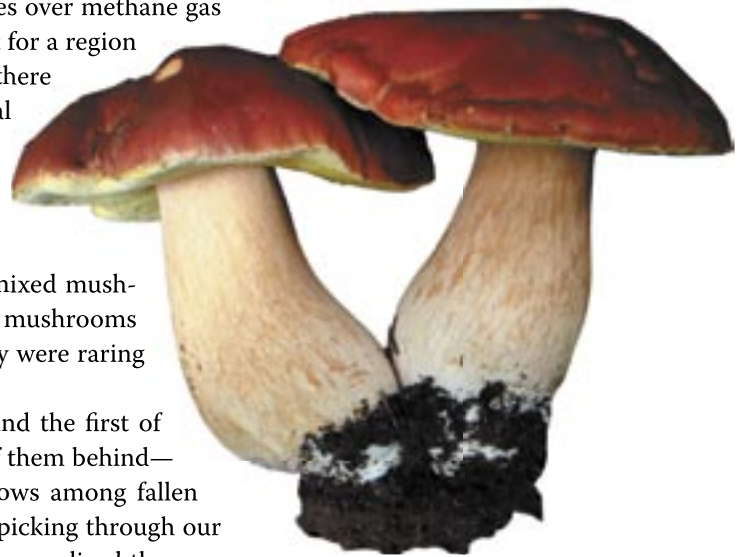
Eugenia Bone

My husband and I summer on a small ranch in Crawford, Colorado, on the western slopes of the Rockies, about parallel with Colorado Springs. For the last five years western Colorado, like most of the interior west, has been in the throes of drought. Hay prices have soared, ranchers have had to sell cattle, and the battles over methane gas drilling, which wastes aquifer water, have been especially virulent for a region that is historically friendly to mineral extraction. And of course, there have been very few mushrooms. But this past July was wet. Real wet, even for a non-drought year. We hunt the west Elks and the San Juan mountains, usually climbing to about 10,000 ft to find a wide variety of fungi: hawk's wings, chanterelle, boletus, delicious milky caps, puffballs, shaggy manes, and matsutaki, among others. In past years I have collected as much as 10 pounds of mixed mushrooms during an afternoon hike. But, this year it was as if the mushrooms were sick of waiting and now, finally given enough moisture, they were raring to grow.

We were totally unprepared when, on an afternoon hike around the first of August, we found 60 pounds of porcini, and had to leave fields of them behind—easily 3 weeks early! In this part of the country the porcini grows among fallen timber and on the border of pine forest and open pasture. After picking through our haul—they were so hard and fresh there were hardly any worms—we sliced the porcini and sautéed them with lemon zest and a jigger of Marsala wine, then dumped the mushrooms on top of buttery farfalle. We collected a dozen button porcini (usually not our habit) and made a beef stew with turned root vegetables where we cut the meat to the same size as the mushrooms. We made omelets with stewed onions, sautéed porcini, and Monterey jack cheese and served them with thick slices of the region's excellent natural smoked bacon. Folks found so many porcini they became like zucchini: we were trying to put the mushrooms in our neighbor's cars.

By mid-August we were finding chanterelles as large as teacups—particularly on one afternoon over Owl Creek Pass, on the damp west-facing slopes under pine trees. From the car we could look up into the pine forests and see yellow brick roads winding up into the woods. We picked 20 pounds of chanterelles in about one hour. We didn't even bother with the "lesser" mushrooms, which blanketed thousands upon thousands of acres. Cooks from all over the little valley where we have our place were collecting like mad. We walked into the kitchen of our friend Yvon Gross, who runs the Leroux Creek Inn to find him cleaning at least 50 pounds of chanterelles. For dinner he made us chanterelles sautéed with white wine and parsley, then finished with heavy cream and piled in a box of tender puff pastry. I think my best chanterelle recipe to come out of the bounty of 2006 was the result of processing. We sauté the chanterelles before freezing them, otherwise they can develop a metallic flavor. Usually we pack the mushrooms in their own stock, but this year they produced much more liquor than was necessary for freezing. We strained the excess liquor and used it in place of chicken broth to make risotto. We stirred in a small handful of grated Parmesan cheese and topped the rice with a heap of sautéed chanterelles. The flavor was very intense—more chanterellish than any I've had before.

For the past five years of drought, when few mushrooms were to be found, I used to say it didn't matter if we didn't find anything, I just love being outdoors. But that's a deception. I am not just disappointed if the mushrooms aren't up: I get pissy. I was able to face this bit of dishonesty only because this year I found so damn many mushrooms. I don't know if it is necessarily a good thing to embrace one's ignoble qualities, but the summer mushrooming season of 2006 sure feels like a gift to me. 🍄



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Marasmius scorodoni
Mycena corticola
Mycena cf. immaculata (?)
Pleurotus ostreatus
Rickenella fibula

Bird's Nest Fungi

Crucibulum leae
Cyathus stercoreus

Gasteromycetes

Puffballs, True and False
Lycoperdon coloratum
Lycoperdon sp.
Scleroderma bovista
Scleroderma citrinum

Stinkhorns

Phallus rubicundus

The best edible mushroom found was a polypore, the chicken mushroom that grows on the ground at the base of trees: *Laetiporus cincinnatus*. Other good edibles included oyster mushrooms and a couple of different boletes.

