

# SOMA NEWS

SONOMA COUNTY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 27 : 5

January 2015

## SPEAKER OF THE MONTH: Darvin DeShazer

### Polypores - The Forgotten Family

Darvin will present a show on California Polypores that includes a quest to find the yellow-pored polypore. Polypores are often ignored by mushroomers because of the lack of culinary traits, but they shine in medicinals, fiber for paper making and dyes for natural fibers.

Darvin is chairman of the Science Department at St. Vincent High School in Petaluma, CA and for over 25 years has taught Biology and Advanced Placement Biology. He also has taught Physics and Honors Chemistry. His scientific training was guided by Dr. David Largent at Humboldt State University where he obtained a degree in Biology and teaching certificates in Life Science and Chemistry.

He was one of the cofounders of SOMA. In 2003 he was the keynote speaker for the NAMA Regional Foray in Northern California. His expertise in mushrooms stems from more than 35 years in the field and a personal library of over 1,000 mushroom books. His love for hunting mushrooms has resulted in over 8,000 color photos of fungi at MushroomObserver.org. He assists local hospitals and veterinarians as the North Bay identification expert of poisonous mushrooms and is a consultant for the Bay Area Poison Control Center and the University of California Agricultural Extension Service. Darvin has written keys to over 2,000 species of fungi and coauthored several publications about fungi, including **100 Edible Mushrooms**. -- Jan 22nd, 7:00 PM, at Sonoma County Farm Bureau, Santa Rosa, CA.



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**EMERGENCY MUSHROOM POISONING ID:** After seeking medical attention, contact Darvin DeShazer for identification at (707) 829-0596. Email photos to: [muscaria@pacbell.net](mailto:muscaria@pacbell.net) and be sure to photograph all sides, cap and of the mushroom. Please do not send photos taken with older cell phones – the resolution is simply too poor to allow accurate identification.

NOTE: Always be 100% sure of the identification of any mushroom before you eat it!

THE SONOMA COUNTY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (SOMA) IS A NON-PROFIT (501C) EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO MYCOLOGY. WE ENCOURAGE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS BY SHARING OUR ENTHUSIASM THROUGH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS AND IN GUIDED FORAYS.

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## President's Letter

### DISPATCH FROM THE DUFF:

The lull in local fungal forays or walks came to a complete end during the last few months of 2014. Because of the record rainfall in December, many SOMA members found species in their yards or their neighbor's landscape and needed help to identify them. It was a very busy time sorting out the large number of agaricacea that fruited and looked appetizing to many. The number of photos, emails and some phone calls kept everyone organized and focused on making accurate identifications. It was the busiest season for many members in a long time.

Early in December, SOMA staffed an information booth at the MSSF Fungus Fair in the Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park. Jessica Holloway and Nick Janson offered information on SOMA Camp, the uses of wild mushrooms and noted which aromas can be detected in dried wild mushrooms. The first copies of the new "SOMA Field Journal" were sold. The journal is a collapsible, foldable notebook with colored, detachable note tags for jotting down physical details of specimens found. A guide is included to help the users to describe the important features of a mushroom. Foragers may record observations of size, color, shape, texture and habitat of their finds. It could be a useful tool to help beginners learn and improve their skills.

SOMA Camp 2015 is 10 days away from the start. The schedule for classes is set, volunteer program assignments are completed, and other necessities put into place. The planning effort and details have occupied a number of people for more than a few hours, especially Chris Murray and Tom Cruckshank. Chris was asked to fill in as SOMA Camp Registrar, which he has done very well. Tom has been responsible for all Camp documents, including presenter handouts, signs, badges, biographies ... it is a very long list of items. Both have done well to keep everyone informed and preventing significant upsets. We think we are on target to have a successful SOMA 2015 Camp.

Over the last few years acoustics in the CYO main hall have been improved. But the shape, construction materials and size of the room remains a challenge for noise control. The goal is to allow everyone to hear every announcement, and be able to listen, comfortably, to everyone sitting at the same table during meals. Cross table conversations are probably not realistic. Once again we need everyone to assist the effort and insure that all folks enjoy the dinners and presenters.

