



SOMA NEWS

SONOMA COUNTY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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Noah Siegel SPEAKS AT SOMA May 15: *Let It Bleed: The Lactarius of California*

The Lactarius or "Milk Mushrooms" of California are relatively small group with only about 50 species, many of which are commonly found during our mushroom season. This talk will highlight the Lactarius of CA, going over the well known edibles such as Candy Caps, and discuss not only how to tell them apart from all their look-alikes; but also how to identify the look-alikes as well!

Noah has spent two decades seeking, photographing, identifying, and furthering his knowledge about all aspects of macrofungi. He has hunted for mushrooms throughout the United States and Canada, as well as on multiple expeditions to New Zealand and Australia. He has won numerous awards from the North American Mycological Association (NAMA) photography contests. Noah recently was a consultant for the Audubon Guide to Mushrooms of North America Macintosh/Apple application, and supplied over 300 photographs for it. His photographs have appeared in FUNGI Magazine and Mushroom the Journal. He is currently working on, along with Christian Schwarz, Mushrooms of the Redwood Coast, a comprehensive field guide for the northern California coast.

Hear him live at 8:00 at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, in Santa Rosa. (See the last page of this newsletter for map and directions).



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CALENDAR

Photo
of the
Month:
**Sonoma
County
Morel**

Credit:
James
Johnson



EMERGENCY MUSHROOM POISONING ID

After seeking medical attention, contact Darwin DeShazer for identification at (707) 829-0596. Photos should be emailed to: muscaria@pacbell.net and need to 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% sure of the identification of any and all mushrooms before you eat them!

This is a free service for hospitals, veterinarians, and other concerned citizens of Sonoma County.

THE SONOMA COUNTY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (SOMA) IS AN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO MYCOLOGY. WE ENCOURAGE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS BY SHARING OUR ENTHUSIASM THROUGH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND

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President's Letter

DISPATCH FROM THE DUFF:

Although summer is not until June, April's foray was a hint of warmer days and the abundant wild plant life of the Sonoma Coast. Many flowers and shrubs were in bloom and some mushrooms had also fruited. More than a few butterflies fluttered in and out of the group camping area as about 30 people came to Salt Point State Park for our foray. Some had come from as far away as San Francisco and Santa Cruz. They had heard from friends about SOMA forays and wanted to attend, and although they said they were also abalone hunters we thought the mushroom foray was their first interest. The group found more than 35 different specimens and a number of edibles. Most specimens were past their prime and some impossible to identify. But the odd chanterelle and some hedge hogs were found to help a new mushroomer's identification skills. And a single clump of black trumpets alongside a trail drew everyone's attention.

The pot-luck included a Black Trumpet Béchamel over rigatoni by Patrick, the Mycochef, as well as many other delectable dishes. Before ending the foray George Riner gave an interesting talk on the specimens found. It made the day more informative for every one and all left with a vow to return to the woods next fall.

Spring and summer are not seasons of rest for some SOMA members. There are numerous tasks for the SOMA board that, if done and done well, will set the table for the club throughout the 2014/2015 year.

The first priority is to ask a member to become the Registrar for SOMA Camp 2015. If you have experience or working knowledge of Microsoft Office, have a couple of hours a day in October, November, December and enjoy working with others, the position is an excellent opportunity to help the club. This role in the SOMA Camp Staff is probably the most important, so the rewards and remuneration are the highest awarded. There is a list that details the functions and duties of the Registrar's position and we need to fill it as soon as possible. In addition, the past Registrar will help the replacement ease into the necessary tasks. Please contact me if you have an interest.

This is the last scheduled post mailing of the newsletter. One person has contacted the Board and would still like to receive a mailed copy until they can make other arrangements. If you must receive a mailed copy, please contact a member of the Board and arrangements can be made to get a copy to you. Please note that the extended time limit will end January 1, 2015.

Over the next few months, the upcoming fall, winter, and spring 2014-2015 Thursday night speaker schedule will be posted along with the SOMA Calendar of Days and the SOMA Scholarship recipients.

The people who keep SOMA running smoothly do so throughout the off-season too, organizing the Volunteer Appreciation Day picnic, continuing with the planning meetings for SOMA Camp January 2015, and getting ready for our next mushroom season. Please feel welcome to contact board members and see if you'd like to join in.

Best regards,

Jim Wheeler

Have You No Morels?

By Mushroom E. Lee
(a/k/a Lee Mc Carthy-Smith)

The last day of April I did something I never do, I “played hooky” from work with a group of six people, a few of them SOMA board members. We set out to explore the Tahoe National Forest near Foresthill and the American River. What I had not expected was how wonderful this experience would be. It was so much fun to escape the grind of my everyday routine and to seize the opportunity to explore nature with like-minded people. It was a great adventure.

In the last 6 years that I have been a SOMA member I have strived to learn as much about mushrooms as possible, in my free time. My goal has been to learn about and to identify at least 3 new mushrooms a year. It has been a little embarrassing to admit that the only place I have ever spotted morels has been at restaurants, SOMA cooking demos, and for sale at stores, dried. I have found many unusual and supposedly difficult to find mushrooms including an Oregon white truffle, so as the sole “virgin morel hunter”

on this trip it was my goal to find at least one morel “in the wild”.

