

## The Other Tree Plague

By Fred Stevens

You've heard about Sudden Oak Death, but what about Pine pitch canker? In many ways Pine pitch canker is just as serious, but it hasn't received the media attention, probably because affected trees usually die slowly, over a period of several years, rather than weeks. Like Sudden Oak Death, Pine pitch canker affects a number of species, and it's spreading. Pine pitch canker is a fungal disease. The causal organism is *Fusarium subglutinans*, native to the southeastern U.S. It was first reported in California in the 1980's in the Santa Cruz area. Since then, Pine pitch canker has spread southward along the California coast to San Diego Co., and as far north as Mendocino Co. Susceptible trees include Monterey pine and Bishop pine but it can also attack Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine, Beach pine, Digger (Gray) pine, Coulter pine, Knobcone pine, and Torrey pine. Local bolete hunters have always paid special attention to Bishop pine and Monterey pine since they are mycorrhizal hosts for *Boletus edulis*. The Bishop pines at Salt Point in Sonoma County are particularly productive. Fortunately, the disease does not appear to be common in this area yet. Of major concern to foresters is the Monterey pine, a species with considerable commercial value. Due to its fast growth, it is the tree of choice for timber plantations in places like Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. In the Bay Area the Monterey pine is an important park tree, and grown in Christmas trees farms. Ironically, though widely planted, the Monterey pine is in trouble. It exists in the wild in only a few small stands, some of which are threatened by development. Thus an already limited gene pool is now even more endangered by this disease.

Pine pitch canker is primarily spread by bark beetles which carry the disease from tree to tree after feeding on infected wood. It can, however, also be spread aerially, or by cutting tools,

*Continued on page 6*

### Table of Contents

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| The Other Tree Plague    | 1 |
| Mexican Mushroom Madness | 1 |
| Culinary Corner          | 2 |
| Just Around the Corner   | 3 |
| The Forager's Report     | 5 |
| Cultivation Corner       | 6 |
| Rare Books               | 7 |
| Calendar                 | 8 |

# Mycena News

*Mycological Society of San Francisco*

*December, 2001, vol 52:12*

## Mexican Mushroom Magic

By Carol Hellums

It all started in May, with a terse email from Mark Thomsen. "This was sent to the MSSF. It is neither endorsed by nor affiliated with the MSSF. That being said it will probably be of interest to some of our members."

Attached was a description of a foray to be held in Mexico in late August. We sent off a few requests for more information, and eventually – with some trepidation – wired a biggish chunk of money to a Mexican bank to pay for what we hoped would be "an exciting opportunity to experience the mushrooms of Mexico in stunning, out-of-the-way locations and with expert guidance."

That's what the e-mail said, anyhow. Guess what? It was all that and more.

August 27

We emerge from customs in Mexico City and look around. We're supposed to be met at the airport. Will someone be waiting, or will we find out that wiring money to Mexico on the strength of a couple e-mails and an appealing web site is a really bad idea?

We see the mushroom before we see the man - a two-foot tall sign reading "Tlaxcala Mushroom Tour". The man holding it reminds me a bit of Crocodile Dundee; that is, if Crocodile Dundee were much taller, better looking, and a lot more gracious. He introduces himself as Erik Portsmouth, one of the tour organizers, and husband to Gundi Jeffrey, with whom we've been corresponding.

That night we stay in a hotel near the airport. There's an evening reception - a buffet table loaded with mushroom dishes typical of the region and the season. We sip wine from Baja California and meet the rest of the group. There are 17 of us in all, plus a mycologist from the University of Tlaxcala and three tour leaders. We discover that MSSF and the Bay Area are well represented, with Connie Green, Kathy Faircloth, Toni Moore, and Bill and me.

The mycologist, Arturo Estrada Torres, introduces us to the area where we'll be foraging. Tlaxcala is the smallest state in Mexico, in the highlands about an hour's drive east of Mexico City. It's a place where tropical and temperate flora meet and mingle. We can expect to see familiar U.S. mushrooms, unfamiliar tropical ones, and a few that are unique to the area.

It's clear already that both food and mycology are going to be well served on this trip.

August 28

Our caravan departs for Tlaxcala around 10: Two white passenger vans, Erik and Gundi's SUV, and a motorcycle driven by the intrepid Frank, who has ridden it all the way from Toronto, Ontario.

Our van climbs up and out of the cornfields and endless, depressing housing tracts of the

*Continued on page 4*



Bill Hellums with two nice *Boletus pinophilus* and the peak of La Malinche in the background.

## Culinary Corner

By *Al Carvajal*

We had our monthly culinary meeting at the Slavonic Cultural Center on November 6 with a sizable and very appreciative group. The Culinary Group celebrated Trafalgar Day with a dinner in the style of the English Navy of the period, or at least of how the English sailors would have had a dinner if they knew how to cook. Trafalgar was a naval battle won by the British Navy under the command of Admiral Lord Nelson over the Napoleonic French Navy. The victory stopped the expansion of the French revolution in Europe and started the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte. It also marked the arrival of England as the dominant world power in the 19th century.

