

Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

November, 2002, vol 53:11

Speaker for November MSSF Meeting Brian Perry

Brian Perry will be speaking about the Mycenas of California, which will include his current research on the Pyronemataceae.

Brian worked with Dr. Dennis Desjardin on his Masters degree from 1996-1999, and has been at Harvard working with Dr. Don Pfister towards his PhD since then. While working with Dennis he did a monograph for the genus *Mycena* in California. At Harvard he is currently working on the systematics of the discomycete family Pyronemataceae.



Mycodigest

Mycodigest is a section of the Mycena News devoted to the scientific review of recent mycological information

Underground Intimacies

By Else Vellinga

We are all familiar with *Amanitas*, *Boletes* and *Russulas* in the forest. These fungi not only are a colourful sight (and make our mouths water) but they are of utter importance to the trees. Underground they make contact with tree roots, forming a partnership, or symbiosis, in which they provide the tree with water and nitrogen, while the tree transfers sugars to the fungi. But these mushrooms are quite picky and choose their partners carefully. The Death Cap is found in our region almost exclusively with Coastal live oak; if we want a meal of King Boletes we look under pines, and for Chanterelles we'll search through the oak copses. Are Redwoods, California bay laurels and Bigleaf maples free from fungal helpers?



The answer on that question is a big NO! Around 80% of all plant species, in other words, grasses, herbs, weeds, and trees, do have fungi in their roots. But these fungi do not form the mushrooms we all love so much. These fungi are microscopically small, produce only hyphae (long thin fungal cells) and spores. They never reveal their underground existence on the forest floor. Again the plant and the fungus benefit from the symbiosis, but in this case it is mostly phosphate that the plant gets from the fungus. The fungi are known by several names: Endomycorrhizae, Arbuscular Mycorrhizal fungi (AM fungi for short), Vesicular-Arbuscular fungi, or by the taxonomic group they belong to: Glomales or Glomeromycota.

AM fungi grow inside the plant roots, and form there elaborate structures for exchange of nutrients. Little is known about the life of these fungi. Do they have sex? Probably not, but we are not 100 % sure. How long do they live? We do not know. Until 1953, people thought that the spores of those fungi were the eggs of nematodes! The spores are actually quite big, up to 1 mm in diameter. And the identification of the species is based on these spores: size, colour, shape, and the structure of the wall. A mere 150 species have been described in the whole world, based on those spore characters, and remember these 150 provide every plant species with phosphorus! Actually, this number is likely to be much too low and it tells us more how hard it is to recognize the species, as well as how few people have studied them. Nonetheless, compare this number with the thousands of *Cortinari* and *Russulas*, which grow together with a handful of tree species. AM fungi have been around for a very long time. Fossil spores and hyphae have been discovered in Wisconsin that are estimated to be

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In Memory of Bill Durnell

Members of the MSSF were saddened to hear of the death of Bill Durnell, husband of Beryl Durnell, who has helped with the MSSF library so diligently. Bill offered great contributions to the society, and he will be missed. Emmy Lou Miller, the MSSF Archivist, adds: "It was always such a delight foraging with Bill Durnell and Beryl. They were always so good at it, and were always so delighted with their finds - besides being so gracious in sharing the results."

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President's Column

By David Rust

When I first became curious about mushrooms, I was amazed by their diversity and beauty. I experienced this feeling once again last week at the North American Mycological Society (NAMA) foray at Diamond Lake, Oregon, where over 200 mycophiles combed the surrounding forest for specimens. NAMA foray organizers had arranged for buses to take as many as 45 people out to special habitats, and the atmosphere at the collection tables was electric as returning foray participants uncovered and labeled their treasures. Some of the haul was familiar, but most of the fungi that people brought in for identification were marvelous and new: A big, brown, wavy-capped mushroom with a thick stipe that looked like a bolete, which when turned over, revealed large black teeth under the pileus; and a pure white *Amanita* with a slightly warty cap that the experts discussed for three days and still couldn't name.

When we arrived, I planned to go on the first early-bird foray of the event, but learned that I needed to hang out for my volunteer stint at the registration table. Instead, I took a short walk on a trail that circles Diamond Lake. The ground was ominously dry and without promise, until I spied a lonely puffball - a tiny fresh *Lycoperdon*. Where there's one... I scanned the hill above and spotted a few large Douglas fir trees. Heading off trail, I looked for areas that might hold moisture and soon found an area where an animal or human had disturbed a patch of whitish mushrooms - many of them lying right on the surface of the duff. Here was a large fruiting of *Cantharellus subalbidus*, the white chanterelle; the first I'd ever found. I carefully noted the spot and returned to the lodge to help register new arrivals. This patch and others near it produced a large number of edible mushrooms for my wife and I to bring home. I later learned that this area was not a legal area to pick, and had to return each chanterelle to its place in the duff - NOT!

About a dozen MSSF members attended this year's NAMA foray. Even though this was my first foray, I immediately saw the attraction - and the benefit. Here was the ideal mycological experience: professionals leading forays, giving lectures, participating in the ID process, and answering questions about fungi. The packed four-day schedule included lectures designed for beginners, and various presentations by experts on the morphological characteristics of *Ramaria*, *Inocybe*, and *Gomphus*. Here were many of the same speakers that we've enjoyed at our membership meetings: Paul Stamets, Tom Volk, Admir Giachini and Marilyn Shaw; and lecturers we're sure to have in the near future: Jim Trappe, Steve Trudell, Efrén Cazares, and Brandon Matheny. Most importantly, I appreciated getting face time with people whom I had only known through e-mail.

NAMA is a true resource for all of us. There is an announcement of a regional foray in Albion in January on another page of this newsletter. I encourage MSSF members to join NAMA and participate.

