



SOMA News

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 7

March 2011

*SOMA IS AN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO MYCOLOGY.
WE ENCOURAGE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS BY SHARING OUR ENTHUSIASM
THROUGH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND GUIDED FORAYS.*

WINTER/SPRING 2011 SEASON CALENDAR

March

March 17th » Meeting—7pm

Sonoma County Farm Bureau

Speaker: **Connie Green & Patrick Hamilton**

Foray March. 19th » Salt Point

April

April 21st » Meeting—7pm

Sonoma County Farm Bureau

Speaker: **Langdon Cook**

Foray April 23rd » Salt Point

May

May 19th » Meeting—7pm

Sonoma County Farm Bureau

Speaker: **Bob Cummings**

Foray May: Possible Morel Camping!



EMERGENCY MUSHROOM POISONING IDENTIFICATION

After seeking medical attention, contact **Darvin DeShazer** for identification at (707) 829-0596. Email your photos to muscara@pacbell.net. Photos should show all sides of the mushroom. Please **do not** send photos taken with cell phones—the resolution is simply too poor to allow accurate identification.

NOTE: Always be 100% certain of the identification of any and all mushrooms before you eat them!

A free service for hospitals, veterinarians and concerned citizens of Sonoma County.

SPEAKER OF THE MONTH

Connie and Patrick —“A Show and Tell”—

March 17th—7pm



Separated at birth but from the same litter Connie Green and Patrick Hamilton have traveled (endured?) mushroom journeys together for almost two decades. They've been to the humid and hot jaguar jungles of Chiapas chasing tropical mushrooms and to the cloud forests of the Sierra Madre for boletes and Indigo milky caps. In the cold and wet wilds of Alaska they hiked a spruce and hemlock forest trail to watch grizzly bears tearing salmon bellies just a few yards away.

In the remote Queen Charlotte Islands their bush plane flew over “fields of golden chanterelles,” landed on the ocean, and then off into a zany Zodiac for a ride over a cold and roiling sea alongside some low flying puffins to the World Heritage Site of Ninestins.

The two of them have gazed at glaciers and berry picked on muskeg bogs. More than a few times they have filled buckets and buckets with morels. Once on a mountainside, all alone, they picked Kama Sutra style (or at least that is how Patrick wrote about it).

They have mushroom hunted, cooked, and traded stories with some of the best chefs in the Bay Area and been the guests of great chefs in their world famous restaurants.

Both are SOMA, MSSF, and Mexican Mushroom members who have watched and withstood the changing attitudes about commercial and recreational mushrooming for a long time.

Connie, who owns Wine Forest Mushrooms, has recently had her fine book—**Wild Table**—released, and Patrick, a former food world chef and now the de facto chef for SOMA, has written well over a 100 articles about foraging for, and the cooking of, wild mushrooms. They will speak to our club about all things in the culinary world of wild mushrooming.

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SOMA's *Amanita muscaria* logo by Ariel Mahon

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dispatch from the Duff

A doughnut hole in the Northern California winter storm system came through and rain returned just in time for our February foray. A late harvest of hedgehogs and black trumpets were found at Salt Point State Park over the weekend. A number of people, many first-timers, came to the foray and took home tasty examples of both species. One family had enough to take to "Grandma's house" for her special dish of pork and wild mushrooms. Another family headed down to the shore for a late afternoon low tide to collect mussels. They were very happy when Mycochef Patrick supplied them with an excellent suggestion on how to prepare them. I left our gathering that afternoon salivating and thinking how delicious the combination of freshly picked mushrooms and mussels would taste. All in all, we had another great day on the coast.

The rains also produced a varied crop of mushrooms in my backyard in the middle of Sebastopol. A bunch of tasty candy caps and handfuls of black trumpets, as well as many non-edibles sprouted vigorously among the roses and azaleas. The non-edibles were mainly species of agaricus and amanita. There was a spectacular display of *Amanita phalloides* under the big live oak tree, lasting for quite a while, too. In an ongoing conflict with a large gang of squirrels that frequently messes about in the yard and chews up the siding of the house, I briefly had visions of encouraging them to "taste" just a little bite of this special amanita treat. Well, it didn't happen and it shows that the squirrels are smarter than they look. Anyway, it is a good idea to check and see what you can find growing right under your nose in your very own neighborhood.

On February 17th, we had a good turnout at the Farm Bureau in Santa Rosa of folks attending Else Vellinga's presentation about "The Naming of Mushrooms" and all enjoyed the talk very much. Else discussed interesting insights into the life of a working scientist. She laid out the history and practices of mushroom species identification and introduced many of the audience to Linnaeus and Elias Magnus Fries. She described that by using classic practices and modern DNA sequencing, she has identified 11 new species in the last couple of years. Although new technology is very precise and has resolved a number of differences in opinions, or hypotheses, it remains that nature is not static and plant life continues to evolve. Future generations of scientists continue to have a lot of unknown mushrooms to identify and many complex questions to answer.

SOMA attended the Sonoma County Science Fair for middle-school students this February. (See Rachel Zierdt's summary). The students did an excellent job with their projects and two were selected for special recognition with a SOMA Scholarship Award. It was the first time I had participated as a judge. It was very, very interesting and kept us on the go from 8am until 4pm. I must admit that after getting home and then resting, eating, resting, I fell asleep around 8pm. I hadn't been around that much energy in a long time. All the young scientists were a treat to be with and it was important for SOMA to recognize and support their interest in science.

