



OMPHALINA

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Christmas Issue

Newsletter of



FORAY
NEWFOUNDLAND
AND LABRADOR

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OMPHALINA is the lackadaisical newsletter of Foray Newfoundland & Labrador. There is no schedule of publications, no promise to appear again. Its primary purpose is to serve as a conduit of information to registrants to the upcoming foray and secondarily as a communications tool with members.

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Please address comments, complaints and contributions to Andrus Voitk, self-appointed Editor:

foray AT nlmushrooms.ca



is an amateur, volunteer-run, community, not-for-profit organization with a mission to organize enjoyable and informative amateur mushroom forays in Newfoundland and Labrador and disseminate the knowledge gained.

Webpage: www.nlmushrooms.ca

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COVER

Dasyscyphus virgineus, graces our Christmas cover because it is pure as the driven snow, symbolic of the white Christmas that we may not see around the luxurious editorial offices of **OMPHALINA**. The Christian reader may also delight in the association of its epithet with the Virgin Mary. Its shape is appropriate because guttation makes it look like an inaccurate snowflake, a star with blunted rays, or just a very pretty Christmas tree ornament. Virginal white is also symbolic of the new year, as yet unblemished, nothing writ upon it. Finally, its stemware shape makes a suitable goblet for your New Year's Champagne, guttation already bringing to mind the festive bubbly. Altogether, a very fitting picture with which to wish a very happy Christmas and warm New Year to you all, no matter what your religious conviction or which calendar you follow!

Dasyscyphus virgineus is a good example of why a common mushroom might seem uncommon. This saprobe is ubiquitous, not fussy about substrate (dead birch root in this instance), and has a long season, yet we have recorded it on only three forays. All it needs is moisture and prefers to be on the cool side. Therefore it is least common in the summer, when more people are out and about, looking at natural history phenomena. Also, it is small. The need for constant or prolonged moisture often makes it grow on the underside of organic matter, or even on buried wood (as here), hence, not seen too often. While you may not be intimate with this quite common mushroom because of its discrete behaviour—as befits a maiden—surely after the lucid description of guttation in the recent issue of *FUNGI*, no doubt everyone recognized this phenomenon (guttation reprint downloadable from FNL website).

It is interesting to speculate on the mode of propagation of *Dasyscyphus virgineus*. Given its usual locations, clearly it does not depend on air currents to disperse its spores. Invertebrate vectors? Then why have a stem? *Dasyscyphus virgineus* can be found in places of suitable moisture and temperature even before the snow is fully gone and after the first snow has fallen. Things are so cool at those times, that most invertebrates are not great movers or eaters. Or are the spores mixed in the guttation droplets and carried away by groundwater? Is that why the droplets are cloudy? Good subject for a PhD thesis, this little virgin.



Message from the Editor

This is our special holiday edition, sent out expressly to wish each and every one of our readers a very merry Christmas and a happy 2011.

OMPHALINA began as a newsletter for members only. In keeping with the holiday spirit, now that we have some content beside foray notices, we have extended the recipient list to include our consultants, partners, upcoming faculty and sister clubs. Our partners have been mentioned in several past issues and the Report, and thanked by letter. The upcoming faculty is listed on our Notice (back cover). However, we have been remiss in not recognizing adequately our consultants, who serve our club free of charge; we hope appearances of OMPHALINA in your mailbox will speak of our gratitude. Our consultants are **Dave Malloch** of the *New Brunswick Museum*, our mycological consultant; **Andrew May** of *Brothers & Burden*, our legal counsel; **Jim Parsons** of *Thought Nest Consulting*, our web consultant; **Rick Squire** of *Squire & Hynes*, our accountant; and **Sue Sullivan** of *Sullivan Risk Consulting*, our risk management consultant. To these fine people our heartfelt thanks. We have also sent a copy to the Natural History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, The Wildflower Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Mycological Society of Toronto, and the Alberta Mycological Society, with whom we exchange or hope to exchange newsletters.

A fitting close to the International Year of Scribodiversity, this special issue covers diverse range of the recognized mycological subspecialties: mycoreligion, mycotravel, fungal fine arts, mycogourmandise, and even mycology, in addition to describing a mushroom on the cover. In our lead article Gander member Jim Cornish contributes to the holiday spirit with a specially written review of *Amanita muscaria* and Christmas. OMPHALINA is registered as a mul-