As usual, we started with a marvelous collection of appetizers. All were just outstanding. I just can't remember all of them, nor the people who cooked them. I guess that is a sign of my advancing age. I just can list a few of the most remarkable. Dave Bell's mushrooms stuffed with salmon looked divine but by the time I got to the appetizer table they were all gone. I was told that they tasted great. One of our new members, George Collier, prepared some tomato and garlic chanterelles over toasted bread squares. I did get some of those. David Eichorn prepared a chipotle humus that went very well with eggplant and pepper dip with pita bread made by Christopher Rhodes. I don't know if they coordinated their efforts, but I know that Christopher can use some of those Middle Eastern cooking skills since he has joined the Peace Corps and will be going to those parts of the world. Someone made some delicious salmon and shitake rolls but I could not find out whom. Another interesting dish was an artichoke and mushroom quiche "sans the crust" prepared by Tom Sasaki. I always assumed that you needed a crust to make a good quiche but I was proven wrong. Mark Lockaby made a mozzarella and tomato salad, not very British, but it tasted great. Perhaps Mark was celebrating Nelson's happy years in Italy! And MaryAnn Swazo brought an aged English stilton, complete with the moldy smell and lacking only a glass of sweet sherry to make you feel like the lord of the manor.

After appetizers, we started the dinner with negus, a punch similar to sangria prepared by Dick Rhodes. It was refreshing and interesting tasting, perhaps due to the selection of spices. Jeanne Campbell honored Lady Emma Hamilton with a delicious garden salad. Lady Hamilton was a common woman of uncommon beauty, charm and intelligence that knew how to use her considerable gifts to rise to the upper echelons of the British society. Her beauty was immortalized by almost all the great painters of the century. She became Lord Nelson's lover and bore him a daughter while still married to Lord Hamilton, the English ambassador to the King of Naples. The salad was followed with roasted wild boar and boletus prepared by Bill and Carol Hellums, using an authentic recipe of the era. The dish had the consistency and appearance of a cassoulet since it also calls for white beans, but delivers a totally different flavor. The boar was served with a combination of brown and wild rice prepared with oranges and walnuts (Cindy Valentine), baked pumpkin (Fred Kron, who also brought the rolls and butter) and a very English dish: snow peas with onions (Monique Carment). The later is the type of dish one gets for dinner in early summer in those quaint little cottages on the side of country roads in Sussex. We closed the affair with sticky toffee pudding (David

Suurballe), decaffeinated coffee (Remo Arancio), and Maids of Honor (Beryl Durnell). Sticky toffee pudding is like a molasses cake topped with syrup and whipped cream. It tasted incredible, the type of dessert my grand mother would have made. The combination worked very well, definitely better than what any Lord Admiral was ever served on Her Majesty's Royal Navy.

We will not have a regular Culinary meeting during the month of December, because we all are going to be preparing the appetizers for the MSSF Holiday Celebration. Aren't we?

### The MSSF Mushroom Marketplace

Be sure to stop by the club's Mushroom Marketplace at this year's Fungus Fair. You can buy mushroom-related food products from around the world at little or no mark-up. This year's theme is CHEAP and most items will be in the \$2-\$3 price range. All proceeds benefit the MSSF. Some items to look for are porcini bouillon, wheat-free corn/porcini pasta, mushroom-shaped cookies and chocolates, vegetarian shitake oyster and soy sauces, matsutake noodle soup, and an assortment of dried mushrooms from China. These make great stocking stuffers. It's also a great way to try new products you've always been curious about while supporting the club.

#### Society Officers

President: David Rust.....(510) 430-9353  
Vice Pres: Mark Lockaby.....(510) 412-9964  
Secretary: Jeanne Campbell.....(415) 457-7662  
Treasurer: Sherry Carvajal.....(415) 695-0466

#### Select Committees

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

#### 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 email 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, email David at david@bartolotta.com or call at (415) 621-3166.

## Fungus Fair Forays

Friday, December 7

for Fugus Fair held on Dec. 8-9

Members are encouraged to collect mushrooms on Friday, December 7, for the Fungus Fair being held at the Oakland Museum's Natural Science Gallery. For this purpose, forays are being scheduled throughout the Bay Area and beyond. Only serious rain will cancel or delay these fungus collections. Bring cardboard boxes, baskets, wax paper and wax paper bags for your collection and also bring lunch and water. For more information call individual foray leaders.

**Memorial Park:** San Mateo County, 9:30 am, meet near entrance to the park. Mike Wood (510) 357-7696, Fred Stevens (650) 994-1374.

**S.F. Watershed** at Las Pulgas Temple on Cañada Road, in San Mateo County, led by Bill Freedman. Trip begins at 10:00 am, please try to arrive 30 minutes earlier. We must leave the watershed trips by 3:00 pm, especially this year, because we must drive to Oakland to prepare for the Fair. 650-344-7774

**Wunderlich Park:** J. R. Blair will be lead a foray in Wunderlich Park, San Mateo County, 10 am departure. Show up, or phone or e-mail him - 650-728-9405, jrblair@outrageous.net

**Santa Cruz Area:** Thomas and Tina Keller will lead a foray in the UC Santa Cruz campus area, meet at 8 am. E-mail them at tkeller@worldnet.att.net, or call 408-879-0939 for specifics.