Best regards,

Jim Wheeler



FORAY OF THE MONTH

Saturday, March 19th

Meet at **Woodside Campground** in **Salt Point State Park** at 10 AM.

\$8 daily parking fee per car now at SPSP!

Bring a potluck dish to share; vegetarian dishes are always welcome! Please bring your own glasses, plates and eating utensils. Besides the positive environmental reasons and benefit to the gastronomic experience, it will help minimize the amount of trash to be hauled out. Contact foray leader Michael Miller at (707) 431-6931 for more information.

Dermocybe or not Dermocybe?

That was (and still is) the question, (Part II), by Dorothy Beebe, © May, 2006, (updated February 2011)

The week following the recent mushroom dye experiments, (as written up in the April 2006 SOMA News), I took my brilliant "blood red" *Dermocybe* dye samples and the rest of the *Dermocybes* up to show my mentor, and THE mushroom dye innovator, Miriam Rice. She was not as surprised as I had hoped, and indeed, looking at her collection of over 30 years of experiments with *Dermocybes*, she could show the same colors – but also the same puzzling wide variety of red hues from that species, to the point that I wondered if she had been finding *Dermocybe semisanguinea* as well. Or, IS there indeed more than one form of this species, *Dermocybe phoenicea* var. *occidentalis*, (A.K.A. *Cortinarius phoeniceus* var. *occidentalis*) than I had thought?

Some of you are probably wondering at this point why this even matters to me, but the VISUAL feast of the mushroom dyes is what most excites MY palette – perhaps bringing as intense a lasting pleasure as that which many other folks receive from the subtleties of flavor from eating mushrooms. (chacun à son goût or *De gustibus non est disputandum!*) We got into an interesting

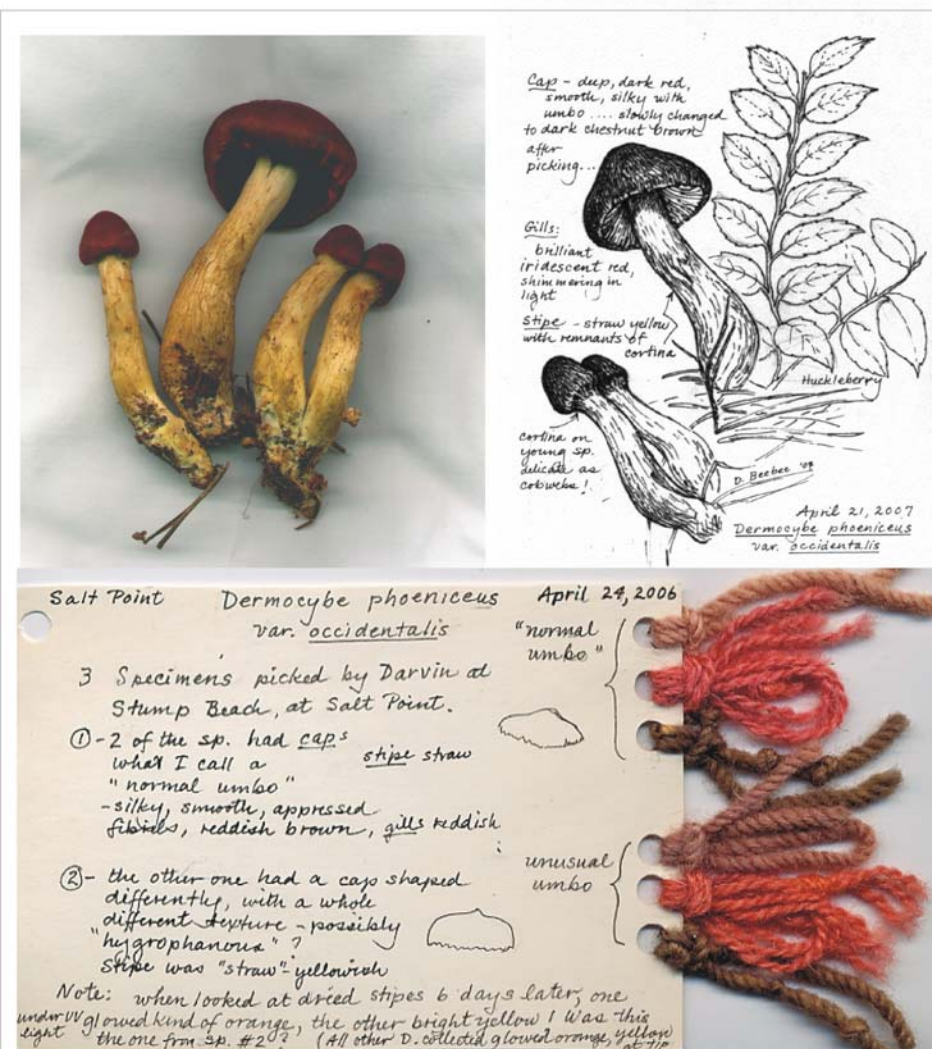
discussion about this as Patrick and Jill were preparing for the SOMA forayers one of the most extraordinary mushroom soups I have ever tasted, while I was trying to sketch a little orange gilled *Dermocybe* that Ernst found near the picnic table! Now that little *Dermocybe* is worth a whole separate article ... (next year!)