There will be a Silent Auction at SOMA Camp as in year's past. Donations are a little slow at the moment. SOMA Camp does need your support, so please check your closets, or safes, or areas used to store special things and determine, if you might be able to part with an object d'art or inanimate, object d'amour for SOMA's benefit. Thank you!

Our "Members Only Foray", on Saturday, December 20th, was exciting and productive. Good turn-out of 40-45 people, all with very good attitudes. The weather turned out to be much better than predicted, although it did rain at times. The tarp was quickly erected for the first time in three years ... hurray! Patrick's hot meal was even more enjoyable in the wetness. The weather did clear later in day and allowed the group to bundle and pack all the gear in a timely way.

Best regards,  
Jim Wheeler

# December Foray

By Alana Barton

SOMA holds mushroom forays with mycologists who can identify all the mushrooms found. Last time we went mushroom hunting at Salt Point State Park on the Sonoma coast. We were on the look out for Porcini's, but ended up finding candy caps, shaggy manes, and hedgehogs as well. I was thrilled to find candy cap mushrooms in the wild for the first time. Candy caps smell like maple syrup, which intensifies as the mushrooms are dried. This time, I want to dry my candy cap mushrooms, crush them, and then add them to my holiday hot chocolate.



Shaggy Manes

Credit: Tanlorne.us

I brought home the shaggy manes for dinner. My go-to method for cooking mushrooms is to sauté them with butter, shallots and garlic. I generally add the ingredients by feel and taste. The shaggy manes were paired with wild rice and kale sautéed in garlic and olive oil.

- Ingredients:
- 4 shaggy mane mushrooms (or substitute another mushroom)
  - 1 small shallot
  - 2 medium cloves of garlic
  - 2-4 tablespoons of butter, more as needed

Chop up the shallots and garlic. Heat a cast iron skillet. Once hot, melt one tablespoon of butter, and add the shallots and garlic. Mix over medium heat until the shallots are translucent, and the garlic soft. Melt another tablespoon of butter before adding the mushrooms. Heat over medium heat, mixing occasionally so the ingredients do not become overly crispy. Continue to add butter to the skillet as needed to keep the skillet greased. sauté the mushrooms until they are soft and pliable. The shaggy manes will open up and become slightly translucent when done.

The next forage with SOMA is January 24th. After a forage there is a potluck supplied by the members and attendees, full of decadent homemade food often full of mushrooms. SOMA provides information on mushrooms regarding identification, cooking, dyes and paper, growing, foraging, and health. Membership is around twenty dollars.



## Photo of the Month

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Myco-tectonic Plates on *Amanita muscaria*

Credit: Paul Stamets

# The Forager's Report: January 2015

By Patrick Hamilton

It's another New Year and we mushroomers get the bonus pleasure of simply adding this to our already fairly good to fabulous fungal year in progress now since, um, September when we got around 1/2" of goodly and Godly blessed rain.

Or had our year of fun begun actually in August, but up in the Sierras? Does it end after mountain morel season? When is it that we begin and end "official mushroom season?" Fiscal years can run from July 1 to June 30, other business years as they so choose; we have the Lunar, Solar, and Gregorian calendars plus about 100 or so others including the Hebrew and Chinese day-trackers: But why don't we have one for ourselves? Or at least a reminder list for the year. . . ?



Porcinis and Morels

Credit: leslieland.com

## August

1. Check the weather reports for the mountains from 3,000' to 6,000'.
2. Do recons to patches you tell few others about.
3. Tell everyone you know nothing about fall mountain porcini fruiting.
4. As soon as summer thunder has showers splashing down in those patches do another recon.
5. Tell only a few what to do.