**Tomales Bay State Park:** Robert Mackler will lead a foray in Tomales Bay State Park, in Marin County. Meet at 10 am in the small parking area at the upper end of the Jepson Trail. It is on the right side of Pierce Point Road about a quarter mile before the park entrance. Call 510-799-6756 before 9pm the night before (Thursday) for more information in case of cancellation or changes.

**Salt Point State Park:** Anna Moore will lead a Salt Point foray in Sonoma County. Meet at Stump Beach at 10 am. Contact her at 510-643-9518 if need be.

**Willits Ranch Foray:** Collecting specimens on a private ranch in northern California, in Mendocino County. The habitat is mostly tanoak and madrone with a few areas of redwood, pine, fir and oak. Meet at 9:30 am, and call or e-mail for directions. Jan Donaghy 510-339-1569 Janman955@aol.com or Mark Lockaby 510-412-9964, Pozer900ss@aol.com

**Nevada City Foray:** Sierra foothills collecting in Nevada City at Pioneer Park. Meet at 9am. Coordinators are Jerry Bloom and Daniel Nicholson, 530-265-9328

## Just Around the Corner

By Else C. Vellinga

During those long and dry Californian summers mushrooms in gardens and lawns are a welcome sight. Amid the newly planted basil, marigolds, and pelargoniums along Oxford Street here in Berkeley the showy big white caps of a *Lepiota* popped up. Really big fruitbodies, in clusters of two to five specimens and half fairy rings. The first ones were spotted at the end of May, and until now (mid-November!) new crops have regularly appeared. Young ones are spitting images of young Shaggy parasols (*Macrolepiota rachodes*), old ones are whiter, and lack big brown scales. And have green gills and spores - the green-spored parasol, *Chlorophyllum molybdites*, in other words. This is really a species to avoid, as it can cause heavy stomach upsets. It tops the list at the mushroom poisoning registry in this country. Fortunately, it is a rare appearance in our area. Some years ago a student found one on the Berkeley campus, but the species is more common in warmer areas, like the central valley, or the Los Angeles area where it has almost become a weed in the irrigated lawns. So is this a sign of global warming going local?

*Macrolepiota rachodes* is a common sight on the Berkeley campus, all through the winter. The spores do not turn green with age, as do those of the green-spored parasol, though the gills might occasionally become a bit greenish. Actually, it is not *M. rachodes* on campus; there are two species around here. The most common one with the abrupt bulbous base of the stipe, and a rather simple ring is an undescribed species; the real *M. rachodes* is much more rare. There are also some nice and easy microscopic characters to distinguish the two (and molecular differences). Both like gardens, compost heaps and other places where there is food enough for them. And both species are really nice edibles, though some people have strong unpleasant reactions. The undescribed species is found all through the west of the USA, and has probably been transported with plants like Monterey pine and Monterey cypress to Australia, where it is doing well on compost heaps and under those imported trees. *Macrolepiota rachodes* itself is, as far as I know, found throughout the eastern parts of the USA, and it is common in Europe.

Fred Stevens took some instructive pictures of *Chlorophyllum* and the *Macrolepiota* side by side and these can be found at the mykoweb web site of California mushrooms: [http://www.mykoweb.com/CAF/species/chlorophyllum\\_molybdites.html](http://www.mykoweb.com/CAF/species/chlorophyllum_molybdites.html).

So, common species, just around the corner, can lead us to lots of discoveries!

## Lab For Sale

Contents of home Mycology/Microbiology lab. Includes glassware, sterilizer, media, chemicals, microscope and much more. Call Dr. Steve Rosenberg at 510-537-0326, or e-mail rosenb@uclink4.berkeley.edu for complete list of items and prices.

## Mexican Mushroom Magic

*Continued from page 1*

Valley of Mexico, into pines and fog. It's the end of the rainy season, and everything is green and damp. We pull off the freeway at a rest stop on the slopes of Popocateptl, a not-so-inactive volcano that is Mexico's second highest mountain, and spend a couple of hours wandering through the trees and meadows. My foraying isn't very successful - I'm too distracted at just being in Mexico again, a place that I love, enjoying the wet green grass after a California summer, admiring the scenery, the donkeys, and the old farm buildings.

Back to the rest stop for a comida corrida. That can be translated as a "fast meal," but Macdonald's was never like this: a bubbling stew of chicken and tomatillos, served in a molcajete (a three-legged stone bowl usually used for grinding spices), plus a plate with savory beans, rice, little roasted onions, nopales (cactus), and a mild string cheese.

Then it's on to Tlaxcala. We ride out of the mountains, the pines, the fog and the rain, into sunshine and oaks, hills and cornfields. Our destination is a 16th-century hacienda, now a hotel, called "La Escondida", where we'll spend the next four nights.