A glance at the July checklist for Central Park reveals that just one genus, *Russula*, accounts for 25% of all the mushrooms found. The checklist also shows, by their absence, that few boletes were found. In the woods in Harriman State Park, by comparison, a great many boletes as well as *Russulas* appear.

A glance at the July representative checklist for Central Park sorted by habitat or substrate reveals that wood chip mulch is as good an area for finding mushrooms as any in the park, even when grassy areas and open, grassy, tree-shaded areas dry out, the wood chip areas are still holding rainwater moisture.

Selections of Fleshy Mushrooms Sorted by Habitat/Substrate

Grass

Conocybe lactea
Panaeolina (Psathyrella) foenisecii

Soil (hard-packed)

Agaricus bitorquis

On the ground

In grassy Oak tree "woodlands"
Ectomycorrhizal mushrooms
Boletes
Amanita spp.
Inocybe spp.
Russula spp.

Decomposers

Marasmius scorodoni

Wood chip mulch

Lepiota spp. (*L. americana*, *L. cepaestipes*)
Collybia luxurians
Phallus rubicundus

On wood

Trees, stumps, branches, or on buried wood
Coprinus spp.
Psathyrella candolleana
Mycena corticola
Pleurotus ostreatus
Plus polypores like *Laetiporus cincinnatus*

Examples of Population Flows in Seven Mushrooms

Sorted by Habitat/Substrate:

1. Grass (the place to look immediately after rain):

Conocybe lactea appeared in grassy areas on July 6, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, and 26. Because these mushrooms collapse by noon, these are fresh populations that are springing up. By comparing these appearances with rainfall during July, we see that it rained on the 5th & 6th, and then not again until the 13th. It next rained on the 18th, 21st, and 23rd, with fresh *Conocybe lactea* coming up daily. The intense but very brief downpour on the 28th either failed to bring up fresh *Conocybe* or I missed them.

2. Bare Soil (a one mushroom substrate: *Agaricus bitorquis*):

Agaricus bitorquis first appeared in a hard-packed soil rectangle that once contained a tree just outside the Central Park West park wall on May 25. Fresh mushrooms have appeared here off and on throughout June and July, with anywhere from one to six buttons appearing at a time.

3. On the ground in grassy Oak tree woodlands (a good place to look for mushrooms during a rainy period and for several days afterwards, depending on how hot it gets):

Boletus campestris first appeared in a grassy area near an oak tree on June 28. It was then seen on the July 5 (5 new caps), 10 (5 caps), 20, 24 (a dozen new caps), 28, and 31. *Amanita rubescens* was first seen on June 23 in a weedy area near a large pin oak at 102nd St. It was then seen on July 7 (many, buttons and mature), 21 (many in different stages), and 29.

Marasmius scorodoni was first seen on June 28 in the grassy tree-shaded area between 98th and 99th Streets between the ballfields and the west drive. It was sub-

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Lincoff, cont. from p. 10

sequently seen here on July 3 and 5. On July 21 they appeared by the hundreds both here and along the south side of the walkway across from the Recreation Center in the middle of the park at 97th St. These mushrooms disappear from sight rapidly, but they spring back up (from a desiccated condition) with new rain.

4. Wood chip mulch (the most reliable mushroom habitat in the park. The wood chip mulch absorbs rainwater and mushrooms keep coming up, including mushrooms we associate with trees like oaks):

Phallus rubicundus has been the most conspicuous mushroom in Central Park during July. Not only can you smell it from more than 50 feet away (it is a stinkhorn, after all), but it is visually arresting. Tourists walking through the park down near Columbus Circle would stop to stare at what to them must have looked like a phalanx of phalluses thrusting up out of the ground. As described by different people, it appeared to be exuding some kind of manure from its top which was avidly attacked by flies. This is the stinkhorn that many of us, without examining it closely, were calling Mutinus elegans. Actually, both mushrooms occur in Central Park, but during July 2006, it was Phallus rubicundus, with the dark red hooded top, that has been dominant in wood chip mulch nearly everywhere. If the stinkhorns themselves are not visible on any given day, the white eggs from which these stinkhorns arise are there in clumps and clusters in the wood chip mulch waiting for the next rain in order to "fruit."

Collybia luxurians is the surprise mushroom of the month in Central Park. Not the rarest (which may be Lycoperdon coloratum), or most beautiful (which may be some of the red Russulas), or the most bizarre, which is the stinkhorn Phallus rubicundus, but the most surprising discovery. It can look like a Collybia dryophila or Collybia subnuda. It grows in clusters, often with large, floppy caps. It occurs in nearly every wood chip mulch area that I've examined. It has a reddish brown to tan cap that often curves up in age. The gills are white to off-white and attached to the stipe. The stipe appears twisted or has twisted fibrils running its length. It was first seen in Central Park on June 30 and it has continued to put up fresh fruit bodies in one wood chip mulch area or another throughout July. It can be as small as Collybia dryophila, and it can appear on the ground (perhaps on buried wood) in the grassy tree-shaded areas of the park. It is most conspicuous in the wood chip mulch areas between 96th St. and 99th just west of the Central Park Drive. 🍄



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