## September

1. Continue with all of August's plans. Especially the cool secretive stuff.
2. Check rain patterns in Southern Oregon and most northerly California.
3. Google state parks where you can't pick porcini but spend time oogling Patrick's Point SP in Humboldt, just because. Don't have a state park named after you? Write your legislator, now!
4. Plan a trip to your friend's in Oregon's porcini and chanterelle country. If one is not available, get one. Join an on-line mushroomer's dating service. Don't know of one? Start one now!
5. Check with friends in Gualala and The Sea Ranch, as to what they think about mushrooms. Don't have a contact there? See #4 just above.
6. Pray for rain. But also look for sulfur shelves on still-dry stumps and in the crotches of eucalypts. And for summer fog drip chanterelles in SPSP.
7. Plan to go on the first SOMA monthly foray of the mushroom season.
8. Plan a trip to Alaska.

## October

1. On your way back from Oregon stop off at that favorite beachy sort of secret park and check for spruce porcini, lobsters, and man on horseback. Pick at will, if you will. But be wary of any rules-enforcers' and weary of any enforced rule.
2. After the rains you've prayed for have not spoiled your parade but instead made it an equal to that one of Roses pick, pick, pick, porcini--5 lbs per day at our beloved SPSP. And while you're there if you happen to see someone leave exposed toilet paper in the woods and--bear or not--shoot 'em.

(Continued on page 6.)

# The Forager's Report: January 2015.....(Continued)

## **November**

1. Begin looking for matsutake and early blacks and other cool finds that will make you look fungally important to your friends. (If you have none, see the aboves.)
2. Should/could be (might be?) full-on edulis season so pick to fill the dryers we all have. BTW--mine is over 20 some even years old. A "Harvest Maid" (think of her wearing that sweet cornflower blue one you presented to make up for the argument where you were wrong, again, or--think of him in that--never mind) by American Harvester 13 round tray mini monster which will dry even rather wet edulis cut less than 1/4" and set at 95 degrees in about 12 hours.
3. Check under Doug-firs for the scrumptious and crunchous "shrimp group" russulas, so good to cook with in the pan, to look at on the plate, and to taste on the palate. Look for and be very careful picking coccoli there too.
4. This month is a good one to finally become like an Eastern European mushroomer and decide to eat suillus.
5. Plan to make porcini gravy and also roasted garlic mashed potatoes with crunchy bits of fried porcini strips atop for TG. You'll be a mushroom hero and becoming one and retaining that status is all important to the mush-room person you all either are or surely wish to be (if you are still reading this).
6. Plan to go to Jackson SF.
7. Look in ravines for horizontal downed trees spanning creeks for oyster mushrooms.

## **December**

1. Begin to check out the live oak and other habitats for candy caps. A good rule is to stoop and pick each one you see and by the end of the day you could have 100 or so.
2. Get out to West Marin's Bishop pine environs as the boletes move a bit south down the coast.
3. Look harder for blacks up the coast.
4. Pick to dry yellow feet or sauté them fresh in curries--way good!
5. Give yourself a really nice gift for the holidays: Buy a pound of dried candy caps (\$200) or a pound of dried morels (\$300). Or keep learning better how to get your own.

## **January**

1. Hedgehogs should be popping in the huckleberry patches and maybe blacks too.
2. Matsies are truly slowing now, candy caps could be on the wane, but your fungal spirits are still heavenly buoyed from your "fun in the forests" favorite pastime.
3. If it is not a "pastime" seek help.

## **February/March**

1. Blacks might/could be yet coming strong along with rapandums and belly buttons.
2. Velosas--rated to be the very best by some--are coming out under the drip lines of live oaks. Ah--be careful.
3. Can you see April yet. . .?

## **April**

1. Snow melting? Go to the mountains.
2. Snow still there? Get the last of our coastal mushrooms (until the fruiting of June "pine trells").
3. Serious time for morel recons the first two weeks of this month.
4. Begin to pick them in the lower elevations you've kept secret for decades.

## **May/June/July**

1., 2., 3., and 4. May is for morels. These months and week parts of them mingle up with morels and spring porcini. Look for those hard-headed puppies in the same general areas and habitats as natural morels. Make for a nice basket! There you have your mushroomer's calendar.