At first sight, La Escondida is a surprise. It may be a 16th-century hacienda, but the main façade is something out of a Victorian fantasy - or nightmare - of the Middle Ages, all turrets and battlements and crenellation. Bad remodeling job. The interior is pure Mexico, though: a courtyard vivid with flowers, and cool, high-ceilinged rooms and hallways. (There are a few architectural flights of fancy inside, though - ask Connie Green about her bathroom.)

The hotel is located on the lower slopes of La Malinche - an extinct volcano almost 15,000 feet high. The windows of our room look out on some of the old hacienda buildings, then across a sweep of green fields, then forests, and up to the mountain's peak, about 6 miles away.

Dinner is amazing. In fact, the meals in general are amazing. Two of the tour organizers, Jon Jarvis and Estela Salas Silva, are also proprietors of the Mexican Home Cooking School, and Estela is in charge of the food. (Another Bay Area connection - Estela was chef at El Rebozo Restaurant in Marin for five years.) I like, and agree with, her description of the style of Mexican cooking that she teaches and prepares: "A very high cuisine developed . . . in pre-Hispanic times. It was added to and enhanced by Spanish and the French during their occupations, resulting in a kitchen as rich, subtle and complex as any in the world." No Taco Bell for us!

We meet the other two mycologists who will be accompanying us for the rest of the tour: Alejandro Kong Luz and Adriana Montoya Esquivel - along with their 6-year-old daughter, another Adriana, who has charm to burn. Alejandro does a slide show on his research on the Russulae, and other mushrooms, of nearby La Malinche National Park - which is where we'll be foraying. It's a tribute to everyone involved that most of us manage to stay awake after such a day, such a meal, and unlimited Baja California wine.

August 29 - 31

We spend the next three days foraying at various sites around La Malinche National Park. The park is a circle over 20 km. in diameter, centered on the mountain of La Malinche. Most of the foray sites are

around 9000 - 10,000 feet, and the trees are primarily pine, fir, alder, and oak. Most of the time we travel from spot to spot quite comfortably in the vans, but on two occasions we transfer to pickup trucks to go where the vans can't, or won't, go. A few miles of being tossed around in the back of a pickup can seem very long - someone even falls out, but hops back in unscathed. For the first time, I envy Frank his motorcycle. But the destinations are worth the pain.

Every day we collect baskets and baskets of mushrooms. Just to name a few, there are morels, *Boletus pinophilus*, *Collybia dryophila*, several varieties of *Amanita* - *caesarea*, *rubescens*, and a lot of muscaria that were just too pretty to resist - and much more. (For a species list, check [www.mexmush.com](http://www.mexmush.com).)

Although our group includes everyone from mushroom neophytes to a man who has three mushrooms named after him (David Lewis, the president of the Gulf States Mycological Association), an interest in food is some-



The group getting ready to foray.

thing we all have in common. The three little words we most want to hear: "Yes, it's edible." Getting us out of the woods when it's time to go is rarely a problem. Estela and Jon set up gourmet lunches under the pines that have us trotting happily back to eat, and after lunch there's dinner to look forward to.

In the evenings we return to La Escondida for more of Estela's fabulous food, including pre-dinner tastings of the mushrooms we've found, sautéed in butter. At first I worry that our Mexican mycologists seem much more relaxed about identifying edible amanitas than has been my experience in the U.S.; but I decide that they know what they're doing and I should relax.

One night, Adriana talks about her ethnomycological work in Tlaxcala. She's investigating the relationships between the people in rural areas and the wild mushrooms they collect and use, for food, medicine, and profit. The next day we visit a village where she's been doing research, on the eastern slopes of La Malinche. A family in the village prepares mushroom tamales for our lunch, and that evening they come to La Escondida and serve a buffet dinner. Here's what we have to eat:

- *Ramaria* in tomato sauce.
- Chanterelles in salsa verde with cilantro.
- Boletes with fava beans, pork, and epazote.
- Fried *ramaria* with eggs.
- *Laccaria* with poblano chiles.
- *Amanita rubescens* with pork, epazote, garlic, and onion.
- *Gomphus floccosus* with peas and squash.
- *Lyophyllum decastes* with chicken, tomato, and guajillo chiles.

It may not have been the place for a delicate stomach, but our group all but licked the dishes clean, and we were very happy indeed.

In addition to the nightly mycological talks by Arturo, Adriana, and Alejandro, we have special guest lecturers on the last evening. Professor Gastón Guzmán, president of the Latin American Association of Mycology and the world's authority on *Psilocybes*,

*Continued on page 5*

## The Foragers' Report

By Patrick Hamilton

"Ten days after the first 1/2" of rain. . . ." No, that didn't work. How about, "When the rain drops are as big as mouse ears. . . ." Wait, unuh, wrong season, wrong mushroom, wrong mixed-up old wives' tale.

Many of us have our own radars to know when favorite patches will sprout and how soon after the first rains the mushrooms will show up on our personal detectors. And probably just as many of us tweak these "absolute truths" every year as we learn more and then get confused more and end up knowing less. Curious business, this fungus stuff.

We had the prerequisite 1/2" of rain, especially up on the north Sonoma and southern Mendocino coasts — our early, and often rewarding, forging areas — late in October but few prizes were claimed by those contestants who pursued their forest games (as of November 10th).