"Mushroom, The Journal of Wild Mushrooming", in New Hands

By Leon Shernoff

About a month ago, I was talking to my parents on the phone, and my dad said "Hey, did you hear? "Mushroom, the Journal" is folding." Many of your club members may not have heard about this, and many may not even know what "Mushroom, the Journal" is. Its full name is "Mushroom, the Journal of Wild Mushrooming", and it is many things to many people. In the Summer (most recent) issue (it's a quarterly), Harley Barnhart discusses the new fungal food product, Quorn, with wry humor. Gary Lincoff tells you how fungi all over the world fit into just a few basic groups. These articles and the rest of the Summer issue can be read online at <http://www.mushroomthejournal.com>.

Other recent issues have grappled with the National Fish & Wildlife Service's recent attempts to have the matsutake protected under the treaty for trade in endangered species, and the emergence of a new *Phytophthora* species that's killing the oaks in central California. So when my dad said that the magazine wasn't going to fold if the owner/editor, Don Coombs, could find someone to take it over, my choice was clear. I've learned that mushrooms have just about as much to teach you as you could ever hope to learn. I've got collections in the New York Botanical Gardens and the Field Museum in Chicago. I'm the v.p. of the Illinois Mycological Association, and created the IMA's website <http://www.mushroomthejournal.com/ima> with its online key to 683 mid-western species. You may have seen my articles "Taxon of the Month" in "Mycophile", the NAMA newsletter, or my article "The First Morel," published this Spring in "Mycophile".

I intend to maintain the magazine pretty much the way it is. I've already been happily working with Maggie Rogers (an indispensable part of the magazine, and of the mushroom-hunting scene in America) and Gary Lincoff. I've already gotten my first article for the January issue from Elio Schaechter, and I'm looking forward to working with the rest of the "Mushroom, the Journal" crew. I'm really excited about continuing this magazine: a national forum for people to exchange the knowledge of fungi that we've gained over the years and to share in the passion of the hunt.

Don is very happy that his creation will continue, and he says, "What Leon doesn't know yet is that he's going to do less mushroom hunting and I'm going to do more." I don't know if I'll really do less - - after all, now I have an excuse to attend all those big forays I've been meaning to. And it's a business expense! "What a long, strange road this has been", Don says. I'm sure that 19 years from now, I will say the same thing.

Leon Shernoff

"Mushroom, The Journal of Wild Mushrooming"

1511 E. 54th St.

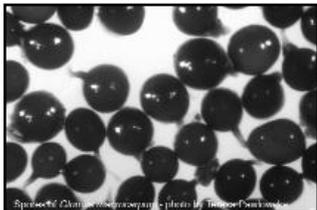
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Underground Intimacies

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460 million years old, much older than any fossil of a real mushroom. At that time there were no land plants as we know them now, only hornworts and liverworts. So, the fungi might have made it possible for plants to evolve, and to grow on the land.

Endomycorrhizal fungi are found in habitats as varied as dry sand dunes, redwood groves, chaparral, and tropical rain forests. You can get an idea about the number of different species and the structure of that fungal community by looking at the spores in the soil. Sieving the soil is one possibility, growing plants in the soil followed by examination of the roots is another. With the first method it is even possible to get an idea about the species composition of dry soils kept in a 'herbarium' for 50 years. Not all species form spores at the same time of year, so getting a complete picture of what is going on is not as easy as it looks. In a small abandoned field in North Carolina, researchers found, to their surprise, a total of 37 species of AM fungi. Only 50 species of herbs and grasses were counted in the same field. And some fungal species were very specific, growing only with one host plant, just as *Leccinum scabrum* only grows with birch.

In another field setting in Minnesota, plots with varying numbers of plant species (from 2 to 18) were investigated to see the effect on the number of AM fungi. And yes, the more different the plants were, the higher the number of fungal species. Also, in laboratory experiments, it has been shown that the success of grassland plant species often depends completely on the presence of AM fungi. No fungi, no growth. So the diversity of that grassland, and the structure of that plant community exists only because of the presence of AM fungi! This has led agricultural and horticultural enterprises to develop spore mixtures to enhance growth of crop or garden plants, and to use in habitat restoration projects. As you drive by Big Sur, and see tiny grass plants waving in the gales, reflect on the AM fungi helping them grow in those landslide areas!

Further information can be found at the following website:

<http://invam.caf.wvu.edu> - the website of the international cultural collection of arbuscular and vesicular mycorrhizal fungi gives a wealth of information on AM fungi.

Two books chockfull of information on mycorrhizal symbiosis:

Smith, S.E. & D.J. Read, 1997. *Mycorrhizal Symbiosis*. 2nd Ed. Academic Press: 605 pp.

Van der Heijden, M.G.A. & I.R. Sanders (eds), 2002. *Mycorrhizal Ecology*. *Ecological Studies* 157.

An anthology of more specific articles (of which there are many):

Bever, J.D., P.A. Schultz, A. Pringle & J.B. Morton, 2001. "Arbuscular Mycorrhizal Fungi: More Diverse than Meets the Eye, and the Ecological Tale of Why." *BioScience* 51: 923-931.

Burrows, R.L. & F.L. Pflieger, 2002. "Arbuscular Mycorrhizal Fungi Respond to Increasing Plant Diversity." *Canadian Journal of Botany* 80: 120-130.

Egerton-Warburton, L. M., R.C. Graham, E. B. Allen & M. F. Allen, 2001. "Reconstruction of the Historical Changes in Mycorrhizal Fungal Communities Under Anthropogenic Nitrogen Deposition." *Proceedings of the Royal Society Biological Sciences Series B*, 268: 2479-2484.

Redecker, D., R. Kodner & L.E. Graham. 2000. "Glomalean Fungi." *Ordovician. Science* 289: 1920-1921.