So, are there indeed 2 forms of *Dermocybe phoenicea* var. *occidentalis* as Miriam Rice has suspected and Dr. Ammirati suggests? And if so, are we finding them at Salt Point and how does one differentiate between them? Only with the dyes? According to my readings in the mycological literature, (*Mycotaxon*, April-May 1997, G. Moreno et al) one form contains the anthraquinone pigment *emodin* and the other one does not. (Dr. Erik Sundström says that *emodin* is responsible for the orange dye we see from *D. malicoria*. (See *Mushrooms for Color*, Miriam C. Rice, 1980) But, according to Dr. Ammirati, (*Mycotaxon op cit.*) apparently, the species WITHOUT *emodin* will have a stipe which fluoresces bright yellow under UV light when it is extremely dry... The specimens containing *emodin* apparently do not fluoresce this bright yellow, but only a dull reddish orange. However, are there other factors which could induce that fluorescence, like bruising from excessive handling?

The SOMA Foray at Salt Point on April 22, 2006 inadvertently (but happily) provided an opportunity for a "test case". Darwin found a nice group of *Dermocybe phoenicea* in his usual haunts, but one specimen looked distinctly different than the others, in spite of the similar rusty red gills and cap. What puzzled us with that one was the bell-shape of the cap, tiny pointed umbo with its almost hygrophanous surface rather than the smooth silky reddish-rust cap that I'm accustomed to seeing. (Really hard to describe these subtle differences unless you could see the two specimens side by side...)

The next day, Darwin and I checked both mushrooms under his sweet little portable UV light, and the "weird one" had yellow at the base of the stipe. (So did many of the dried *Dermocybe* mushrooms which Anna Moore had given me back in December which we also checked), but none of the above fluoresced brilliant yellow on the whole fresh stipe.

The next step was to do a dye with each mushroom cap, and see if there was a noticeable difference in dye color on wool yarn. I decided to test samples of the 2 different specimens for dye, using only the caps as had been done in the previous experiments. Same procedure, same similar sets of pre-mordanted wool samples: chopped up mushroom cap, put into glass jar with pre-mordanted wool samples, poured about 1/3 cup of boiling water over each dye experiment, and let sit overnight. And I saved the



Sample of DBB's method of "dye sequencing"

(Continued on page 5)

Right around March time calendar-watching mushroomers here begin to look away from our coastal winter woods and glance inward into their dreams and think about the snowy spring forests of the Sierra. Soon the early risers come up in the mountains of California and poke their heads above, below, and around the warming white banks of the less high montane habitats.

Coming soon will the Cucumber Mushroom, corals of different colors, little Corts, the tasty and handsome *Agaricus albobutescens*, puff balls, cups, waxy caps, rust-orange delicious--and to some toxic--Gyromitras, two verpas, and with them all, of course, morels.

Spongy, dimpled, cone-shaped, round, one-walled, two-walled, thick walled, thin-walled, white, yellow, reddish, brown, black, greenish or some even are grey. So many different ones (what are their species' names, anyway?) but they're all just as much fun to find as they are fine to eat.

And found and eaten them I've been lucky to have: Over campfires with pocket poor but morel and day job rich circuit pickers in the desolate, beautiful, and bear full Blue Mountains of north eastern Oregon, in the volcanic lands near Lassen NP and in our own central Sierra up in Crystal Basin back in the Cleveland burn; and also with famed Bay Area chefs in the firs, cedars, and pines west of Lake Tahoe, in Plumas NF joined by beloved Connie Green and the Late Great Larry Stickney (a lovely Pinot made it a forest foursome), after a Cherry Lake burn with Mike Boom picking a very hazy and ill-defined boundary line right by Yosemite NP; with Arora in several locales; with David Campbell in a blizzard; with Norm Andresen and Mike Wood; with The First Lady of Mushrooms, Maggie Rogers, east of Portland; with SOMA Camp kitchen slave Heath Curdts on an almost private burn not too far up in the mountains but full of tasty burns that he guided me to; with lovely Linda Morris camping miles down rough forest roads in the wilds of the Mendocino NF; with many others and most always with favored companion and long-time buddy--Australian Shepherd Danny Boy.

I think I remember bits of the trips all but a couple have stuck out real well.

A recounting was told once of an event that took place up there in that burn near Ukiah, Oregon, in 1993 or so, and it went something like this. . .

"... We did a morel tasting over a camp stove near the John Day Wilderness way up and off US Highway 395 that year and it proved, once and for all (maybe), that burns are better than naturals (at least that those were better)."

"Ever try a cooking experiment with morels, some from a burn area and others from a nearby "natural" environment? The burns seemed to be thin-walled and the naturals double-walled."

"Here's what was done for those by the fire and curiously watching over what I was about to do that evening: In different pans, in hot olive oil and butter, the chopped mushrooms were sautéed until almost done. We then added a bit of chopped garlic (no shallots available), white wine, salt and pepper. After reducing the wine "au sec" (until just about dry) they were served up to the crowd."

"First thing we discovered was not what we were looking for. After watching the racially mixed group for reactions we saw some doing this clumsy covert thing--sort of childlike--pushing the morels around their plates. We found out that over a fourth of the pickers, Caucasian and Asian, had never eaten them before! I guess it would have been sort of like eating your own money. . . ."