The owner of a Ft. Bragg mushroom company found few King Boletes in his best spots. Others forayed near Stillwater Cove and in Salt Point State Park and found a single *B. edulis* and not much more on the 7th and 8th. Cep seeker Chris Sterling of Anchor Bay reported seeing only one and that was early in October by a moist pond bank. A lonely but lovely Queen was happily taken under a madrone near Salt Point Lodge. Not much, folks.

October 28th and 29th last year were the dates for a first strong showing of boletes along our coast and they continued for several weeks. This year they will assuredly start later and maybe we'll have them through Christmas for presents to ourselves.

## Mexican Mushroom Magic

*Cont'd from page 4*

speaks on the sacred mushrooms of Mexico. Dr. Francisco de Diego Calonge, director of the Royal Botanical Gardens in Madrid, speaks on the medicinal properties of mushrooms. And after dinner these two distinguished and charming gentlemen join those of us who are so inclined (which is most of the group) on the terrace in front of the hotel for a roaring good party.

September 1

Oh no! It's our last day. Our vans take us to the city of Tlaxcala for a day of sightseeing. That evening there's a farewell dinner at the Mexican Home Cooking School, complete with mariachi music and even more delicious, mushroom-oriented, food.

When I look back on the trip, it's hard to find a flaw. Well, there was the traffic noise. The hacienda was bisected by a highway, which at night seemed to run right through our bedroom. But after the first night we didn't notice it much. And the little rattlesnakes in the woods — did I mention them? But the setting was beautiful and exotic. The food was delicious and exotic. The expertise of the mycologists, and their enthusiasm and availability, provided an opportunity to make the trip as educational as one could wish. Gundi and Erik appeared to be equal to any emergency, from recalcitrant van drivers to one guest's acute appendicitis attack. And everyone involved —

Last month this column on foraging suggested some other things to look for when mushrooms are still scarce. Here's another one.

Prickly Pear cactus, those familiar large paddle succulents with fine hair-like spines, are producing goodies for us right now. Look for the pink-ish, orange-ish, or red-ish fruits, called "tunas" in Spanish and "yummy" in Cotati. You pick them with gloves and then, over the stove, quickly burn off the hard-to-see stickers. Peel and eat (spit out the seeds), or cut them into large pieces and put the chunks into a food processor until just chopped and the seeds are loosened from the surrounding flesh. Run this through a food mill or a coarse strainer to remove the seeds and then put the fruit puree over medium high in a heavy-bottomed pan with sugar and lemon juice to taste. Cook until the temperature reaches the syrup or jelly stage (about 215 degrees F), place into canning jars and process as any fruit.

For something fine to dine on while waiting for your patches to produce take enough of this just-made cactus syrup with its luscious strawberry and kiwi flavors, add it to, alas, store-foraged, sauted in butter with caramelized leeks, Golden Chanterelles seasoned with grey French sea salt, freshly ground black pepper and tarragon. Plate with a crisp roasted squab stuffed with wild and Jasmine rice, currants, dried cranberries, chopped pecans and a chiffonade of bitter baby greens served alongside creamy browned-on-top scalloped potatoes. Pair with a fine Loire Valley Chenin Blanc or one of our Savignon Blancs like Mason or Geyser Peak. Ah huh.

Soon enough the usual suspects will be lining up for us to identify but, darn, it's difficult to wait. Until then there is one axiom we can rely on: "When the last Black oak tassle hits a 10 day old 1/2" wet mouse."

Keep those reports coming in!

organizers, mycologists, and group members alike — was congenial, interesting, and a whole lot of fun.

And I haven't even mentioned the puppet show, the horseback riding, the pulque-making (and drinking), the hacienda's long history, or the story of how it got its present name.

Next year's Tlaxcala Mushroom Tour is currently planned for August 25-31. If you'd like more information:

- [www.mexmush.com](http://www.mexmush.com) (Mexican Mushroom Tours)
- [www.mexicanhomecooking.com](http://www.mexicanhomecooking.com) (Mexican Home Cooking School)
- [www.mexconnect.com](http://www.mexconnect.com) (English-language magazine about Mexico — I like it for general information)

**Mycena News** is the newsletter of the Mycological Society of San Francisco and is published monthly from September through May. Send or email newsletter submissions by the 12th of each month to Lorrie Gallagher, 129 Tucker Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94134, phone: (415) 467-1868, email: [lorriegallagher@hotmail.com](mailto:lorriegallagher@hotmail.com)

Editor: Lorrie Gallagher

Layout: Rose Flaherty

Printing/Mailing: Mother Lode Printing  
Jackson, CA

## Cultivation Corner

By Ken Litchfield, © 2001

Our new Mushroom Garden is getting well established. With Enrique's help it has been divided between the southwest corner and the middle of the north side by a terrace of vertically aligned logs about one and a half to two feet high with a vertical log staircase stepped up through the middle. Strawberries line the top of the log terrace on both sides so the fruit can hang down exposed over the logs during the season. Some of the logs are hollowed out and have been getting stuffed with hardwood chips mixed with Turkey Tails gray and brown and Oysters.