Schuessler, A., D. Schwarzott & C. Walker, 2001. "A New Fungal Phylum, the Glomeromycota: Phylogeny and Evolution." *Mycological Research* 105: 1413-1421.

Van der Heijden, M.G.A., J.N. Klironomos, M. Ursic, P. Moutoglis, R. Streitwolf-Engel, T. Boller, A. Wiemken & I.R. Sanders (1998). "Mycorrhizal Fungal Diversity Determines Plant Biodiversity, Ecosystem Variability and Productivity." *Nature* 396: 69-72.

Else Vellinga is a mycologist who works on the systematics and phylogenetics of Lepiotas in Tom Bruns' lab at UC Berkeley. She is also an avid knitter, and Anna's hummingbird is her favourite bird species right now.

Mushroom Dinner at Lalimes

Lalimes Restaurant in Berkeley will be holding their 7th annual wine and wild mushroom dinner in conjunction with the MSSF fungus fair on Tue/Wed, December 3rd and 4th. The MSSF will set up a table and display. The 5 course pre-fixed dinner costs \$42. Head chef Stephen Jaramillo is a frequent and somewhat fanatical wild mushroom forager. Lalimes is located at 1329 Gilman St. in Berkeley. Reservations can be made at 510-527-9838.

**For the most current Calendar information,
call the MSSF hotline at 415-759-0495
or check the MSSF web site at:
www.mssf.org**

SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp

Registration is now open for the 6th annual SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp. It will be held at the Boy Scout camp in Navarro, Mendocino Co., CA, and will take place on Martin Luther King weekend, January 18-20, 2003. The Camp, which is a benefit for SOMA, is full of mushroom forays, classes, workshops, slide shows, speakers, specimen tables, and of course, great wild mushroom cuisine and camaraderie.

The fee for this year, with on-site rustic lodging, is \$180 for non-members and \$165 for members. To register, please obtain and send in a registration form. Forms may be printed from the SOMA website www.SOMAmushrooms.org, or obtained by calling (707) 773-1011, or e-mailing: lamorr@pacbell.net. For general Camp information, contact the SOMA Camp coordinator at (707) 887-1888, or charmoon@sonic.net.

Fungus Fair 2002

This year's Fungus Fair will be December 14-15 at the Oakland Museum. There is much to do, and we need help from all MSSF members to help it succeed. Here are some ways you can pitch in.

Distributing Posters: You can help publicize the fair by distributing posters. We'll have posters available for pick up at several points around the Bay Area by early November.

San Francisco: Randall Museum front desk. 10-5, Tuesday-Saturday. Call Ken Litchfield at (415) 863-7618 for more information.

East Bay: Oakland Museum. Call Doris Welch at (510) 238-6641 for pick-up arrangements.

South Bay: Home of Yu-Shen Ng in Palo Alto. He lives within three minutes of Highway 101 at 4148 Briarwood Way. Call him at (650) 793-1406 (cell) or (650) 812-0402 (home) to arrange a time for pickup.

Marin: Green Jeans Nursery, 690 Redwood Highway, Mill Valley, 415-389-8333

We'll also have posters available at the MSSF General Meeting on November 19.

Volunteering at the Fair: You can volunteer at the fair itself or help with set up on Friday, December 13. See adjoining note in newsletter for details, or call Lorrie Gallagher at (415) 467-1868.

Help with the planning: You can help with last minute arrangements, e.g., planning displays, arranging programs, coordinating logistics. There will be a final fair planning meeting in early December. The date has not been decided at this time but you can contact Tom Chester for more information at (415) 665-7520.

David Arora's

Mendocino Mushroom Foray

**Thanksgiving Weekend
Friday Nov. 29-Dec.1, 2002.**

David Arora, author of *Mushrooms Demystified*, is once again offering his Thanksgiving weekend mushroom foray at Albion on the Mendocino coast. The foray begins Friday afternoon, November 29, with a mushroom hunt, and runs through noon Sunday. Experienced foragers and chefs Jill Milton and Brigid Weiler will be coming down from British Columbia this year to prepare meals for the gathering, and as always there will be other chefs and experienced mushroom hunters on hand to contribute their help and expertise to what is always a fun- and fungus-filled weekend.

Scheduled activities include mushroom hunts, beginning and intermediate identification workshops on local mushrooms, cooking demonstrations, a potluck fungus feast, and glimpses of Arora's ethnomycological research in various lands. Unscheduled activities include - well, if we knew what they were then they wouldn't be unscheduled, would they?

The cost is \$150 per person including cabin lodging and most meals. To register, or for more information please contact Debbie Viess at (510) 430-9353 (days or eves 7-9 pm) or amanitarita@yahoo.com or 328 Marlow Dr., Oakland CA, 94605.

All experience levels are welcome, including beginners. When you register, please be sure to include an e-mail address if you have one.

Early registration is advised!

Annual Mendocino Woodlands Foray

November 22-24

The MSSF's annual visit to the Mendocino Woodlands will begin with dinner on Friday night and end with lunch on Sunday. As they did with last year's successful meals, Sherry Carvajal and crew will again tantalize you with their lip-smacking meals. Sherry always welcomes freshly found mushrooms to be served as either appetizers or with meals. Housing will be in cabins with fireplaces, and meals will be served in the main dining hall. Mendocino Woodlands is located next to Jackson State Forest, a prime place to look for fall mushrooms. To enjoy this special weekend, send your check made out to MSSF to Tom Sasaki, 1506 Lyon St., San Francisco, CA 94115 in the amount of \$95 for members, or \$115 for non-members of the Society. Call him, if need be, for further details - (415) 776-0791.