In our mushroom quest I am happy to report that we found plenty of morels growing in an area where the snow had just recently melted away, at around the 5000’ elevation. The views at that elevation were incredible, the snow-capped mountains the bouquet of flowers all around; blooming dogwood trees, lupines, monkeyflowers, columbines, irises and more. AND to top off the day, in addition to finding morels, I was fortunate enough to see a mountain lion.

What a great experience! I cannot thank everyone involved with SOMA enough for all the information, opportunities and events (the Yahoo group/list serve information, forays, camp, fairs, monthly meetings, etc...) it has been a great education so far. It is also fair to say that without SOMA I would not have taken this trip and I would have no morels.



The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants

*The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants -
At Evening, it is not
At Morning, in a Truffled Hut
It stop opon a Spot*

*As if it tarried always
And yet it's whole Career
Is shorter than a Snake's Delay -
And fleeter than a Tare -*

BY EMILY DICKINSON

*'Tis Vegetation's Juggler -
The Germ of Alibi -
Doth like a Bubble antedate
And like a Bubble, hie -*

*I feel as if the Grass was pleased
To have it intermit -
This surreptitious Scion
Of Summer's circumspect.*

The Season's Recap (As It Goes On And On. . .)

This past season began with not even a whisper of a hello but has left with us a nice note by not leaving at all. What started out bleak, dry, depressing and troubling too has turned into a fine spring; time for us who are willing to keep getting out to just keep on doing that because there are yet wonders to behold and to maybe bewilder those who failed to foresee what has happened. Your reporter was one who did not know but is now surely enjoying the show.

And that would include porcini popping in April out on the coast concurrently with Sierran spring boletes, a long and not too bad candy cap season, an amanita extravaganza showcasing the other-worldly *A. magniverrucata* (whoa!), the first ever sightings of *B. barrowsii* by many, and a lovely little morel season occurring as this is written (May 4).

"Little" and wee but only in that few folks have been seen from around here up in the mountains taking advantage of this most seasonal of happenings. Little else should be done right now except going to the Sierras and picking good spots to pick and picking; fat chance you'll find many morels by sitting around here.

It takes sometimes a lot of trips to get a handle on how to handle all the possibilities of where to go and when. How high are they fruiting, on what exposures, and in which forests are all questions best answered by gettin' on up.

Dust off your national forest maps and check back over those logged areas you noticed under work by heavy equipment last fall. It helps if you've done this important home work: Call it smart foreplay if you love morelling the following springs. Noting on

the maps is a really easy way to give you guidance as to where to head if you don't want to fight such, as, say, the Rim Fire's b.s. drama.

Speaking of which: Looks like mass participation in the unpermitted activity of mushroom harvesting there is having an effect in at least showcasing the absolute specious and fallacious unfounded crap-ola bannered by the Stanislaus NF Supervisor to try and prevent what is the Gods'-giving right to pick on regulated public lands.

(What a few folks were going to do was pull a wood cutting permit and go in the burn with a pick up and chainsaw and park down a dirt track but it was too far to drive though to just join a freakin' circus, it appears.)

Another thing that didn't happen in this latter day season right here was almost no chanterelles, golden, black, even yellow foots were scarce--and they're almost never not seen coming up in our coastal woods. Matsutake poorly showed, shrimps were sparse, but dye mushrooms, particularly *C. smithii*, were robustly present and they are pretty little fellows.

Some say the an El Nino is coming this year and those climate situations can provide for smiles upon the faces of the mushroom people.

This is the last column of the year. Get up

and out to our fabulous Sierras now and after thunderstorms in the late summer and pick to keep your hearts' content.

Best way to cook morels? Maybe over a campfire after first tossing rinsed mushrooms in a bowl with melted butter, S & P, skewer on a long twig and roast until thoroughly cooked well.

That's all folks!



Amanita magniverrucata

Credit: santacruzmountainsecology.

Grilled Trout Stuffed With Morels and Spring Greens (From Twin Eagles Wilderness School's Finest Morel Recipes)

Ingredients:

2 Trout (~ 8 ounce. We prefer brook trout)
1 cup finely-chopped morels
1 Tbsp. butter
1 garlic clove, minced
1 bunch watercress, finely chopped
1 Tbsp. fresh dill, minced
4 scallions, minced
1/2 tsp. horseradish
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
2 Tbsp. crushed crackers
Melted butter as needed

Directions:

Melt butter in a pan over medium heat. Add morels, garlic, watercress, dill, and scallions. Mix, cover, and cook over low heat for 5 - 10 minutes. Remove from heat and add in horseradish, salt, pepper, and crushed crackers.

Stuff trout with mixture. Brush the sides of the trout with melted butter. Cook for about 10 minutes per side on a hot grill, turning only once.

Serve hot, and indulge yourselves with the rich flavors of earth and water.