The upper level is divided into two gardens by the log steps and a wood chip path to the east border path of the garden. To the southwest we have a triangular shaped Allium garden with garlic, garlic chives, chives, shallots, onions red and gold, rainbow chard scarlet and crimson, blood leaf dock, French sorrel, horseradish, and thymes lemon, lime, and wooly. The garlic and shallots came from a neighborhood market, picking out the smallest, but plump, bulbs to get more per ninety nine cent pound. The rainbow chard came from the bargain bay of Floorcraft Sloat and the rest were transferred from the museum. Near the southwest point of this garden is a section of ceramic sewer pipe about two and a half feet wide upended as a two foot high open bottomed planter. Everyone who has noticed it has remarked upon its fine appearance, not realizing that it was scrounged as a reject from San Francisco's sewer system redo. Into this planter went a mix of hardwood chips, straw, and the fine hardwood beta chips from the museum's animal room bedding all mixed and wet. That was inoculated with an old culture of Oysters with some life left in it and then cased with a four inch layer of compost with a little stable duff mixed in to top off the planter. The compost layer has had a number of Shaggy Parasol bulbous bases planted into it and will get more. A thin slice of a large log acts as a tree ring manhole cover over the planter to keep out excess water and maintain dampness. Digging down into the center there are patches of fresh white fuzz where the Oysters are starting to take off and the *rachodes* seems to be taking in the compost. We'll have to see who takes over the planter or if they share. This whole Allium garden is covered with a thin mulch of hardwood beta chip bedding from the museum's animal room to indicate that it is planted full. As the garlic shallots and onions sprout from their bulbs the mulch will be thickened with the lengthening sprouts until it is three to four inches thick and ready for invasion by Garden Giants. The vertical leaves of the Alliums provide the perfect humidity catcher for the mushrooms without obscuring the view of the caps as happens with broad leaved leafies.

The garden patch on the northwest side of the log steps is larger and not finished planting yet. So far it has pink and gold rainbow chard alternating with Red Russian kale and Chinese Red Giant Gai Choy mustard, a patch of fingerling potatoes, and some edible flowered Calendulas. It will be getting lots of carrots, kohlrabi, cabbage, and others along with a pit of compost and kitchen waste. The pit gets the bucket of wood ashes I've been saving and several jars of morel spawn from an old batch in Norm's fridge, some of which Terri fruited in their back yard not long ago.

On the lower level there is a seedbed just seeded for several colorful leafies next to a bed of compost inoculated with bulbous bases of a giant strain of Shaggy Parasol. Opposite this patch is a big bed

of beta chips fully invaded with Garden Giant mycelia for the Fungus Fair. It is also for inoculating more massive quantities of spawn to ratchet up the mycelial mass for attacking the huge piles of materials in the compost program.

We have just made a large move of many of the museum plants to the garden and will be getting them and more into the ground soon. In addition, the lab is looking good. The back and side warehouse walls have been cleaned of their old peeling paint and grime and now have new coats of paint thanks to Enrique and Jared Aldrich. And now we have begun setting up the lab. Matt Crystal was out delivering another filtered air chamber so we now have two sterile transfer workstations.

The native plants people at the park have been telling us about mushroom locations to check. We have found a number of interesting fungi around the park, *Suillus brevipes*, Pine Spikes, Laughing Gym, a huge polypore, Turkey Tails, and one of my favorites Prince Augustus. Growing at the end of a soccer field in barren dirt with no tree nearby was a bright orangey yellow head of cauliflower about six inches across looking a lot like a beginning-to-differentiate Sulfur Shelf but with a sweet, intensely vanilla flavored fragrance. Norm says it may be a *Hydnum*. We have found several Sulfur Shelf colonies that Norm and Terri have been culturing. We are going to be trying out each of them to find out which is the most aggressive eucalyptus eater for attacking massive amounts of wood chips. We'll also be trying *Clathrus rubra*, Garden Giants, and others.

Ken Litchfield, 415-863-7618, [klitchfield@randall.mus.ca.us](mailto:klitchfield@randall.mus.ca.us)

---

## The Other Tree Plague

*Cont'd from page 1*

infected cones, and seeds. Typically the first signs of an infection are dieback of terminal growth. Affected branch tips turn brown accompanied by oozing pitch. Other pine pitch infections involve the crowns of young plants and trunks of mature trees. Trees decline over a period of years as the disease progresses downward. Some lightly affected trees ward off the disease, but many are reduced to skeletons. Affected trees are can be seen throughout the S.F. Bay Area, but be aware that not every unhealthy Monterey pine has Pine pitch canker. A variety of other diseases and environmentally induced problems can mimic Pine pitch canker. Nonetheless, with practice, one can identify infected trees with some confidence. There is no cure for Pine pitch canker, but there is some reason for optimism. Pruning branches off of lightly affected trees can improve chances of survival. In addition, as noted above, not all trees are killed by pine pitch canker, so it is reasonable to assume that resistant trees will be developed for the nursery trade. Unfortunately, this will not solve the problem of a diminished wild gene pool.