The Foragers' Report

By Patrick Hamilton
MYCOCHEF@aol.com

I have been reminded by the so oftentimes immoderate moderators of our Internet discussion group (mssf@yahoo.com) that less than half of our membership looks onto computer screens for news of mushroom hunting. You unfortunates who cannot gaze into that space probably want to know some of what has been posted there. Your reporter does here dutifully excerpt from that encyclopedic posting of things fungal.

In the northern Sierra large clumps of *Lyophyllum decastes* were spotted in late September and taken with some Fairy Rings, a "pretty large" *Gastroboletus subalpinus*, and an *Amanita sibiricola*.

Maybe my first bolete ever (after looking a lot) was a *G. turbinatus* that I spied exposing itself under a clump of dirt and gravel by a Doug-fir on a knoll near Navarro Ridge while I was doing some roadside personal business that men sometimes get to do. It was such a relief.

The SOMA group (another great club to join) had news of a new to, or a least maybe unknown before in, California, polypore. It was white lobed, brown staining, with a strong fungal odor and keyed out to be *Parmastomyces transmutans*. This shelf fungus was found right off the new Stump Beach Trail (a locale famous for its beautiful winding walk up through varied habitats and for all types of great edibles—at Salt Point State Park). Another first find for that area, and by the same folks, was *Chroogomphus pseudovinicolor*, a thick stemmed good-looking orange Pine Spike that tastes "edible" (I've never eaten it). Exciting stuff, these discoveries; however, information such as "first found here" is reported without any further verification and is intended solely for this column and not for any publication more scientific.

Some wildly colored *Laetiporus gilbertsonii* were spotted fruiting on Eucalyptus stumps.

Some seekers of other wild hues, hallucinogenic style, were reported seen in Florida raising the rankle of ranchers there by not closing gates. (I am pretty sure that if eating those types of mushrooms one does not know certainly what might be ahead of them and probably doesn't remember too well anything behind, like gates.) A past president of ours laughingly and not a little loudly boomed that a friend in Tillamook told him of local dairy farmers charging people to pick Psilocybes on their lands. This helped lead our Internet group into a discussion about fence crossing, gate closing and a general ethic, or lack of, in mushroom hunting on private lands.

When I lived in Sonoma County in the 80's I had horses and there was a "law" that anyone on horseback could cross anyone's property, as long as you closed any gates. And if that horse was carrying a mushroom basket, well, it got kind of murky there.

Another Yahoo issue dealt with by folks putting in their senses worth was about duff.

Should we cover or should we not? Some feel that leaving open spots in the pine forest floors might lead to poor fruiting next season; others (me included) feel that exposing bolete holes leads to

others leading themselves to your openness and has little to do with mushroom futures, naturally.

There were *A. augustus* found, again in the Sierra, Aspen boletes, Kings, and some more Princes in Montana, some *R. xerampelina* off Hwy. 50 by Kyburz, and some morels picked in San Francisco. Yes, morels right here, now, in The City. I shall quote from a most private e-mail: "I confess, I've been holding back from giving up my precious patch. On a sunny Wednesday in September, in the mulched and watered landscaping . . . were a terrific number of *Morchella*: a few *elata*, mostly *esculenta* (not sure whether some of these were *vulgaris*), all in splendid condition, all edible. My four-year old granddaughter quickly became a spotter and I came home with almost a pound. I can add that I was not the first to cut; someone had been there before. There, I feel better. Now can I have my badge?" That last part of the quote strikes deep into your columnist's heart. I have plenty of morels in my larder but no more badges. To all of you that requested (and needed) these I apologize—there are no more.

The Mushroom of the Month for November has been identified and it is *Russula xerampelina* – a delicious and versatile treat. Look for it fruiting in troops under Doug-fir early in our season. A pretty good trick for ID purposes is to scratch the stem and check for amber color to appear very soon thereafter and then turn this mushroom upside down, look at the cap margin, and if it is the same color as the top of the cap there is a good chance that it is what you want. If these field marks are not apparent it is probably not The Shrimp.

That's all for now folks.

Mushroom Hunting and The Magic of Fire

A class with David Arora and William Rubel

Gualala, California

November 22 to November 24, noon to noon

Class fee \$150 per person

(includes two hearth-cooked dinners)

David Arora, author of *Mushrooms Demystified*, and William Rubel, author of the recently published *The Magic of Fire* are offering a workshop on mushroom preparation and traditional hearth cooking in a rustic setting near Gualala in Mendocino County. The weekend workshop includes mushroom hunting and instruction in Identification in the surrounding pine forests where king boletes normally bloom during November, a slide show on traditional cooking methods around the world, and two dinners cooked entirely in the fireplace with hands-on instruction.

Participants are responsible for their own accommodations – there are plenty of motels and inns in the Gualala-Point Arena area. Simple but limited on-site lodging and camping is also available. The class is limited to 18 people so register now! For more information, see www.williamrubel.com – click on "classes." To register or to ask questions about the class, or to inquire about accommodations, contact William Rubel (william@williamrubel.com) or (831) 425-5978.

Culinary Corner

By *Al Carvajal*



photo by David Bell
Roberto & Jocelyne Riobo dancing the Tango

Last month, the theme of the Culinary Group's Monthly meeting was a celebration of the Argentine and all things Argentinean. Located on the southern-most part of South America, Argentina is a nation of immigrants. The tribes that inhabited the Argentine territory were nomadic and lived by hunting, fishing and gathering. In the 16th century, ships brought white men from a different world. The understanding between natives and Spanish conquerors was not easy. Nevertheless, many natives survived and today constitute an important segment of the Argentine population. A new generation

of mixed blood people was born, thus giving rise to a new country. From the 19th century onwards, the Argentine received waves of immigration, which brought the spirit and habits of Spaniards and Italians, in addition to a lesser extent of Swiss, French, German, Irish and English. Thus, the 21st century Argentina is a mixture of races and cultures producing a complex identity that is the feature of the Argentine people. Tango, soccer, a typical cuisine and strong political passions are some of the resulting cultural products.