And here what you have is a mushroom person's seasonal recipe which will look especially good if any one who makes it is wearing a cornflower blue apron (see #2, November, above).

## Black Mussels, Black Chanterelles, Red Peppers

Serving Size: 8 Preparation Time: 0:30

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation
5	lb	black mussels	
2	ea	shallot	coarsely chopped
3	cloves	garlic	chopped
2	c	white wine	
1/2	bunch	thyme	
1	ea	onion	diced
1	tbl	curry powder	
1	tbl	Thai curry paste	
1	tbl	sweet soy or regular	
1	ea	red bell pepper	julienned
1	c	black chanterelles	julienned
1	tsp	honey	
2	tsp	rice wine vinegar	
1	cn	unsweetened coconut milk	
		pea sprouts	
		vegetable oil	
		grey sea salt; and	
		fresh ground pepper	



1. Rinse and strain mussels. In large pot sweat shallots, thyme and half of the garlic in oil. Add mussels, S & P, and wine. Cover and cook until all mussels open. Strain them immediately and reserve cooking liquid. Cool mussels and take them out of shell and debeard them (if necessary).
2. In second pan sauté onion and garlic until caramelized. Add curry powder and toast until aromatic. add paste and soy sauce and caramelize. Deglaze with the coconut milk and mussel juice (strain through fine sieve to remove any sand). Cook and reduce by 2/3.
3. Sauté peppers and blacks, add pinch of curry powder, S & P. Add vinegar and honey and cook until tender.

To plate--heat cast iron skillet. warm mussels, peppers, mushrooms in curry pan. Spoon mussels onto hot skillet. Top with sautéed pea sprouts.

Look proud. Be proud. Be a mushroomer!