"... From your wallet, take bills of any denomination; marinate them in slightly curried citrus juices, then dip in tempura batter, deep fry in peanut oil, serve in a dipping sauce of soy, mirin, sesame oil, scallions, ginger and garlic."

"We evaluated the merits of both morel dishes and the burns clearly did exhibit more pleasing flavor notes. "Magnified morel flavor" is an easy description. This finding was also confirmed later for me by a friend, Connie Green. She was there with us but her primary vocation is a distributor of top quality wild mushrooms to the finest restaurants in San Francisco. She told me that most chefs will always pay more for the burns, period. Looking at this economically, the burns are lighter and therefore chefs get more mushrooms per pound and more morels mean more profits because they are rarely sold by the pound in restaurants. . . ."

Then there was that Old Timer campfire evening. . . . "You're too young to have much to remember, and I'm too old to remember much," the gracious and gracefully aging mushroom hunter was relating over a glass of cherry and youthful Pinot to a couple of folks new to forays sitting and eagerly listening around the camp's fire. "Each year I struggle to cram newly learned mushroom names into my cramped brain and also try to remember ones from past years that I thought I'd known."

"Where does all that memory go," the old guy rhetorically mused to the group, "and," (being a wise forayer of some experience) "before I forget, can I have another bit of that wine?"

An inquisitive but younger, yet obviously hard-lived, camper inquired of the wise one, "Is there something to those little conical shaped piles of gray dust that I sometimes find on my pillow?"

"I'm glad you notice the little things in life like I do. They tend to go away and forever too. You'll do well on our forays," the elder sipper said. "I do believe that in every one of those small heaps by our ears some of our life's remembrances are being let go of, shoved out the door, so to speak, to make room for new stuff."

"I do wish I could retain more of what should be important, now, and not have my brain filled with past events that it thinks are important but I think are not. Does that make sense to you all, at all?"

"Got any more wine?" He did remember to say.

Morel tales are fun but we are still in the Season of the Blacks here so let's talk of those. Back in late 2010 it was reported that it was going to be a banner year or some such for our much loved black trumpets. It sure did begin to appear to be that way but then with wacky weather (when is it not?) they seemed to stop and then they got dried out and then drowned (yikes!) but now we have them in full glory again. Yes we do. You simply must go to "where no man has gone before" or at least you got to avoid the most beaten down forest paths.

Go inland south and north! Ever tried north of SPSP? East of there? West of Laytonville? North of Ft. Bragg? Oregon? The wilds of West Marin? The Peninsula's forests? Find yourselves some private property owners who would like you to take them for a walk there and explain what grows on their land. Volunteering is a great *methode* for this, BTW.

And another pretty cool *methode* is in the recipe on page 8. Make it for your lover, companions, family, just friends or just enemies (or maybe for yourself?). All will want you to make it. Remember—and it says here—that "cooking is power" and the powerful gain access to all sorts of neat stuff and nifty things.

(Continued on page 8)

February started off with blissfully warm dry weather which had me reaching for the beach chairs and sun tan lotion. But my ventures into the woods at Salt Point were showing fewer and fewer mushrooms, and the need to scramble deeper into the brush and farther afield than normal. Luckily, the Rain Gods kicked the Boys of Summer out so we'd had plenty of precipitation in mid-February to kick the season back into gear.

52 hunters showed up at the Woodside Campground rarin' to go. Groups went out near the campground, up the Central Trail where huckleberry is thick and mushrooms abundant, south to the Powerline Trail and up Kruse Ranch Road to the Upper Stump Beach Trail.

The Powerline party encountered good pickings, with some gigantic Repandum hedgehogs to show off. Jim Wheeler's group heading up the Central Trail included a group of 5 from San Francisco, with one woman fresh off a flight from London who found a sizable haul of mushrooms for dinner that evening despite her jet-lagged condition. I was a bit wary as I led my group down the hill from the Upper Stump Beach Trailhead to my favorite spot. 2 weeks earlier the mushrooms had been in serious decline in this area. I needn't have worried, as the recent rains

had brought back excellent pickings. A family of 5 from Sonoma had arrived late and barely caught up with us a couple blocks down the trail. 8th grader Rose, an accomplished mushroom hunter, had convinced her reluctant friends to come and the 3 girls proceeded to pick a large basketful.

Upon arriving that morning, we were greeted by clear skies, sun and conflicting weather reports. We decided to tempt Mother Nature by not erecting the big awning and we paid for it later as returning foray groups encountered rain and a brief hailstorm. This tapered off quickly and did not interrupt the pot-luck feast. MycoChef Patrick Hamilton made a fantastic Thai noodle dish and a cake for Linda Morris' Birthday ("If you stand on your head, I'm only 19".) Finola, another SOMA stalwart who always brings hot food offered up Chile Verde. Excellent beef stew was provided by Mr. Campbell and young Rose's father whipped up Black Trumpet & Red Peppers from Charmoon's recipe right off the SOMA Website.

Once again, rewards were granted in abundance to those hearty souls who brushed off the reports of rain and cold and headed into the woods. Hope to see everyone on March 19th for the next foray.