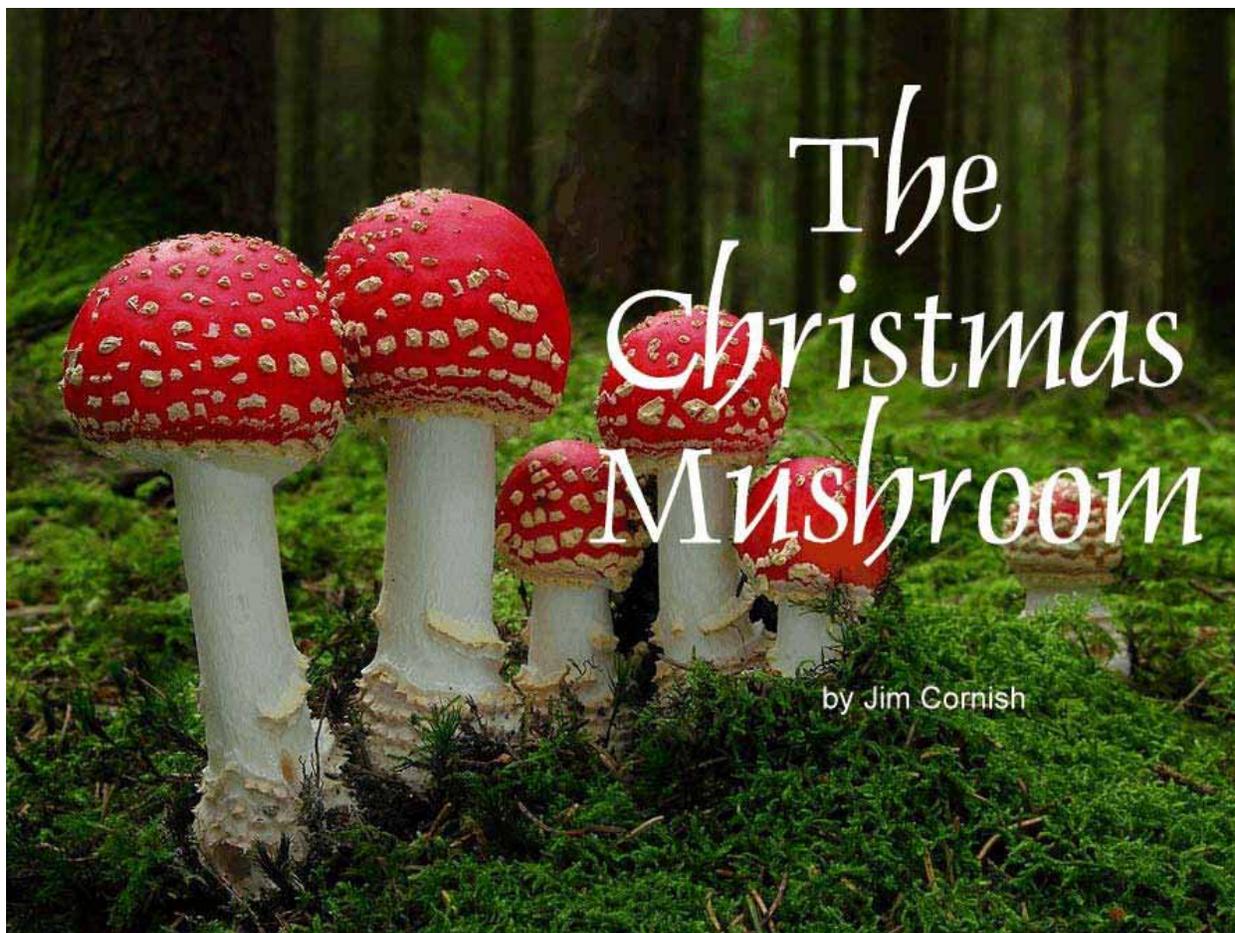
tilingual publication, and this special edition carries our first French article: André Paul and Renée Lebouf laud our foray in terms to make us blush. Merci pour le cadeau! Since we have not translated any of our English writings into French, we are not translating this into English. Maria Voitk describes her quilt, “On the Whims of the Wind”, depicting spores based on authentic pictures. We are trying out a cooking section, “The empty skillet”, which Maria agreed to edit. With submissions from professional and amateur members alike, this will likely become our most popular section. Finally, a little crowing about our small intrusion into the scientific world of mycology. Such activity is possible because of our herbarium, which brings up a serious question that must be resolved during the upcoming year: **How can we keep our collection in the province?**

The Osprey has found an Editor (two, in fact); as a result, a publication devoted to articles of local mushroom lore is only warranted if there is sufficient support (contribution of material). Experience with this issue suggests among us there is enough talent to do this, so we shall try it for 2011. If we get enough descriptions of mushrooms, recipes, arts, crafts or other mushroom related submissions, we can continue to publish such content. If not, OMPHALINA will always have a role as a vehicle for notices to members and foray participants, in a more appealing format than a bare e-mail message.

Happy mushrooming!

andrus

PS: Feel free to share this issue with friends. If you wish to use any of the material in another publication, please ask, because authors retain copyright to submitted work. OMPHALINA is freely available to the public for downloading from our website.



The Christmas Mushroom

by Jim Cornish

[Best read while enjoying a glass or two of Christmas Cheer!]

As Christmas approaches, our thoughts of mushrooms are not about rings and veils or gill attachments and spore prints, but about how best to serve them at an office party or a gathering of family and friends. What role mushrooms had in shaping the traditions, trappings and iconic characters of the holiday season, rarely, if ever, enters our minds. Yet, without a fungal influence, Santa Claus, gifts, flying reindeer, and even Christmas itself, might not exist.