What can mushroom collectors do? First of all, it should be noted that Pine pitch canker is largely coastal in distribution, and not prevalent inland. Common sense would suggest not transporting Monterey pine wood, cones, or seed to other areas. Prunings from infected trees should be chipped, dried or burned. Other than that, there is little that can be done. One thing is clear. As many of these trees die, their mycorrhizal associates, the *russulas*, *lactarii*, *amanitas*, and various species of boletes will disappear and be replaced by lignicolous species such as honey mushrooms, *Pluteus spp.*, *Sparassis crispa*, *Gymnopilus spectabilis*, *Tricholomopsis rutilans*, etc. We may not like it, but that's Nature's way.

## Rare Books

By John Lennie, Librarian

The Mycological Society of San Francisco owns two rare and valuable books which it wants to sell in order to acquire more practical books for its library.

1. Farlow, William Gilson. *Icones Farlowianae*, illustrations of the larger fungi of eastern North America. Descriptive text by E.A. Burt. 103 colored plates. Folio, pp. x, 120, original green buckram, Cambridge, 1929. Edition of 500. Reserve: \$800.

Cover scuffed, corners lightly bent, spine marked with "#17" in ink and with traces of a small label, traces of library label inside front cover, 6 library stamps (inside front cover, on facing page with "#17" again, on title page, on page x, on final blank page and inside back cover), signatures breaking loose, plate 22 detached, 1.5 inch tear close to spine on plate 59, 0.5 inch tear close to spine on plate 85 and on page 91. Light bleeding from text on some plates. Some bleeding from overlaying in storage (i.e. before binding) affecting plates: 10, 11, 15, 21, 25, 33, 35, 49, 59, 62, 63, 64, 70, 72, 77, 78, 79, 86, 87, 88, 89, 94, 97, 101, 102, 103. Twenty eight plates, most of them the same, were affected in the the only other copy I have seen.

In 1930 Kauffman wrote in his review in *Science*: With the exception of the *Icones* of Boudier, where the scientific training of a mycologist was to a remarkable degree linked with the talent of a real artist in the same man, no illustrations of mushrooms have appeared which remotely approach the beauty and scientific accuracy of the plates in the volume before us. It is furthermore, the first extensive collection of colored plates of American agarics to be conceived, executed and published in the country.

An exhibition celebrating the "Creation of *Icones Farlowianae*" continues through 2001 at Harvard University's Cabot Science Library, One Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA. A fascinating on-line account – the source for Kauffman's quotation – is at, <http://www.herbaria.harvard.edu/Libraries/Farlowexhibit/creation.html>

2. Wasson, R. Gordon. *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality*. NY: Harcourt Brace & World, 1968. First Edition. 12 x 8 in. With Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty. Half morocco in original slipcase. Printed by Giovanni Mardersteig at Stamperia Valdona, Verona, number 613 of 680 copies. Reserve: \$900.

Slipcase lightly scuffed, book as new.

This book sold for \$200 in 1968; an equivalent amount today would be over \$1000.00 (see <http://woodrow.mpls.frb.fed.us/economy/calc/cpihome.html>). Since then Wasson's books have become collectors' items.

The procedure for the sale is to submit an offer before midnight on 1 January 2002. When bidding ends and the reserve is met, the book will be sold to the highest bidder. In case of a tie, a random draw will be made. Shipping will be extra at cost. The books are first being offered to the mycological community but when a reserve is not met I will try to sell a book in other ways. If I still fail I may decide around February 2002 to revisit the auction and accept an existing offer below the reserve. Don't hesitate to ask for more information, or to request photographs.

Please send offers to: John Lennie, 861 Keeler Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94708-1323 or [librarian@mssf.org](mailto:librarian@mssf.org)

## Join Fred Stevens & Bill Freedman on MSSF's Annual Mills Canyon Discovery Expedition

Many members of our group have enjoyed the annual Saturday morning foray into creek side Mills Canyon in Burlingame. It will happen this year on January 12, 2002, from 10:00 am to about noon. Heavy rain cancels.

Take Route 280. Exit at Trousdale Ave. in Burlingame and turn south on Skyline Drive to Hillside Drive. Hang a left, (Kohl Mansion sign nearby). Go down the drive till you come to Adeline Avenue, the second arterial stop sign. You will see us at the parking area when you look to the left.

We have identified about 120 varieties of fungi, including rare edibles such as chanterelles. We have minimal restrictions. (Bill is Chairperson of the Friends of Mills Canyon). If you'd like to help us keep the area clean, bring a plastic bag for trash removal.

Wear wet-weather or lug-soled shoes. Although we keep improving the trail, sections do get wet and muddy. We have never set a limit to our party, so you needn't sign up. However, we prefer to cater to beginners. Friends of Mills Canyon members join us in this event.

To peer more deeply using a magnified level of understanding, we recommend a pocket lens to examine the finer details of fungal forms which evolution has provided, as well as to aesthetically bring to your attention small but beautiful hidden shapes and colors. A wide inexpensive one may be purchased at a stamp collector's store.