Fungi Found Feb. 19, 2011 Salt Point State Park

Albatrellus pes-caprae
Amanita calyptroderma
Amanita porphyria
Bulgaria inquinans
Cantharellus cibarius var. *roseocanus*
Cantharellus subalbidus
Clavulina cristata
Clavulina rugosa
Cortinarius cinnamomeus
Cortinarius phoeniceus var. *occidentalis*
Cortinarius traganus
Craterellus cornucopioides

Craterellus tubaeformis
Cryptoporus volvatus
Dacrymyces palmatus
Entoloma sp.
Fomitopsis pinicola
Gomphus clavatus
Gomphus floccosus
Gymnopilus sapineus
Helvella lacunosa
Hydnellum aurantiacum
Hydnum repandum
Hydnum umbilicatum
Hypholoma fasciculare
Inocybe geophylla var. *lilacina*
Jahnoporus hirtus

Laccaria sp.
Leotia lubrica
Mycena haematopus
Phaeolus schweinitzii
Pholiota velaglutinosa
Pseudohydnum gelatinosum
Russula brevipes
Russula cremoricolor
Russula sanguinea
Sowerbyella rhenana
Sparassis radicata
Stereum hirsutum
Trichaptum abietinum

Thanks to **Darvin DeShazer**

(What's Stirring in the Dye Pot continued from page 3)

stipes, to do a separate dye "later" – because a stipe will often produce a different color than the cap.

The results were very similar – perhaps the dye from the "unusual-capped Dermocybe" producing rose-red hue with a more of a tinge of orange to the alum mordanted wool, and the unmordanted wool a more lavender tinge than the other – subtle, but noticeable to a color gourmet! (And you have to see these colors in DAYLIGHT to fully appreciate the differences...)

And then just on whim, (this is 5 days later) I decided to look at the stipes of the two specimen types that had been spared the dyepot again under the UV light.....and now the stipe of the "unusual-shaped-capped" *Dermocybe* GLOWED BRILLIANT YELLOW and the stipe from the other – a dull reddish orange!!!! So does this mean that it was from a "Type II" *D. phoenicea*? ... **And do we indeed have BOTH types of *D. phoenicea* var. *occidentalis* at Salt Point?** The mystery continues ...and only the repetition of many more experiments may tell... or not... Tune in next year!

Well, continued dye experiments over the last 5 years, have shown (to me at least) that we must be dyeing with more than one or two variants of *Dermocybe phoenicea* collected up at Salt Point, just as the late Miriam Rice insisted. For we mushroom dyers, our form of "DNA sequencing" happens in the dyepot, in the reactions of the different pigments to the metallic

salts (mordants) that we use to set the dyes. I have a whole binder of such "sequencing" experiments that show a wide range of dye results from "rose" – to "blood red" color on the same alum mordanted wool, from supposedly the "same" mushroom to judge by visual identification... (dark chestnut/oxblood red cap, shimmering iridescent red gills, and yellow striated stipe). Keeps me on my toes... what are YOUR experiences with this highly sought after little dye dermocybe?



Grapes or Truffles?—Show Me the Money...

(This article appeared in December @ winesandvines.com
by Paul Franson)



Truffle-inoculated hazelnut and live oak saplings were planted last month at Robert Sinskey Vineyards in Carneros; if successful, their truffle production could be more profitable than winegrapes Photo: Paul Franson

Wines & Vines - Wine Industry News Headlines

Napa Calif.—Looking for a complementary alternative crop to wine grapes, some North American grape growers are following the lead of their European colleagues and planting trees that they hope will eventually encourage truffles to grow.

Last week, the Napa Truffle Festival, which appears patterned after the Oregon Truffle Festival, came to the heart of wine country to promote the process. The promotion by American Truffle Co. was woven into a celebration of truffle consumption aimed at well-heeled gourmets. The event was hosted at Napa's Westin Verasa Hotel, home of La Toque restaurant; chef Ken Frank is a famous truffle-phile.

Robert Chang of American Truffle Co. and his colleagues presented seminars on the history and science of truffles, their cultivation and their marketing. Among the attractions was a visit to Robert Sinskey Vineyard's property in Carneros, where a month-old truffle orchard has been planted using saplings inoculated by Chang's company. Sinskey now has 560 trees on 1.25 acres.

Another company, New World Truffieres, has already provided saplings for orchards in Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino and San Luis Obispo counties. One of the oldest is in Templeton, where vintner Larry Turley planted five acres of trees in naturally alkaline limestone soil in 2004.

Mendocino was first

Dr. Charles Lefevre of New World Truffieres, who has a Ph.D. in forest mycology, says that the first U.S. truffle cultivation was an orchard planted in remote Mendocino County in 1982. It produced truffles commercially until abandoned after its owners' deaths.

Lefevre says that about a dozen truffle orchards in the U.S. are producing commercially, one in the Sierra Foothills near Placerville. He estimates that his customers, many of whom are vintners or grape growers, have planted 30 acres of truffle orchards in Sonoma, almost as many in Mendocino County and

10 acres in Napa. Jess Jackson's Jackson Family Farms is planting the first of what will be 60 acres of orchards in Sonoma County next year.

Two types of trees are used for the truffle cultivation: live oaks and hazelnuts (filberts). The filberts can produce truffles in six or seven years and have a shorter life, while the oaks take 10 years but live a long time.

Turley hasn't seen any truffles yet but will visit the site with Lefevre, who supplied and planted the trees and a truffle dog, in January to see if any have developed yet.