The mushroom responsible for some

of this seasonal merriment and mayhem is the infamous *Amanita muscaria* or fly agaric, the Christmas mushroom. Its distinctive red cap dotted with white warts, remnants of its universal veil, make it one of the easiest mushrooms to identify. Native to the boreal and temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere, *A. muscaria* is now cosmopolitan in distribution, thanks to seventeenth century Europeans who colonized the Southern Hemisphere and unintentionally carried its spores and mycelia with them. Its connections to

Christmas, however, go back much further, to a time in pre-Christian Europe and Siberia when religion was a series of indigenous polytheistic traditions collectively called paganism. Thus, most of the ties between the fly agaric and Christmas are with the type variety, the red or “European” *A. muscaria* var. *muscaria*. In Newfoundland and Labrador, as in most of Eastern North America, the native variety is the American fly agaric, *A. muscaria* var. *guessowii*, named after the German-born Canadian botanist Hans Theodor Güssow. Our mushroom has a yellow to orange cap. It also differs from the type variety by producing far less psychoactive chemicals and more toxic chemicals. Therefore, the only likely tripping from eating our mushroom is to the hospital, or even the undertaker—not a very Christmassy thought.



ingestion, these agents create euphoria and auditory and visual hallucinations. Throughout its Eurasian range, *A. muscaria* was commonly used as a

psychedelic and as an enthenogen—a substance taken to create heavenly visions, spiritual raptures, transcendental experiences and insight. Ingesting it was part of the mysticism practiced in the earliest centuries of the Christian Church and in the pagan religions that existed across northern Europe long before the birth of Christ. It was when these two religious ideologies met that the role of *A. muscaria* in influencing the development of many Christmas traditions became evident. To keep its new converts

The Mystic and the Psychedelic

The reason for *Amanita muscaria* to influence one of the most widely celebrated religious holidays in the world is found in its toxicology. Among its many toxins are at least two biologically active chemicals (muscimol and ibotenic acid) that are psychoactive in humans. Shortly after



from slipping back to their old ways, the Church allowed some pagan practices to creep into holy day celebrations, most notably Christmas and Easter.

Ho, Ho, Ho

The most recognizable “character” of Christmas is Santa Claus—aka Sinterklaas, Father Christmas, Père Noël and Kris Kringle to name a few.

Loosely based on Saint Nicholas, a Turkish bishop partly responsible for the spread of Christianity to southern Europe in the third century of the Church, Santa is a blend of mushroom collecting shamans, a Christian crusader and a commercial idol.

Shamans, the holy men of paganism, often collected *A. muscaria* for healing and for religious ceremonies. Having learned that drying the mushrooms reduced their toxicity while increasing their potency, the shamans strung the amanitas like popcorn over a fire or hung them like ornaments from the boughs of fir trees brought inside for winter solstice celebrations. After eating some of their dried booty, the shamans’ eyes glazed over, their cheeks flushed and they fell into fits of laughter. When their help as healers was sought, they gathered their amanitas in a

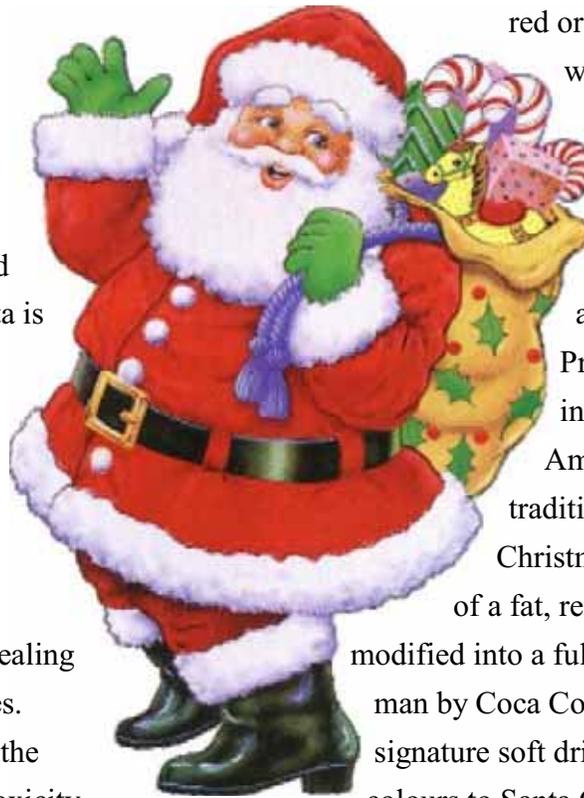
sack and traveled on a reindeer-drawn sleigh to the teepee-shaped homes of the ill. Finding the homes buried in snow, they entered via a smoke-hole in the roof. The parallels to what has become the Santa story are uncanny to say the least.