Fred Stevens is one of our finest expert amateurs, a very knowledgeable guest lecturer and a great teacher for novices who want to learn basic mycology. It is an ideal beginners' introduction trip. For more information, contact Bill Freedman: 650-344-7774, fax 650-344-2227, e-mail: [loufreed@aol.com](mailto:loufreed@aol.com).

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

**[www.mssf.org](http://www.mssf.org)**

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

First Class Mail  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Jackson, CA  
Permit No 29



December, 2001 vol 52:12

## *MSSF CALENDAR, DECEMBER 2001*

**Tuesday, December 4, MSSF Annual Holiday Dinner:** At the Snow Building at the Oakland Zoo, located at 9777 Golf Links Road, Oakland. Appetizers served at 7 p.m., dinner served at 8 p.m. For information and reservations, please contact Sherry Carvajal at (415) 695-0466.

**Tuesday, December 4 & Wednesday December 5, Wild Mushroom & Wine Dinner:** Lalimes restaurant in Berkeley will be hosting their annual Mushroom dinner. For reservations, call 510-527-9838.

**Thursday, December 6, Mushroom Dinner:** Wild mushroom dinner at the Ross Valley Brewing Company in Fairfax, 415-485-1005.

**Saturday-Sunday December 8-9, Fungus Fair 2001:** Oakland Museum, Natural History Exhibition Hall. Saturday hours 10-5, admission required, Sunday hours 12-5, free admission

**Monday, December 10, MSSF Scholarship deadline:** Deadline for application for MSSF scholarship. Send inquiries and materials to Robert Mackler, 157 Mesa Court, Hercules, CA 94547

**Saturday, December 15, Nevada City foray:** Yuba Watershed Institute sponsored foray, 9 am. Held at the North Columbia Schoolhouse Cultural Center, 15 miles north of Nevada City. Call Daniel Nicholson for further information. 530-265-9328

**Tuesday, January 8, Culinary Group's Monthly Dinner:** Potluck dinner. Come and join us for homemade soups and breads at the Slavonic Cultural Center, located at 60 Onondaga Avenue in San Francisco. Reservations are not required. For information,

contact Alvaro Carvajal at (415) 695-0466.

**Saturday, January 12, 2002, Mills Canyon foray:** Fred Stevens and Bill Freedman will lead the annual foray in creek side Mills Canyon in Burlingame, 10am to noon. See newsletter for details.

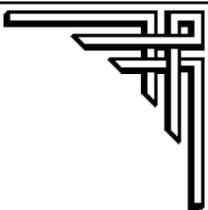
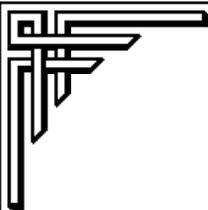
**Saturday, January 12, 2002, Bear Valley Beginners foray:** Meet at 10 am at the parking lot of the Visitors' Center, Bear Valley, Point Reyes National Park. Bring food & water, rain cancels. Call before 9pm for directions or other information. Foray leader: Bob Mackler, 510-799-6756 or e-mail at [rdmackler@aol.com](mailto:rdmackler@aol.com).

**Saturday-Monday, January 19 - 21, 2002, SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp:** Annual SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp in Navarro, Mendocino County. Contact Charmoon Richardson for further information at 707-8871888, [charmoon@sonic.net](mailto:charmoon@sonic.net)

**January 20, 2002, S.F. Watershed for Beginners:** Meet at the intersection of Cañada Road and Edgewood Road, led by Bill Freedman. Young children make it difficult to educate others, limited to 25. Call 650-344-7774 for reservations.

**Thursday to Sunday, January 24-27, 2002, Sea Ranch Beginner's Mushroom Foray:** Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights at the Sea Ranch on the Sonoma County coast. Cost is \$100. Email Terry Sullivan for details at [terrsull@aol.com](mailto:terrsull@aol.com)

**Tuesday, February 5, Culinary Group's Monthly Dinner:** At the Slavonic Cultural Center, located at 60 Onondaga Avenue in San Francisco. For reservations, please contact Zoe Caldwell at (510) 569-1554 or e-mail Karin Roos at [karo@sprintmail.com](mailto:karo@sprintmail.com)



# MSSF 2001

# Christmas Dinner

## Tuesday, December 4

The MSSF Culinary Group, led by Chef Michael Giacomini and his merry band of kitchen elves, presents the menu for the 2001 Christmas Dinner, to be consumed in the company of frolicking fungal friends, Tuesday, December 4th at the Snow Room of the Oakland Zoo:

- Potato Morel Soup with Chives & Bacon  
(vegetarian available by request)
- Beef Tenderloin with Porcini Sauce
- Chanterelle and Chestnut Lasagna with  
Béchamel Sauce (vegetarian)
- Truffled Green Beans
- Salad
- Dessert

The salad and dessert along with delectable appetizers will be provided by volunteers from the Culinary Group. Musical entertainment provided. Appetizers will be served at 7 p.m., dinner served at 8 p.m.

Dinner is still \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members.

Please call Sherry Carvajal at (415) 695-0466 by November 30th to assure your reservation. When making your reservation, please be sure to notify us of any special dietary requirements.