The birth of Tango took place towards mid-19th century in of dwelling conglomerates around the young city of Buenos Aires. Those who lived there, peasants from inland, European immigrants and some disadvantaged porteños (born in Buenos Aires) made up a new social class and created cultural expressions. This was the start of the Tango. It is clear that Tango culture is earlier than Tango as an artistic expression. But, because other audiences have trouble understanding this culture, its diffusion took place through dance. What started with dance eventually came of age in the expert hands of composers who captured the richest part of the Buenos Aires culture in their compositions. Thus, Tango became a portrayal of Buenos Aires and its people.

As its people, Argentine cuisine is a mixture of cooking elements from various European countries that have been altered to use native food products readily available in the area. Each culture brought the foods from the old country.

The tradition of eating beef began in the 19th century, when there were thousands of cattle in the Pampas region. Beef was roasted on a spit on an open fire. When it was done, people sliced off chunks. They ate by holding the end of a chunk in their mouths and cutting off the rest with a knife. Today, beef is served in many ways. Bife a caballo (beef on horseback) is steak topped with an egg. Parrillada is blood sausage, ribs and other meat grilled together. Churrasco is grilled steak, and milanesa is deep-fried breaded beef. It is common for Argentines to socialize over an asado, beef roast barbecued over an open fire.

To celebrate Argentina, the culinary group chose a parrillada in the October meeting. As usual, we started with a plethora of appetizers

washed down with a wonderful sangria (Carol Hellums). Some of the appetizers were a cannellini bean dip with chanterelle croutons (Edwin Caba), an Argentine beef stew baked in a pumpkin (David Bell), mushrooms with chipotle peppers (Dave Surbale), a morel pate (Leon Ilniki) and an Argentinean tortilla (Pablo Riviere). There were many more, all excellent, but their cooks forgot to log on the appetizer sign on sheet and I have no idea who did what.

And how can you have anything Argentinean without Tango? So, after appetizers, we all marched to the Auditorium to see an outstanding Tango dancing demonstration by two excellent professional dancers and teachers, Roberto and Jocelyne Riobo (web site at <http://www.barriotango.com>). After the demonstration, Roberto taught a short Tango class to those culinary members willing to participate. Everybody had great fun.



photo by David Bell
Dinner attendants being trained in Tango dancing.

We came back to the Hall of Flowers library and started the dinner with a wonderful gazpacho (George Collier) followed by some outstanding meat empanadas (meat pies) prepared by Rodolfo. After that, we lined up on the patio; John Garrone and Rodolfo had set up an eight 8 foot grill to use for the parrillada and churrasco, it was served with two different kinds of chimichuri sauces. The parrillada consisted of morcillas (blood sausage), chorizos and tripe prepared Argentinean style. The churrasco (beef tenderloin steaks) were cooked to perfection. It was served with an excellent green salad prepared by Jeanne Campbell and bread brought in by Bill Hellums. We finished with an excellent dessert of enyucado (coconut and casabe cake) with dulce de leche (Sherry Carvajal) and yerba mate tea (Remo Arancio). In all, it was an evening to remember and the result of great effort by John Garrone, Rodolfo, Bill Hellums and the rest of the culinary group.

For our next meeting we are planning a visit to Italy. Wild mushrooms should be more available and we will have a delightful dinner.

Mendocino Regional Foray

January 24-26, 2003

NAMA is holding a regional foray on the Mendocino coast January 24-26, 2003. The Albion Field Station is located on the North Coast just south of the town of Mendocino, 2.5 hours north of San Francisco. Darvin DeShazer of SOMA will be the foray mycologist, and will give a talk on Saturday evening.

Cost of \$115 includes all meals from Friday dinner through Sunday breakfast. Rooms are heated, participants should bring bedding. To see the facility, check www.puc.edu/Albion/.

Half of the 60 spaces for this foray are reserved for non-local NAMA members, so local NAMA members (from FFSC, MSSF, SOMA, Humboldt Bay) need to sign up soon or take their chances for a last minute add-on. For further information, contact Debbie Johnson, debjean@cruzio.com, (831) 459-9530, 214 Fairmount Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062. A check for \$25 payable to "NAMA Forays 03" reserves your place, with the balance due 30 days prior to the event.



photo by David Bell
Roberto & Jocelyne Riobo dance the Tango while Culinary members observe

Cultivation Corner

By Ken Litchfield, © 2002

We have a few events coming up. Included is the Garden Workday in October for the benefit of those who read the online version of this newsletter that comes out earlier than the printed one.

Mushroom Garden Workday - Sunday, October 27th, 10 - 3+

On Sunday October 27th we will have a mushroom garden workday at the Presidio garden. This will begin around 10 in the morning and go till around 3 in the afternoon. We'll be spreading mulch, cleaning up and preparing beds for fall planting, harvesting mushrooms, and generally fixing up the garden for its partial transfer back to the museum courtyard and continuing enhancement at the Presidio, and prepping specimens and cultures for the Fungus Fair. Your attendance and participation for any or all of that is welcome. Drinks and refreshments and sack lunches are recommended, some of which we will have.

Presidio Lab Workday - Sunday, November 3rd, 9 - 3+

On Sunday November 3rd we will have another cooking day with Norm at the lab for preparing cultures for the Fungus Fair. Besides the usual edibles and colorful flower mushrooms we would like to grow out a bunch of dye mushrooms. If you would like to prepare some cultures for any display that you oversee at the Fair this will be our first opportunity to prepare the cultures you want at your own MSSF facility. Yes, it will require some experimentation to hit things just right but that can be as fun as foraging for them and maybe more reliable. If you attend the Land's End Foray with Tom Sasaki starting at 9:30 in the morning you can bring whatever you find over to the lab afterwards and capture it for culture and/or cook it up in the kitchen. We'll be starting around 9 and going to around 3 or later.