Santa’s red and white garments have also linked the jolly old elf to pagan shamans who often forayed dressed in red or green robes trimmed

with white fur. The modern Santa is, however, a modern creation. His red and white colours are attributed to Louis Prang, a Bostonian who, in 1885, introduced America to the British tradition of sending Christmas cards. His depiction

of a fat, red-suited elf was modified into a fully grown and rotund man by Coca Cola, who linked its signature soft drink and corporate colours to Santa Claus in a 1931

advertising campaign designed by a Swedish artist. Being of Scandinavian decent, the artist was undoubtedly acquainted with pagan lore. And since using magic mushrooms was common practice in 18th-19th century America, maybe a few caps of *A. muscaria* inspired them too!



Inebriation and Flying Reindeer

Muscimol and ibotenic acid are not metabolized by the body. Instead, they are excreted unchanged in urine, or milk of lactating females, reindeer and human alike. This fact might help explain a couple of other Christmas traditions, intoxication, inebriation and flying reindeer.

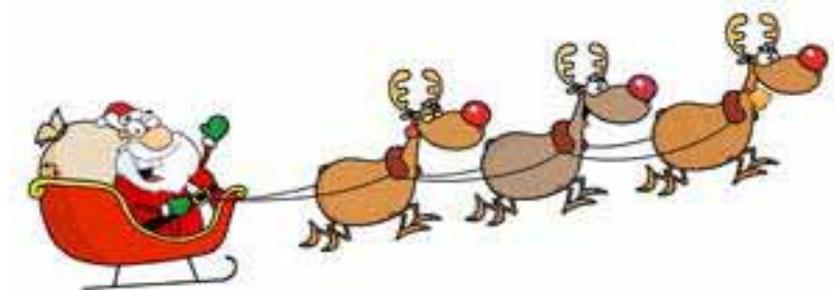
Reindeer were, and still are, the “sleigh horses” of many northern people. On their forays long ago, shamans often encountered dancing and prancing reindeer intoxicated by *A. muscaria*. After collecting the few mushrooms remaining, they turned to collecting milk and urine from the inebriated animals. Both liquids proved to be more potent and less toxic than the mushrooms themselves. Hmmmm, is it possible that muscimol-laced milk was the original eggnog?

Inebriated on muscimol-rich reindeer urine, shamans would have felt the sensations of size distortion and flying, giving Santa his magical flying reindeer and his ability to shrink for that slide down and then up the chimney. The pagans also recycled muscimol by repeatedly drinking each other’s urine, a practice that explains the use of the word “pissed” when referring

to intoxication by alcohol, another popular “western” tradition not limited to Christmas, but seemingly all too common this time of year.

Santa’s use of eight reindeer is a modern invention and may well be linked to Norse sagas, or Celts and their eight solar sabbats (markers) on the “Wheel of the Year”. Both groups were no strangers to using mushrooms. The Eddas (poems of Norse mythology written by a fourteenth century Icelandic monk) tell how their All Father God named Odin (Woden) dropped gifts into the boots of children as his eight-legged horse Sleipnir galloped tirelessly across the night sky. Observing that *A. muscaria* lacked roots and spontaneously appeared around them, the Norse thought the mushrooms sprung from drool dropped by Odin’s steed. In modern Christmas traditions, the eight legs of Odin’s horse are replaced by the eight reindeer pulling Santa’s sleigh and the children’s boots by stockings, hung by the chimney with care. The popularization of the eight reindeer is, however, a modern take on an old tale and is attributed to Clement C. Moore, an American who penned “’Twas The Night Before Christmas.” Written for his own

children in 1823, Moore drew heavily on the European traditions of Santa Claus. It is interesting that he chose Donner and Blitzen for reindeer names. Both words have German origins and refer



to thunder, the sound signalling Odin's approach.

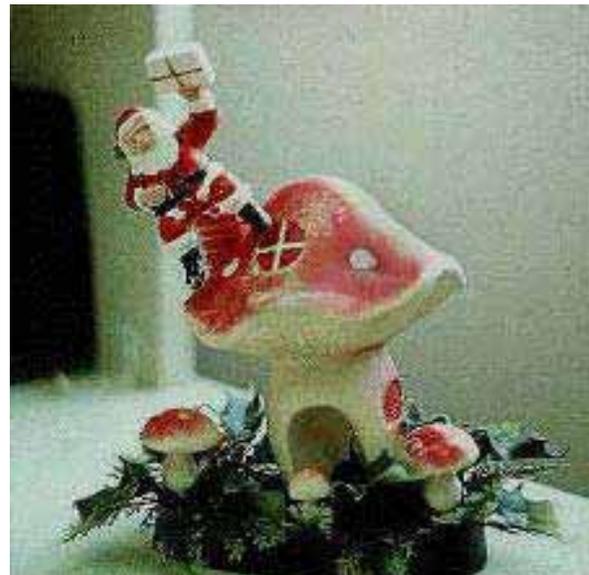
Rudolf is an even later addition to Christmas thanks to the storybook "Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer." It was created by a New York City merchant to boost sales and became a Christmas classic when Gene Autry recorded the poem in his 1947 song by the same name. Is it possible the red nose could be based on modified versions of stories of drunken reindeer?

Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree!