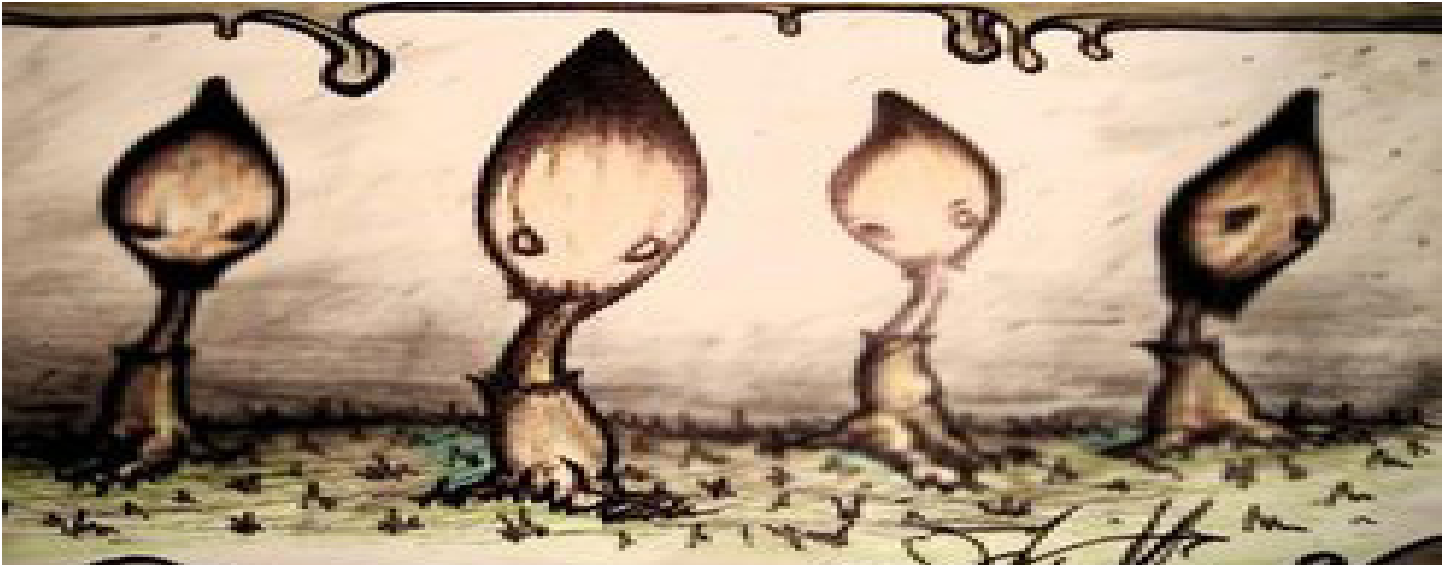


# Can Mushrooms Treat Depression?

By Eugenia Bone

(Reprinted from The New York Times November. 29, 2014)

I TRIED magic mushrooms out of curiosity and in middle age. I'd been on the amateur mycological circuit for a couple of years, but hallucinogenic species were rarely mentioned at the foraging expeditions and conferences I attended. It's almost as if they were the black sheep of mycology: embarrassing to serious taxonomy jocks. I read some books on the subject, but most were tripper's guides that didn't utilize, um, specific language or current science. Psychoactive mushrooms had been in a kind of scientific ghetto ever since they were criminalized in 1968. But now the drug derived from some *Psilocybe* mushrooms, psilocybin is finally being re-examined for its medical applications.



Liberty Caps

By Kingkzero

A study published last month in the *Journal of the Royal Society Interface* compared M.R.I.s of the brains of subjects injected with psilocybin with scans of their normal brain activity. The brains on psilocybin showed radically different connectivity patterns between cortical regions (the parts thought to play an important role in consciousness). The researchers mapped out these connections, revealing the activity of new neural networks between otherwise disconnected brain regions.

The researchers suspect that these unusual connections may be responsible for the synesthetic experience trippers describe, of hearing colors, for example, and seeing sounds. The part of the brain that processes sound may be connecting to the part of the brain that processes sight. The study's leader, Paul Expert at King's College London, told me that his team doubted that this psilocybin-induced connectivity lasted. They think they are seeing a temporary modification of the subject's brain function.

The fact that under the influence of psilocybin the brain temporarily behaves in a new way may be medically significant in treating psychological disorders like depression. "When suffering depression, people get stuck in a spiral of negative thoughts and cannot get out of it," Dr. Expert said. "One can imagine that breaking any pattern that prevents a 'proper' functioning of the brain can be helpful." Think of it as tripping a breaker or rebooting your computer.

Psilocybin is present in a wide range of mushrooms, especially in the genus *Psilocybe*, though why it exists in the mushroom is not fully understood. When ingested, psilocybin metabolizes to psilocin, which resembles the chemical structure of serotonin — a neurotransmitter that regulates mood, appetite, sleep, cognitive functions like memory and learning and feelings of pleasure. Psilocin may simulate serotonin, and stimulate serotonin receptors in the brain. (Continued on next page)



## Can Mushrooms Treat Depression?.....continued

Psilocybin was first synthesized in the late 1950s, by the chemist Albert Hofmann (who also synthesized LSD from a fungus). In the years following its discovery, a number of studies were conducted, on psilocybin's efficacy in treating alcoholism, as a tool in therapy and as a mechanism by which the terminally ill might better cope with despair. But clinical research into psilocybin became professionally marginalized, and research funding dried up about the same time it entered the mainstream as a recreational drug. Outlawed in 1968, it was swept up in the counterculture panic of the Nixon era and classified as a Schedule 1 drug, like heroin, under the



**Liberty Caps**

**Credit: Greg Thorn**

Controlled Substances Act of 1970. A Schedule 1 drug means it is considered to have the highest potential for abuse and no currently accepted medical use.

It's taken over four decades for the cultural taboo against psilocybin to relax enough for the drug to be re-examined for its medical applications, though a license to use it in a lab must be approved by the Drug Enforcement Administration and strict, time-consuming protocols must be met to ensure it is used safely. Still, doing this kind of research is no longer guaranteed to tank your career, and a small number of studies have been completed, with more underway, many of them building on the work accomplished by scientists in the 1960s.