Presidio Harvest Festival - Saturday November 9th, 10 - 2

On Saturday November 9th from 10am - 2pm the Presidio will host their first annual Harvest Festival promoting organic farming and gardening and alternative foods and lifestyles. It will be on the large Green at Graham Street next to the large parking lot at the Main Post. They have offered us free (yes, Free) booth space and we can sell memberships and whatever else we want like T-shirts and books to raise money for the society. We will have cultivation demos and sell spawn for our cultivation projects. The MSSF Culinary folks will be selling mushroom soup for their income and books will be sold for society income. If someone would like to volunteer to get the remaining T-shirts together, we could sell them also. We could use a collected calendar of public MSSF events and forays to copy for fliers for promotion along with the Fair. If you have an electronic file I'll get it printed up unless someone would like to do this for us. You are welcome to participate in any way.

Fungus Fair - December 13 - 15

We are working on planning our displays and volunteer help for the Fungus Fair at the Oakland museum. We will have demos showing the lab processes for sterile capture, transfer, growing out, ramping up, and fruiting of fungi. We will have graphics on the walls and displays on the tables that need preparation before the event. Among the interesting displays will be a chair Enrique Sanchez is making that will be upholstered with pink oyster spawn. On Friday December 13th during the day and evening we will be setting up the cultivation displays along with the big woodland display at the main entrance to make them ready to plug in the mushrooms when they come in from the forays. If you can't make the forays but would like to help during that day show up and there should be plenty of jobs to do. We can also use assistance for Jim

Miller, the Duff Czar, who brings in the duff that we and the other committees use for the mushroom displays and tables. It's never too early to start looking for and collecting those bags of pine needles, oak leaves, mossy, gnarly, hollow logs, and other stuff that makes the natural background for the mushrooms.

And now, for some actual mushroom cultivation information.... For a while I have been proselytizing the benefits of growing mushrooms in your garden. If you have a garden or like to garden or like mushrooms in any way then one of the best ways to get to know the fungal kingdom is to grow at least one species in your garden. That species should be the Garden Giant or Burgundy Cap, *Stropharia rugoso-annulata*. It is an extraordinarily easy mushroom to grow on a wide range of raw mulch materials that are readily available or actually in need of recycling. Yes, it is a very reliable producer of huge mushrooms that you can use like fragrant button mushrooms when they are young or grill like portobellos when they are fully unfurled. But you don't have to just eat it. It can act like your pet recycling blob that you keep out in the back yard and feed everything from cardboard to kitchen scraps. If you are big on worm bins you can add it to the bin, and the worms and the mushroom will thrive together. You can make observations of how the mycelium grows and follows nourishment and moisture, breaking down raw materials to make mushrooms and humus. Organisms like fungi are so hidden and alien to the average person, and even many mycophiles, that only experience the sight and taste of the fruiting body, that it helps to find a way to interact and relate to them on a personal basis. What better way to get to know another organism than to grow it and feed it and treat it like a family pet.

We have had great success growing this mushroom at our Presidio Garden this year. We have had kilos of mushrooms every week. It has been a fine fundraiser for our committee. It is a great educational tool to teach other people about mushrooms when you can go out in the garden and show the fruiting body and mycelial body to them and give a hunk of it for them to take home to their own garden. Or make slurry of the old caps and spores to spread around on perfectly good materials for recycling that would otherwise add to an overburdened landfill. While it doesn't have the great culinary intensity of morels or porcini, most people regard it at least as good as the *Agaricus*. Perhaps some experimentation is needed to determine the best recipes for your palate. Like all mushrooms you may be one who's taste buds aren't adapted to that species. But you could then trade or give them away like zucchinis or tomatoes while still enjoying their benefits. Come out to the Presidio garden, and soon to the Randall now that we're working on moving it back, if you want to see first hand how to grow this and other mushrooms.

Membership and Subscription Information

To Join the MSSF and receive this newsletter, send a \$25 check, payable to MSSF (\$20 for seniors 65 and over and full time students), to MSSF Membership, 2750 Market St., Suite 103, San Francisco, CA 94114-1987, Attn: David Bartolotta. Please include contact information: home and/or work phone numbers and e-mail address. New and renewal memberships will be current through December of 2002. To change your mailing address, please notify David. MSSF members may also join or renew membership in the North American Mycological Association at a reduced rate by including with their MSSF check a separate check for \$32 payable to NAMA. Send it to David at the same address. For further information, e-mail David at david@bartolotta.com or call at (415) 621-3166.

In Gratitude to Mushrooms

By *Debbie Viess*

As our national holiday of Thanksgiving looms, what better time to express my gratitude for the myriad ways in which mushrooms have enriched my life. The pursuit of wild mushrooms has re-affirmed my sense of wonder about the natural world. Mushrooms have taught me to slow down, to pay attention, and have rewarded me many times for changing my perspective. I have stood right on a patch of morels and not seen them, but when I crouched down, then suddenly they appeared as if by magic before my eyes. Of course, they were there all along, and it was my altered perspective that allowed me to see them.

I am profoundly grateful for the beauty of mushrooms. Pause in the proper habitat, with the moist verdancy of our winter woods tickling your senses, and suddenly, fantastic fungal fructifications pop out of the landscape - from tiny perfect bell-shaped caps of an orange mycena, to the dramatic sweep of a hawk's wing mushroom, *Sarcodon imbricatum*, its scalloped cap concealing the many spore-bearing teeth. These are visual moments to dye for (with apologies to M. Rice and D. Beebee).