Using trees as part of solstice celebrations is an ancient practice among cultures around the world. Pagans saw the universe as a tree, its top reaching to the north star, hence Santa's North Pole address and, according to Canada Post, his H0H 0H0 postal code. Conifers were brought inside and often used as drying racks for amanitas, a process that frequently lasted to the winter solstice, making the fly agaric the original tree ornament, at least in northern Europe. Today, mushroom ornaments and ornaments depicting both a modern looking Santa and stylized mushrooms are still popular Christmas tree decorations in continental Europe.

A Blend of Traditions

The story around the celebration of Christmas has many chapters. Around the world, ancient stories of gift giving by generous folk heroes abound, as does the celebration of the winter solstice where the birthday of Christ was placed by early Church leaders. While "religious" explanations of Christmas traditions seem to originate with one saint or another, many of them have ancient pagan roots. As Christianity spread and cultures intermingled through migrations, invasions and trade, some aspects of their traditions, just as their languages, became combined. Today's Christmas is a blend of secular, cultural and religious icons that is becoming increasingly disconnected from the real story of Christmas. For that, *Amanita muscaria* cannot be credited or blamed.



Credits

I thank the following for kind permission to use their images:

Tom Volk: Mushroom and Santa Ornament

Jacques Laudry: *A. muscaria* var. *guessowii*

Jamie Parks: Watercolour of *A. muscaria* var. *muscaria*

Roger Smith: *A. muscaria* var. *guessowii*, Family Portrait (below)

Title photo: *Amanita muscaria*: public domain

Clipart: public domain



Further Reading

Tom Volk's Fungus of the Month for December 1999
<http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/toms_fungi/dec99.html>.

Tom Volk's Fungi that are necessary for a merry Christmas
<http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/toms_fungi/xmas.html>.

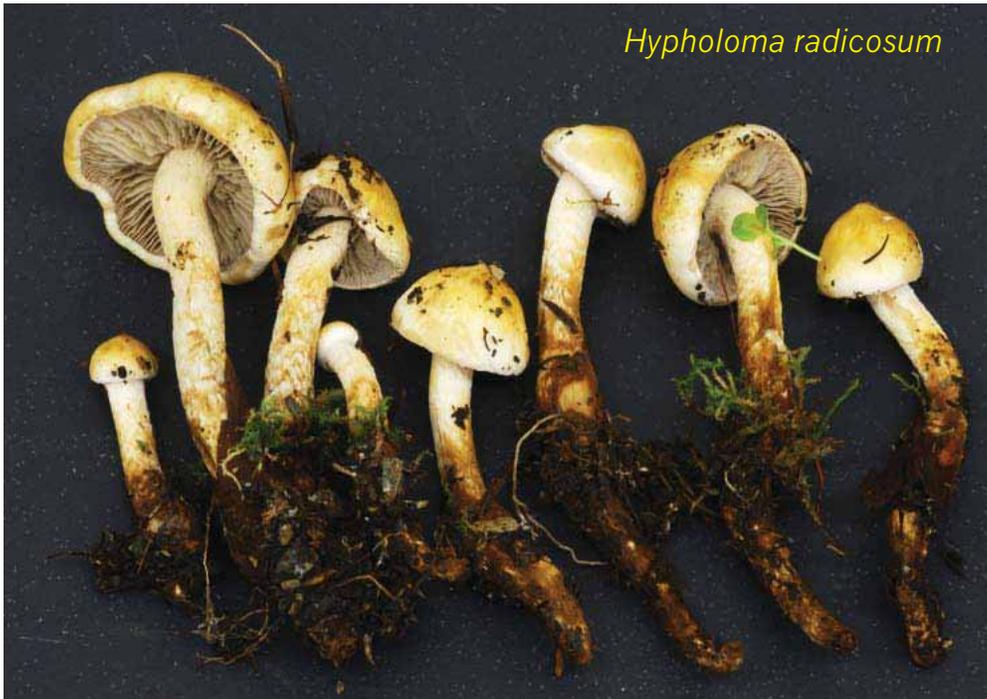
Dave Malloch's Discussion of *Amanita muscaria* var. *guessowii* <http://website.nbm-mnb.ca/mycologywebpages/EssaysOnFungi/Species/Amanita_muscaria_guessowiiDiscussion.html>.

If you want to know more than you want to know about the Amanita Family (including a Newfoundland and Labrador key and checklist—unfortunately under reconstruction at the moment), see Rod Tulloss' Studies in the Amanitaceae <<http://www.amanitaceae.org/>>.



MYCOLOGIE À LA FAÇON DE TERRE NEUVE ET LABRADOR

par André Paul et Renée Lebeuf



Hypholoma radicosum

problèmes de langue survenaient! Par ailleurs, rarement aura-t-on vu, année après année, une si belle brochette de mycologues experts de plusieurs pays travailler avec acharnement à trouver et à identifier de nouvelles espèces pour enrichir la collection des champignons de la province. Grâce au comité organisateur, et en particulier à Andrus, Terre Neuve et Labrador est devenue l'un des hauts lieux de la mycologie mondiale.