As with mushrooms, we eat the "fruit" of the fungi, not the plant itself. Three types of truffles are commonly eaten in Europe: the famed black Périgord winter truffle (*Tuber melanosporum*) and the lesser summer or Burgundy variety (*Tuber aestivum*) are cultivated in France. Dr. Paul Thomas of American Truffle says 90% of truffles consumed in France are cultivated, not harvested in the wild.

Lefevre says that growers in Spain have harvested 20 to 50 pounds of truffles per acre.

The elusive white or Alba truffle of Italy (*Tuber magnatum*) has resisted cultivation and is worth 10 times as much as the Périgord truffle, itself exceptionally valuable.

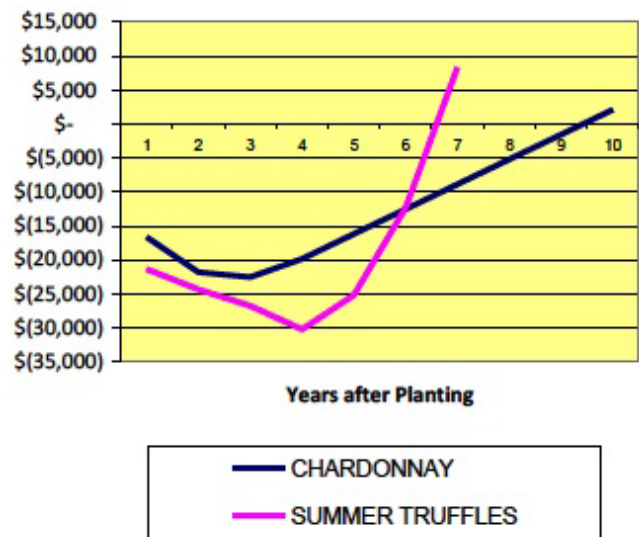
\$1,000 per pound

Truffles are an exceptionally valuable crop. Lefevre cites a study he helped conduct that forecast a price of \$1,000 per pound wholesale for local truffles (they deteriorate rapidly, making local sources ideal) and average yields of 35 pounds per acre, or \$35,000 per acre. The study is available here:

<http://www.oregontruffles.org/>

Oregon forests harbor native truffles, but they aren't highly regarded in general.

Break Even Analysis
(Cumulative Total Cash)



American Truffle's Chang says truffles can be 7 to 10 times as profitable as growing grapes on average. He estimates the investment in an acre of Chardonnay grapes at \$23,000 (excluding land costs) and of truffles at \$30,000, but says it takes

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(Continued from page 6)

9-10 years to recover the cost of planting the grapes vs. 6-7 years for truffles.

After that, he estimates the profit from truffles in full production at \$36,000 per year vs. \$3,600-\$5,000 for Chardonnay grapes. Over 25 years, that would be \$57,000 per acre for the grapes, \$650,000 for truffles.

25-Year Cumulative Total Cash Flow/Acre



Truffles require an alkaline soil, so most California properties require treatment with lime to get to 7.6-8 pH; that change in acid balance can also discourage undesirable fungi.

It's very difficult to inoculate existing trees, and both suppliers sell trees inoculated with truffle spores, each using a proprietary process. American Truffle charges \$20 to \$22 per tree and also

offers consulting services. Lefevre recommends 200 trees per acre.

Chang recommends 400 trees per acre and charges \$20 to \$40 per sapling—and a percentage of the eventual revenue. He won't specify what the royalty is, but others say it is 30%.

After planting, truffle orchards require minimal attention, although the same insect and animal pests that eat grapes and vines like truffles, too. And the conditions desirable for truffles unfortunately discourage good hazelnuts.

Pigs or dogs

As is well known, female pigs can find truffles, because the fungi smell like male pigs, but the swine are big, relatively unmanageable and like to eat the truffles. Dogs can be trained to find the truffles and not eat them, so they're generally preferred for searching. The Italian Lagotto-Romagnolo is the traditional pup of choice.

Lefevre says that there's a shortage of truffle dogs, so he will lead training sessions at the upcoming Oregon Truffle Festival. The sixth Oregon Truffle Festival will be held Jan. 28-31 in Eugene.

Production is dropping in France despite continued planting, while worldwide demand for truffles is rising.

The truffle growing business in America is clearly in its infancy. It appears to have enormous potential—but success remains unproven. Time will tell whether today's pioneer truffle growers end up with fists full of fungi worth almost their weight in gold.

Excerpted from *Wines & Vines - Wine Industry News Headlines - Are Truffles an Alternative to Grapes?*

<http://www.winesandvines.com/template.cfm?section=news&content=81952&htitle=Are%20Truffles%20an%20Alternative%20to%20Grapes%3F#>

<http://snipurl.com/1nkh61> [www_winesandvines_com]

Thanks to **Julie Schreiber**

CLIP & SAVE

Rabbit Rillettes

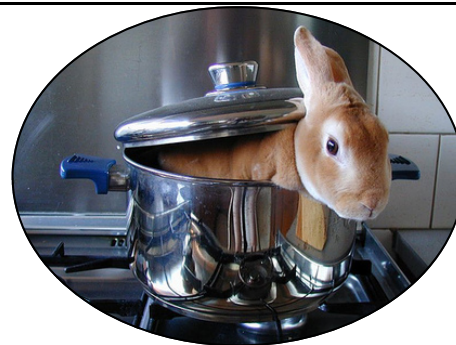
Julie Schreiber © 2011

Note: Served as an appetizer at a recent SOMA Epicurean repast:

- 1 rabbit on the bone
- 3 cloves of garlic, peeled and halved
- 3 shallots
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp sea salt
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/2 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1/2 tsp rosemary leaves
- 200 g duck fat
- 50 g bacon fat

Put all the ingredients into a heavy-bottomed pan, pour in 1 1/2 cups of cold water and gently bring the contents of the pan up to a simmer. Submerge rabbit by putting a plate with a weight on it. Then cover pan with lid. Stir occasionally and add a little more water if the liquid has evaporated. The meat is done when its falling apart. I cooked the rabbit for 2 hours and then left it in the hot fat for 1 more hour. Empty the contents of the pan into a colander or sieve placed over a bowl. Allow to cool a little and remove the bay leaves. With a fork or very clean fingers, break up the pieces of meat into shreds. Transfer into a clean bowl in your mixer with paddle attachment and shred meat to desired consistency. Then mix in enough of the drained fat to form a creamy paste. Add more salt and pepper if required.

Transfer the mix into little individual pots or suitable serving dish. Spoon a little more fat on top, especially if you plan to keep it for some time. Pack them into a cool box and serve spooned on to crusty baguette with crunchy cornichons.



On Tuesday, Feb. 8, Jim Wheeler and I had the opportunity to judge at the Sonoma County Science Fair. This year SOMA has created two new levels of scholarship awards to go along with our usual graduate level scholarships. At this fair we had the opportunity to view and critique entries from students in 7th—12th grade. Using a very rigorous set of criteria we were able to identify several outstanding projects that we deemed worthy of receiving recognition in the amount of \$100 for the student scientist and \$100 for the assisting educator.

Judging took the better part of the day. We first were assigned to a different team of 3 judges with each team initially spending about 2 hours judging 7 projects. Meeting the entrants and interviewing them regarding their projects was the next task. Finally we met as a small group again, enumerating the strengths and weaknesses of each project, tabulating scores on the project display, research question, creative ability, originality, scientific thought, organization, thoroughness, and the interview. Of the about 100 entries, most were very impressive and showed great depth of knowledge and a good understanding of scientific methodology and practice. Out of 166 points, we chose to focus on only those projects that received 149 points or more (90%) as potential winners of our awards.

Limiting our judging to the areas of environmental studies and biology, we reviewed varying projects posing interesting questions. How do ecosystems evolve to respond to wild fires? Can you determine the gender of a person based on only a picture of their eyes? Which type of grass and soil combination

works best for golf course fairways? Is there a correlation between microbial death and metallic conductivity? To name just a few.

Making a determination as to who had the best project was difficult. In the end, we chose 2 winners. Grace Avellar is a 7th grader at St. Francis Solano School. Her project "Hold the Mold" set about to find out if by applying different substances to the surface of a carved pumpkin she could delay the onset of mold.

Our second winner is 10th grader Harlin Falejczyk from Technology High School. Harlin had a very complicated project using advanced scientific techniques to achieve his goal in testing primary and secondary effluent (waste water) to see if an industry-standard test (Enterolert) can show false results and if so to what degree.

We are excited that both students have agreed to come, bring their projects, and speak briefly at one of our upcoming monthly meetings. We will announce their planned presentations when they are finally arranged.

Next month we are off to the Healdsburg Science Fair to judge a second set of entrants.

As we were leaving The Sonoma County Office of Education, Jim commented that today had been the best Feb. 8th he had ever spent. I have to agree. The day was very special and left us both with a great feeling regarding the youth of this county. They are very impressive..... AND THANK YOU TEACHERS AS WELL...



Rachel flanked by Grace and Harlin



Grace with her project.

CLIP & SAVE

(Continued from page 4)

Truffled Yogurt Cheese

Serving Size: 8 Preparation Time: 1:00

Amount	Measure	Ingredient
1 1/8	C	Yogurt Cheese
1/4	Tsp	Truffle Oil (highest quality only)
2 3/8	Tbsp	Bolete Sponge, re-hydrated
1 1/4	Tbsp	Black Chanterelles, dried, re-hydrated
3/8	Tsp	Butter
		Sea Salt
1/3	Tsp	Agave Syrup
		Fish Sauce To Taste (optional)

1. Make the cheese from draining yogurt (start with 10% more volume) before. (Place non-fat, low-fat, or regular yogurt into 3 layers of cheese cloth and drain through a colander set in the garage or any cool place for 24-36 hours. Squeeze out. You can save the whey for making sauerkraut!)

2. Puree all the mushroom pieces in a processor. Boil the pieces with the soaking water until all liquid is evaporated, S & P, optional fish sauce (adds umami), drain, cool, and stir into the yogurt cheese with oil, salt and syrup (to taste). Let sit a few days.

NOTES : start with 10% more yogurt

SOMA Membership Application and Renewal Form

Regardless of what others may think of me, I wish to become a member of the Sonoma County Mycological Association, a Non-Profit, 501 (c)(3), Corporation dedicated to the promotion of the knowledge and appreciation of local fungi.



(Please Print)

☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

SOMA will not share your info!