As an artist with a naturalistic bent, I appreciate mushrooms as the ideal artist's model. Unlike animals, they don't run off (although John James Audubon solved this dilemma by shooting his models first) and unlike plants they don't wilt. Because they are infinitely portable, you can draw them in the comfort of your own home. Since they are the fruit of the fungus, you can pick them without guilt. Mushrooms teach me not to procrastinate - waiting to draw your fungus can result in color changes and worse. It almost makes you believe in the transmutation of matter to see your formerly perfect fungi crawl across the table, transmuted into mini-mycocompetitors (that's maggots, to you).

To me, mushrooms are constantly thought provoking. Why do they fruit when they do? How do they "time-share" their mycorrhizal hosts? What role do other animals play in the dissemination of spores? The MSSF alone contains 700+ bipedal spore vectors. Will *Amanita phalloides*, like starlings with a vengeance, displace our valuable native mushrooms? And, more importantly, why couldn't a choice edible *Amanita* have been introduced instead?

I am thrilled to find in mushrooms the evidence of evolution in action, like the bizarre secotioid forms - agaric mushrooms that have simplified and gone underground for a more truffle-like existence. There are sometimes interesting "mutant" mushrooms to be seen, like a mushroom with a tiny identical mushroom piggy-backed on top, or gills produced on the top of a chanterelle cap.

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These are more layers of visual variety added to an already visually diverse group.

When I tell people that I have a consuming interest in mushrooms, I also mean it quite literally. I am thankful for the many mouthwatering varieties that have enriched my table and amazed and delighted my friends. When I find a motherlode of chanterelles or a field of boletes, I am filled with gratitude as I fill my basket. I try to pick lightly, replace my divots, bury my trimmings and always leave some mushrooms behind to shed their spores. This, I believe, is gratitude in action.

Finally, I am grateful to mushrooms for introducing me to a whole new set of wonderful friends. When my husband David and I were first learning about mushrooms, I would read David Arora's *All That the Rain Promises, and More...* and be as drawn to the people portrayed as to the mushrooms themselves. One night, I looked up from my book with shining eyes and exclaimed, "These are my people!" And it proved to be true. Mushroomers have been a treasure-trove of friends: highly intelligent, woods-wise, quirky, obsessive (but in a good way) and by god they sure know how to cook, unlike my former birding friends.

So, when Thanksgiving comes around again this year, remember all the ways that mushrooms have enriched your life, and pause to give thanks. When you find yourself on your knees before your next great fungal bounty, take a moment to be grateful. And perhaps you could find your own way to give back to the mushroom community, both fungal and human, and help to make the woods more welcoming for us all.

Wild About Mushrooms Co. Fall/Winter Schedule

The Wild About Mushrooms Co. Fall/Winter 2002-03 Events Schedule is available. The Wild About Mushrooms Co. offers mushroom forays, classes, culinary events, and much more. If you would like to receive a free copy of the new schedule, you may call (707) 887-1888, or e-mail to charmoon@sonic.net. You may also view and print the schedule at www.wildabout-mushrooms.net.

Society Officers

President: David Rust (510) 430-9353
 Vice Pres: Mark Lockaby (510) 412-9964
 Secretary: Carol Hellums. (415) 255-4950
 Treasurer: George Collier (415) 641-6068

Select Committees

Forays: Tom Sasaki (415) 776-0791
 Book Sales: Norm Andresen. (510) 278-8998
 Membership: David Bartolotta (415) 621-3166

MSSF Fungus Fair Call for Volunteers

Oakland Museum
Saturday, December 14, 10-5 pm
Sunday, December 15, 12-5 pm

The MSSF needs your help to produce another fantastic fair at the Oakland Museum. Volunteers are needed for a variety of functions. In addition to forays on Friday and fair set-up & mushroom ID on Friday night, volunteers can help on Saturday and Sunday with mushroom education, T-shirts & books, memberships, cooking demonstrations, medicinal mushrooms display, children's art, or general relief for mushroom table participants. We especially need devoted help for set-up on Friday night and clean-up on Sunday evening.

Shift obligation for free admission are Friday 3-7 pm or 8-11 pm, Saturday 10-1:30 or 1:30-5, Sunday 12-3, 3-6 (includes one hour of clean-up) or 5-7 for clean-up.

Contact Lorrie Gallagher at (415) 467-1868 or lorriegallagher@hotmail.com to volunteer.

MSSF Calendar, November 2002

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contact Debbie Viess at (510) 430-9353 or amanitarita@yahoo.com, or 328 Marlow Dr., Oakland CA, 94605.

Tuesday-Wednesday, December 3-4, Lalimes Mushroom Dinner: Cost is \$42, call (510) 527-9838 for reservations, see note in this newsletter

Saturday, December 7, Wild Mushroom Walk: 10 a.m. to noon, a foray through the Presidio, meet at the Main Post Officers' Club; directions sent with confirmation. Free, registration required call (415) 561-7752. Instructors are Bill and Louise Freedman, co-sponsored by Chrissy Field Center and the MSSF.

Saturday, December 7, Nevada City Foray: The foray into the Yuba watershed will be lead by Jerry Bloom and Daniel Nicholson. For details, contact Daniel Nicholson, 530-265-9328.

Sunday, December 8, S. F. Land's End Walk: Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot in front of the WWII monument to USS San Francisco at the north end of El Camino del Mar. To get there, take Geary Ave, which becomes Point Lobo Ave at the west end. At El Camino Del Mar, turn right and proceed to parking lot. Foray Leader: J.R. Blair (650) 728-9405, jrbclair@outrageous.net

Monday, December 9, MSSF Annual Holiday Dinner: 7 p.m., Snow Building at the Oakland Zoo, located at 9777 Golf Links Road, Oakland. For information, please contact David Campbell at (415) 457-7628 or yogidog@attbi.com. To reserve a place, please mail a check, payable to the MSSF, for \$30 per person to George Collier, 1535 Church Street, SF, CA 94131.