Cette année, nous avons eu le grand plaisir de nous rendre dans la Great Northern Peninsula, un endroit qui, à cause de sa situation géographique,

Pour tous les mycologues, la découverte de nouvelles espèces de champignons, de nouveaux sites mycologiques intéressants et de régions inconnues constitue un plaisir qui entretient et nourrit cette passion qu'est la mycologie. Si l'on ajoute à cela l'échange de connaissances avec d'autres mycologues et spécialistes, il en résulte de merveilleux moments.

renferme une fonge très particulière. S'y trouvaient avec nous des mycologues de Finlande, des États Unis et du Canada. Malgré les conditions météo difficiles, un nombre impressionnant d'espèces a été trouvé par les participants, et parmi elles des espèces très inhabituelles. Par exemple, nous avons eu la chance de voir pour la première fois *Hypholoma radicosum*,

Ce sont de tels moments que nous avons vécus en 2009 et 2010 après avoir accepté l'invitation d'Andrus Voitk et de son comité organisateur de participer au Foray NL. Outre la beauté des paysages, de la faune et de la flore, nous avons été renversés par la qualité et la chaleur de l'accueil qui nous a été réservé, par le travail acharné des organisateurs et de toute l'équipe et par la collaboration incroyable des divers acteurs de la province qui, tous, s'unissent pour assurer le succès de l'événement. Et que dire de la gentillesse de tous les Terre Neuviens que nous avons côtoyés! Et de leur patience lorsque des



Cortinarius percomis

un hypholome au pied radicant, de même que de rares et magnifiques cortinaires du sous genre *Phlegmacium* : *Cortinarius aureofulvus* et *C. percomis*, qui possède une forte odeur de fines herbes. Parmi les autres champignons qui ont retenu notre attention, citons *Hygrocybe lilacina*, une espèce nordique au pied teinté de lilas qui, à notre connaissance, n'a jamais été trouvé ailleurs en Amérique, de même que le très rare *Ripartites tricholoma*. Bref, ce fut une rencontre des plus enrichissantes, tant sur le plan mycologique qu'humain. Nous en gardons un excellent souvenir et espérons être des vôtres encore une fois l'an prochain.



Ed Lickey

David Boyle

Roger Smith

Renée Lebeuf

Britt Bunyard

Carlo Thorn

On the Whim of the Winds

Maria Voitk



Beneath the substrate (duff, soil, grass, leaves, dead wood, etc.) grow fungal mycelia whose fruiting bodies we recognize as mushrooms. Each mature mushroom sends forth thousands of microscopic spores, of which only a few go on to reproduce. Each species is known for its unique spores: some are round, oval, pear-shaped, angled; some are smooth, reticulated, spiny, warty; some are hyaline, white, yellow, pink, rust, purple, black; and so on... The spores of most mushrooms with which I am familiar are spread by the wind, dependent on its whims to reach a new suitable habitat.

I became fascinated with this concept and decided to depict it in an art quilt. Dave Malloch was kind enough to send me several of his photos taken of spores under the microscope; others were culled from mycological texts. To symbolize the wind, I chose a windsock shape to hold spores of various mushroom species. Fabric, yarn, threads and beads were put together by techniques of appliqué, sewing, quilting, fusing, and beading. To further engage air currents, the sock was suspended, free to rotate in whirling motion, just as the spores are free to swirl away on their own tangents. The substrate was represented by multi-textured and multicoloured woolly yarn tendrils, into which I embedded mushrooms corresponding to the spores, along with the signature label.

Now “On the Whim of the Winds” turns gently to the currents wafting in our living room, illustrating the vagaries of fungal spore distribution...



The empty skillet

Maria Voitk

For most people, an interest in mushrooms begins with an interest to pick them for the table. No matter where their mycological interest takes them subsequently, the delight and fascination of eating wild mushrooms retains its appeal. At our forays the Pick-for-the-pot outing has always been popular and cooking workshops have been fully subscribed. For **OMPHALINA** to serve its members, easy recipes should appear in every issue.

If you send them in, we shall publish them.

It will depend on you. If you send in enough, we could devote one issue a year purely to mushroom recipes—even a cook book could be a future possibility. Therefore, those of you who do cook and eat mushrooms, please write down what you do and send it in. This request is not only meant for a professional chef like Ulrich, whose creations at the foray remain in fond memory, a but for anybody who actually cooks mushrooms, no matter how humble or common the meal or procedure.

General guidelines for recipe submissions

1. Submit your own experience, things you do and do successfully. Both simple and very complicated recipes are welcome, just as long as they have been tried and they work. Do not copy something from a book because it looks good! We need to be mindful of the copyright laws.
2. If at all possible, include a picture of the finished product as well as you and/or others enjoying it.
3. We prefer standardized common volumes, like teaspoon, tablespoon and cup, to weights (grams, ounces) or volumes (ml, fl oz, quart, L, etc).
4. Please be very clear and do not be embarrassed to be overly simple. Members trust their fellows, so many people will try your recipes, who have never done this before.