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone(s): Home: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

I am interested in participating in the following activities (Check):

Culinary Group _____ Mushroom Forays _____ Cultivation _____

Mushroom Dyes _____ Mushroom Papermaking _____ Newsletter _____

Other ideas/comments: _____

☐ \$25 for family membership (mailed SOMA News, plus website download if desired)

☐ \$20 for family membership who do not require a mailed newsletter (website download only)

☐ \$20 for seniors with mailed newsletter (60 years +) (plus website download if desired)

☐ \$20 for seniors—website download only, (help SOMA and the environment out!)

☐ \$250 for Lifetime Membership with website download!

Checks to: **SOMA**
P.O. Box 7147
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

www.SOMAmushrooms.org

YOU CAN RENEW/JOIN ONLINE AT THE WEBSITE!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deadline for the April 2011 issue of SOMA News is March 21st.
Please send your articles, calendar items, and other information to:
SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org

The **2011 Freestone Fermentation Festival** will be held on **May 21** this year at the Salmon Creek Elementary School -- just one driveway down from the CYO camp, home of SOMA mushroom camp. This is a unique opportunity to explore the world of fermentation. Many types of fermentation involve the family of fungi known as Saccharomyces, which ironically is consumed very much, but spoken of very little at a mycological association camp. We would absolutely love to have somebody give a technical workshop or lecture on the very important fungal family containing yeast, called Saccharomyces. Thank you again for a great SOMA camp!

We are delighted to announce The Third Annual Freestone Fermentation Festival -- the **ONLY** faire of its kind in California! This year we are brewing up the most spectacular line up of educational speakers, delicious cuisine, DIY workshops, and captivating live music! We are ecstatic to welcome author of Wild Fermentation and self-proclaimed "fermentation festhish" Sandor Katz to our event this year. After a wildly-discussed ten page article on Katz in the November issue of The New Yorker, we expect an outstanding response to this unique festival. We are combining a truly elite opportunity to hear Katz speak, with a fantastically fun family event.

This year, all of our proceeds will benefit The Ceres Community Project. Each year, they prepare thousands of beautiful, delicious and organic meals for individuals and families facing cancer and other life threatening illnesses.

Check www.freestonefermentationfestival.com for updates

2011 NAMA

Dr. Dick Homola
Memorial Foray

Thursday, August 4 – Sunday, August 7

Hosted by The Western PA Mushroom Club

An excellent foray is planned for you.

We are going to be using 4 new air conditioned buildings on

campus.

The area is a great place to hunt mushrooms and favored by Walt Sturgeon, John Plischke, Emily Johnston, and others.

There will be 20 walks to choose from.

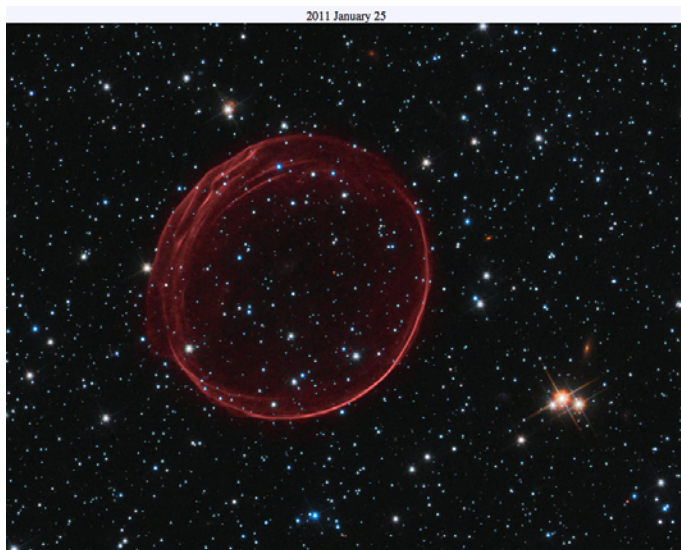
There will be 25 exceptional mycologists and presenters to help you learn mushrooms.

Join us for a long weekend of Fungi, Fun, and Friends!

As the foray is set up, it is limited to 225 people. It is going to sell out early, so don't hesitate, get your registration form signed and send it along with a check today. You must be a member of WPMC or NAMA to attend. You can find a membership application on either club website.

More info:

<http://www.namyc.org/events/index2011-0.html>



The Rippled Red Ribbons of SNR 0509

SOMA News

P.O. Box 7147
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

SOMA

DIVINE MUSHROOM
OF IMMORTALITY

R. Gordon Watson



SOMA Members

The March Issue of
SOMA News has arrived!

SOMA usually meets on the third Thursday of the month throughout the year (September through May), at 7 PM, at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, 970 Piner Road, Santa Rosa, California.

Fungi are displayed at 7 PM, and speakers begin at 7:45 PM. Bring in your baffling fungi to be identified!

Directions to the Sonoma County Farm Bureau

Coming from the south:

- Go north on Highway 101.
- Past Steele Lane, take the Bicentennial Way exit.
- Go over Highway 101.
- Turn right on Range Ave.
- Turn left on Piner Road.
- At about ¼ mile, turn left into parking lot at 970 Piner Road.

Coming from the north:

- Go south on Highway 101.
- Take the first Santa Rosa exit, Hopper Ave/Mendocino Ave.
- Stay left on the frontage road, (it becomes Cleveland Ave after you cross Industrial Drive).
- Turn right on Piner Road.
- At about ¼ mile, turn left into parking lot at 970 Piner Road.

970 Piner Road is marked by a star on the map at right.