A range of studies have suggested that controlled doses of psilocybin can help the user escape cognitive ruts of all sorts. One study, published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* in 2012, rated the vividness of autobiographical memory of subjects on psilocybin and found the drug enhanced their recollection, and “subjective well-being” upon follow-up. The researchers concluded that psilocybin might be useful in psychotherapy as an adjunct therapy to help patients reverse “negative cognitive biases” — a phenomenon common in depression by which one has a greater recall of negative memories than positive ones — and facilitate the recall of important memories.

Other studies have suggested that psilocybin may modify obsessive compulsion by reducing symptoms like repetitive counting or hand-washing, and in a 2006 paper published in *Neurology*, the authors interviewed (Continued on next page)

## Can Mushrooms Treat Depression?...continued

cluster headache sufferers who had used psilocybin to treat their horrific condition, and learned that even low doses — less than is needed to actually trip — could bring about remission. (I also know someone who claims psilocybin cured his stuttering.) A study published last year in the journal *Experimental Brain Research* found that psilocybin eliminated conditioned fear responses in mice, which has implications for sufferers of PTSD. And psilocybin has been shown to relieve anxiety, depression and despair in terminal cancer patients, who describe their experience as giving them a new perspective on their lives.

Anecdotally, psychoactive mushrooms may positively affect even nonsufferers. They did for me. I ate the mushroom as part of research for a book. The experience lasted about four hours, much of which I spent outdoors, but seemed to last much longer. I think because everything I was seeing was so new: the way the air was disturbed behind the flight of a bee, the way the trees seemed to respire, how the clouds and breeze and rocks and grass all existed in a kind of churning symbiosis I experienced a number of small epiphanies — self-realizations actually — but one in particular remained with me. As the drug wore off, I went indoors to take a hot bath. For a moment I thought that might not be a good idea, as bath time is when women in middle age can be very self-critical and unforgiving, and I didn't want the sight of my waistline to veer me into a bad trip. But while in the tub I envisioned my body as a ship that was taking me through life, and that made it beautiful. I stopped feeling guilty about growing older and regretful about losing my looks. Instead, I felt overwhelming gratitude. It was a tremendous relief that I still feel.

Psilocybin could have enormous impact on the lives of many Americans. But at the moment, its Schedule 1 status makes it a difficult drug to study, and only a handful of scientists are engaged in its research. This needs to change. Rescheduling psilocybin won't make it legal; it will make it easier for research to be conducted, leading to more scientists exploring its potential, while reducing investor concern and allowing for compassionate



use provisions. Don't get me wrong: I'm not suggesting 16-year-olds take magic mushrooms. I'm not suggesting they be used to party at all. What I am advocating for is a mind open to the possibilities of their use to help people in need. Because illiberality doesn't cure disease; curiosity does.

Eugenia Bone is the author of "Mycophilia: Revelations From the Weird World of Mushrooms."

**The Sonoma County Mycological Association  
Presents the 18th Annual**

# **SOMA**

## **Wild Mushroom Camp**

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# **January 17-19, 2015**

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

## JOIN US 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!

## SOMA Calendar & Notes:

### SOMA CAMP Silent/Live Auction and Raffle

Please consider donating items for our camp auction and raffle. Last year these efforts netted our scholarship program over \$3000. We were able to provide 2 additional scholarships with these funds. Just about anything can be used, including dried mushrooms, truffles, artwork, mushroom themed items, wine, dinners, trips, restaurant gift certificates, wine accessories (openers, carafes, glasses, etc.) Contact me if you have items at 824-8852, or give them to Jim or me at the next foray or meeting. Thanks Rachel.

### SOMA Calendar 2014

January 9th -11th, FFSC Mushroom Fair; 301 Center St, Santa Cruz, CA.

## SOMA MAP & DIRECTIONS

**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 Road

#### 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!