A few basics

The more you clean in the field, the less you do at

home. One dirty mushroom stem can spread sand on a whole basketful. The gritty crunch of gravel is unpleasant, so do not be afraid to clean them with and in water, if needed. Most cookbooks advise you to avoid water, but this good advice is moot in our province, where mushrooms are already sopping wet from the rains in September month. A salad dryer, gently spun, will get them dry in a short order.

Most mushrooms retain their flavour and food value best if frozen. Fresh frozen mushrooms become mushy on thawing, so they need to be parboiled before freezing. Here's how I do that:

After picking, cut off any bad and “woody” parts. Clean. Slice as desired. Sauté gently for five minutes with oil. Salt, spices, onions and garlic optional at this stage. Drain (add liquid to stock) and place in sealed freezer bags, sized for one-time use. Freeze into flattened packs. On thawing out, squeeze bags gently to express water (pour into stock) before use.

Some mushrooms (notably boletes and morels) do as well or better if dried. Some easy ways to dry:

Clean mushrooms before drying. Drying can be done in food dehydrators or on pans or screens exposed to air and sunshine. Big mushrooms dry better if divided. A pleasant way is to string them on thread hung under the ceiling. Once completely dry, put in airtight containers (moisture is now their enemy).

Here is how I reconstitute dried mushrooms for use:

Place in bowl and cover with boiling water. Let soak until soft (20-35 min). Drain (keep liquid for stock).

The next two pages contain two recipes for your festive table, one from each of our daughters-in-law from New York and Murmansk. The recipes are guaranteed! We have eaten both at their tables and tried them at home, following these very recipes.

As should be obvious, there is much room for variation, substitution, addition. Experiment to make your own creations. And start sending in those recipes!

Goat & Honey Poke

TIINA VOITK



Young *Armillaria ostoyae*, our version of the honey mushroom in Newfoundland and Labrador. Very common in most forested areas, on wood, appears usually after first frost.

INGREDIENTS

5 sheets phyllo pastry	herbs, spices, pepper, salt
3/4 cup prepared honeys	2 tsp lime or lemon juice
1 onion or	2-3 tbsp butter
2-6 shallots	olive oil
2-6 cloves garlic	
175 g soft goat cheese	

PROCEDURE

Thaw out phyllo and frozen honey mushrooms. Gently squeeze bags to remove excess liquid from thawed mushrooms (add liquid to stock).

Chop onion and garlic, and add to honey mushrooms in saucepan. Season to taste. Sauté with olive oil until quite dry.

Add goat cheese to mushroom mixture and allow to become soft. Blend gently. Set aside to cool.

Melt butter, add lemon juice and seasoning to taste.

Place first sheet of phyllo on parchment paper set on a cookie sheet. Brush with seasoned melted butter. Place other sheets on top, one at a time, brushing

each liberally with seasoned butter. Add remaining butter to mushroom mix.

Spread cooled Goat & Honey lengthwise in middle. Fold ends over first, then roll up sides to make a poke. Bake at 350°F until golden brown on outside.

Garnish as you wish, slice, and serve hot or cold.



Tiina with her daughter Triina cutting the poke (photo: Maria Voitk).

Murmansk Leccinum Wellington

ANASTASIA NIKOLAENKO



Left: *Leccinum versipelle*, very common in northern Norway, used in the depicted Wellington. Right: *Leccinum scabrum* (birch bolete) very common in our province anywhere birch grows, including dwarf birch on the northern tundra (photo: Henry Mann). Young, firm ones make a fine substitute, or a mixture of almost any edible members of the bolete family, except perhaps species of Genus *Suillus*.

PROCEDURE

Stuffing

Chop reconstituted dried mushrooms to desired size. Add chopped garlic.

Fry in butter until slightly brown. Season to taste (crushed black pepper, parsley, etc).

Fry thin whole slices of onion in butter in separate pan until gently browning. Add intact green onions.

Pastry

Dissolve sugar in 1/2 cup warmed milk. Add yeast and stir. Leave for 10 min.

Mix flour, eggs, butter, remaining milk. Add bubbling yeast-sugar-milk mixture. Knead into dough.

Roll dough into sheets under 1/2 cm thick. Fit large sheet into pan with raised edges. Add stuffing in layers, mushrooms, onion slices, green onions, mushrooms, etc. Cover with top, pinch closed. If stuffing very moist, cut vents into top. Use extra dough to decorate top with mushroom or seasonal motifs. Brush top with egg and milk mixture for glaze.

Bake in preheated oven at 350°F until cover golden brown (45-60 min).

INGREDIENTS

STUFFING

300 g dried mushrooms
1 onion
2-6 cloves garlic
green onions
2 tbsp butter
salt, pepper, spices, herbs

PASTRY

1 pack quick yeast
4 cups flour
1 tsp sugar
1 1/2 cup milk
2 eggs
3 tbsp butter



Above: Finished Wellington. Formal braided Murmansk mushroom design was abandoned in favour of the frivolous to amuse a small boy reputedly not overly fond of mushrooms. Right: Chef Anastasia with amused Eemil, inspecting O-O (oven output).