Morels and Trout

Credit: Fichigan

SOMA April Foray: Salt Point State Park



SUBSCRIBER NOTE: This will be the last print issue of SOMA News. Thereafter only the electronic format will be online at somamushrooms.org. If you have limited computer access, contact me at SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org or call 707-799-9766. Many thanks, Chaz.

WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO BE A MEMBER OF SOMA?

JOIN TODAY!

Membership in the Sonoma County Mycological Association, or SOMA, is a great way to meet and interact with other mushroom enthusiasts, learn more about identifying fungi, and share interests such as cooking and cultivating mushrooms. Sure, most of what SOMA does is open to the public, but wouldn't you rather join SOMA and get all the goodies? Head to <http://somamushrooms.org/membership>; this the mushroom season is just beginning!

Head to *<http://somamushrooms.org/membership>* and sign up!

My recent purchase of a permit to pick in Tahoe NF triggered a mind game into the thought processes (I was going to say “reasoning”) behind the variability of requirements between the different forests. I’m writing specifically about NFS lands which are multi use public resources, as opposed to State/County/City parks which have a different purpose. Mining, logging, hunting, firewood gathering and mushroom picking are all normal, economic NFS activities along with recreational activities like hiking and camping.

The Tahoe NF permit required that follow what I consider to be good practice, such as not raking the

weekend target shooters (who aren’t even required to obtain a permit) is disgusting. So do we really need to sign that we won’t be raking the duff?

2) Fees need to be rational. Firstly, is there a need to differentiate between amateur and commercial pickers? If so, how? The requirement to slice the mushrooms in half attempts to make this differentiation, but to what end. For commercials, the fees need to be low if they are to make a living, and for recreational pickers they must be better related to the mushrooms currently fruiting. An administratively simple solution might be \$20 per calendar month – not too high for commercials, and



Lake Tahoe Morels

Credit: Morel Mushroom Hunting Club

duff and not leaving litter and had to be signed in front of the NFS person who read the requirements and limitations. It was accompanied by a helpful map showing the location of the American burn and an information sheet showing the difference between morels and *gyromitra esculenta* (toxic to some people). It limited me to 5 pounds (I’d be happy with 5 lbs of morels), yet it requires the mushroom be sliced in half immediately after picking, presumably to prevent my selling them, and typically only meaningful for porcini. The fee was \$20 for two days which I had to specify. So “today” would be fairly obvious, and “tomorrow” if I was staying in the area, but it’s a haul from Sonoma County, and the chances of me going back up on the (random) second day I specified are pretty minimal, so effectively the permit was \$20 for one day. Compare this to the adjacent forest where I’m told (by that “usually reliable source”) that the fee is still \$20 but that allows picking 40lbs after which one must pay \$20 for another permit and is valid for 30 days.

So what are the considerations for a sensible policy? We must expect some variations from one forest to the next as many decisions are better made at the local level, but at the same time they should be within a rational framework.

1) Some consistency with other activities. The amount of damage done to the forest by logging is many orders of magnitude greater than could ever be done by collecting mushrooms, and the amount of trash left by

covering a long enough time span to allow recreationals, who often must travel a long distance to reach the forests, an opportunity to fit their free time to weather and fruiting patterns.

3) No weight limit. Unlike trees, mushrooms are fruit with a limited “shelf life”. If unpicked, most species return to the soil within days.

4) Availability. NFS offices are not open on weekends, so permits are not available to those who work “normal” hours. One possibility might be for the NFS to state that permit requirements are not enforced on weekends. However, since we’re now well into the second decade of the 21st century, it’s about time that the permit process was online as well as in person.

5) Accessibility. For the American fire we were given a map showing its location. For the Rim fire we are denied access “for our own safety”. This is nonsense. To the suspicious mind it suggests that there is some behavior in the Rim fire that the authorities wish to hide from the general public. Logging of healthy trees for “salvage” comes to mind. Ignoring that paranoid mind, it’s imperative that the government allow adults to be responsible for their own behavior. A burned forest is a burned forest, whether it be named Rim or American – a little more dangerous than an unburned forest perhaps, but at least visibility is improved!

The main problem to me, is how to make these changes happen.

SOMA

PO Box 7147
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SOMA News

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SOMA usually meets on the third Thursday of the month throughout the year (September through May), at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau , 970 Piner Road, Santa Rosa, California, 94931. Fungi are displayed at 7 PM, and speakers begin around 7:30 PM. Bring in your baffling fungi to be identified!

Directions to the Sonoma County Farm Bureau

From the south:

- Go north on Hwy 101
- Pass the Steel Lane exit then take the Bicentennial Way exit
- Go over Hwy 101 (heading west) and then right on Range Ave
- Turn left on Piner Rd and go about 1/4 mile
- Turn left into Farm Bureau parking lot at 970 Piner Rd

From the north:

- Go south on Hwy 101
- Take the first Santa Rosa exit for Hopper Ave/Mendocino Ave
- Stay left on the frontage road (it becomes Cleveland Ave)
- Turn right on Piner Rd and go about 1/4 mile
- Turn left into Farm Bureau parking lot at 970 Piner Rd