Request for *Amanita phalloides* Samples

I am exploring the biogeography of *Amanita phalloides*, the death cap mushroom. I am interested to see if the American population originated in Europe, if the West Coast population derived from an East Coast population, and if *A. phalloides* is invasive in the state of California. Samples from anywhere in North America or Europe would be welcome.

I am looking for specimens with caps that are olive, yellow-olive, or yellow-white with olive hue, typically with innate darker streaks, 3.5-15 cm wide, free cream-colored gills, pendulous annulus, and thin white membranous sac-like volva.

A poster with photos may be downloaded from <http://plantbio.berkeley.edu/~taylor/ftp/Aphalloides.pdf>

Mushrooms or pieces of mushrooms may be dried at low heat. Please include a description of where, when, and under which trees you found the mushroom.

Samples may be sent to:

Dr. Anne Pringle, University of California, Plant and Microbial Biology, 111 Koshland Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720-3102. Phone: (510) 642-8441, E-mail is apringl@uclink.berkeley.edu.

Thursday, December 12, Thursday Foray for Fungus Fair: Location to be announced in next newsletter; Foray Leader will be J.R. Blair (650) 728-9405, jrbclair@outrageous.net

Friday, December 13, Forays for Annual Fungus Fair: Forays to be scheduled throughout the Bay Area and beyond to collect mushrooms for the Fungus Fair. Details to be announced in next newsletter.

Saturday-Sunday, December 13-14, Annual Fungus Fair: Oakland Museum, 10-5 Saturday, noon-5 Sunday

Monday, January 8, 2002, Culinary Group's Monthly Dinner: 7 p.m., Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. For reservations or information, please contact Karin Roos at (510) 235-3471 or marmalade@toast.net

Saturday-Monday, January 18-20, 2003, SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp: (Fee) In Mendocino, Martin Luther King weekend, see description inside. To register, print form from the SOMA website (www.SOMAmushrooms.org), or call (707) 773-1011, or e-mail: lamorr@pacbell.net. For general Camp information, contact Charmoon, SOMA Camp coordinator, at (707) 887-1888, or charmoo@sonic.net.

Friday-Sunday, January 24-26, 2003, Mendocino Regional Foray: NAMA regional foray on the Mendocino coast, Albion Field Station. Darwin DeShazer of SOMA will be the foray mycologist. A fee of \$115 includes all meals, participants should bring bedding. For further information, contact Debbie Johnson, debjean@cruzio.com, (831) 459-9530, 214 Fairmount Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062.

Mycological Society of San Francisco
c/o The Randall Museum
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San Francisco, CA 94114

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Saturday, November 2, Lichen Society Micro-workshop: Mikki McGee, SFSU campus, Hensill Hall Annex, 10-4, Contact Mikki McGee, 3 Inyo St. #3, Brisbane, CA 94005, (415) 467-5285, mikkimc@juno.com.

Sunday, November 3, Presidio Cultivation Class: 9-3 cultivation class MSSF Presidio Lab, free, contact Ken Litchfield (415) 863-7618, (see also cultivation article, page 7).

Sunday, November 3, Beginners Mushroom Walk at Land's End: Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot in front of the WWII monument at north end of El Camino del Mar. Foray Leader: Tom Sasaki (415) 776-0791 or e-mail sasakitom@aol.com.

Monday, November 4, Culinary Group's Monthly Dinner: 7 p.m., Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park, a taste of Italian flavors and cuisine. For reservations or information, please contact Alvaro Carvajal by phone at (415) 695-0466 or alvaro.carvajal@att.net

Saturday, November 9, Mushroom Cultivation Workshop: Chrissy Field, 1 to 3 p.m., \$10 per person, call (415) 561-7752 to register. Instructor is Ken Litchfield, co-sponsored by the Chrissy Field Center and the MSSF.

Saturday, November 9, Presidio Harvest Festival: From 10am - 2pm, the Presidio will host their first annual Harvest Festival promoting organic farming and gardening; held at the large Green on Graham Street next to the large parking lot at the Main Post.

Saturday, November 16, Annual Salt Point Foray: Woodside Campground at 10 a.m. This is a 'just show up' event, potluck feast on Saturday night. Foray Leaders: David and Jeanne Campbell, (415) 457-7662

Tuesday, November 19, MSSF General Meeting: Randall Museum, doors open for library browsing and mushroom identification at 7 pm, meeting starts at 8 pm.

Friday-Sunday, November 22-24, Mushroom Hunting and Hearth Cooking: (Fee) A class with David Arora and William Rubel in Gualala, To register, contact William Rubel, william@williamrubel.com or call (831) 425-5978.

Friday-Sunday, November 22-24, Annual Mendocino Woodlands Foray: Forays to be led by Mark Lockaby and Tina and Tom Keller. Send check to Foray Coordinator: Tom Sasaki. 1506 Lyon St., San Francisco, CA 94115, (415) 776-0791, e-mail sasakitom@aol.com. See article in this newsletter for details.

Sunday, November 24, Cooking Edible Wild Mushrooms: Chrissy Field, 1 to 5 p.m., \$20 per person, call (415) 561-7752 to register. Instructors are David and Jeanne Campbell, co-sponsored by Chrissy Field Center and the MSSF.

Thursday-Sunday, Nov 29-Dec 1, David Arora's Mendocino Foray: (Fee) Albion, Mendocino coast, Thanksgiving weekend,

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