Foray Newfoundland & Labrador's Contributions to Science in

the International Year of Biodiversity

—a black and white case to keep our herbarium at home

While the primary purpose of FNL is not to “do science”, but to organize enjoyable forays, much of our data is useful for various scientific investigations. The end of the year is a good time to take stock, look back to see what we have contributed to the building blocks of science. The traditional measure of such effort is the number of publications in the scientific press, specifically peer reviewed publications.

Some of us enjoy writing about mushrooms and do so whenever an opportunity comes along. Most of such writings have a primary intent to entertain or inform our members and others interested in natural history about the world of mushrooms. This sort of writing is very important. Explaining some of the amazing facts known about mushrooms, increases understanding and appreciation. The more knowledgeable we are, the more pleasure we get from pursuing our interest.

This type of writing usually presents what is already known. Scientific writing differs by presenting new knowledge, discoveries that were not known before. Of course, there are discoveries and there are discoveries. Not every discovery merits major attention, even if it is a previously unknown fact. In the past year we have added some knowledge, most of it old, but presented in a new way, to educate ourselves about mushrooms. These writings have usually been in *The Osprey*, and are also in this newsletter, *OMPHALINA*. However, we have contributed three sides of one small building block of scientific writing—some new knowledge. Spearheaded by Esteri Ohenoja, with the help of Zheng Wang of Yale University (Wang will be at our foray in 2011) and other coworkers, we published a small study of *Theuemenideum arenarium* in North America's oldest and most prestigious mycological journal, *Mycologia*, in its 102nd year of print. Our mushroom is on the cover, and it is a nice feeling to know that scientists all over the world read on the inside that the picture comes from the Jersey Trail near

Forteau, in Labrador! John Maunder and Andrus Voitk have a study in *FUNGI* about the slug-mushroom interaction, a subject about which very little is known. Lastly, Erast Parmasto and Andrus published a short communication about guttation in the same journal.

All told, perhaps not much to crow about for an active academic investigative department, but not too bad for an amateur foray with no staff or facilities. In addition to that, we have several very interesting projects going on in cooperation with several investigators around the world. While these things take time, and all do not

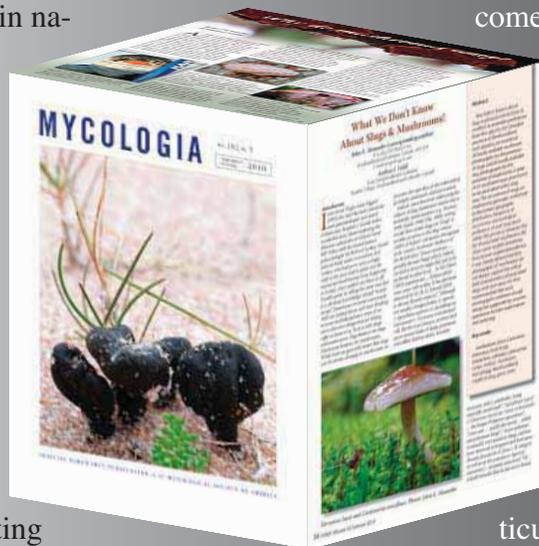
come to fruition, looking at the cube makes us hopeful that in future issues we can report that the box has been completed, ready for a present.

How is this possible? What determines that busy scientists are willing to work with us? The secret is in our data and most of all, our collection. A reliable database, backed by a collection of professionally identified specimens, meticulously kept and readily avail-

able to scientists, is appealing to serious investigators. Because of our location, we have much material that is not common elsewhere. The mycological community considers ours a very valuable collection.

We are facing major problems with it. It was set up in a herbarium at Gros Morne National Park on a temporary basis. That is now full, and we need a new home. Unfortunately, the logical place, The Rooms, which is mandated to keep significant collections of our natural heritage for all the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, informs us that it lacks the resources to assimilate and maintain such a large and active collection. To us the case is black and white. We want to keep it in the province, but have no facility. With offers from both federal and other Atlantic provinces' herbaria to take our collection, there may be no choice.

For those interested, pdf files of all our publications are available for downloading from our website <nlmushrooms.ca>.



The inside back cover is a good location to share with you holiday greetings that have arrived at the Editorial Office of **OMPHALINA**. To date there are only two:

one from **THE KONRAD BROOK SIX** (photo: various sources, who prefer anonymity), at its reunion at the Viking Foray (see their Konrad Brook Report from 2008 on our website), and

one from the 2010 Database Team. Their aesthetically sublime and eruditely eloquent card is a credit to university education and does their alma maters proud (photo: Michael Burzynski).



LICHENS added this year!



FORAY

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

2011 2011 2011
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Terra Nova National Park

Headquarters: *Terra Nova Hospitality Home*

September 9-11, 2011

GUEST FACULTY*

Teuvo Ahti
Stephen Clayden
Renée Lebeuf
Raymond McNeil
Faye Murrin
Todd Osmundson
André Paul
Roger Smith
Andy Taylor
Greg Thorn
Zheng Wang

*tentative at time of publication

Please check our website in the Spring, 2011, for
Information & Registration Forms:

www.nlmushrooms.ca