



OMPHALINA

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FORAY NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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.

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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 of the upcoming foray and secondarily as a communications tool with members.

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

[foray AT nlmushrooms DOT ca](mailto:foray@nlmushrooms.ca),

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COVER

Cladonia verticillata, exposed sandy littoral grassland in Codroy Provincial Park, June 16, 2007. See lead article.

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CORRECTED



Message from the Editor

We made a grievous error in our last issue: head spinning from all that taxonomy, we did not notice that the old dates had remained on the back cover notice for our 2012 foray. Two kind people brought it to our attention. **Please note that the 2012 Annual Foray will take place Sept. 28-30.** The only purpose of the present issue is to rectify that mistake. We have cannibalized a bit from the next planned issue, and padded a bit here and there, to give this issue some content, otherwise it would be finished before this sentence.

You may wonder what the fuss is about, why not wait until the next designated publication date. Well, unfortunately some folks have to make their vacation and travel arrangements well in advance, and for them booking an expensive trip to Newfoundland and Labrador a week early is not good. Why not just send an e-mail? Well, those often get lost. *OMPHALINA* began as the vehicle for notices about our foray and this is still its primary function.

Two other changes have occurred in our organization that deserve mention. Our new webmaster, Jim Cornish, has revamped our website. Jim details some of the changes in a notice on page 8, including a note about the participatory Fungus of the Moment feature. Please see what Jim has to say, then take a look at nlmushrooms.ca to see the new webpage.

The other thing worthy of your attention is that two of our long-time consultants have parted ways with us. Jim Parsons of Thought Nest Consulting designed our logo, created our first website and stored it on his server at his expense. He bought us the domain name and continued to pay the registration fees, while looking after our website. Over the years our site has grown until finally it has become so large that it is beginning to squeeze the host for space he needs for his business. Before risking getting kicked out, we decided that the time had come to move to our own

commercial space at our own expense. Jim Parsons helped with the transfer and gave the domain name to us as well as the e-mail addresses that go with it.

Sue Sullivan of Sullivan Risk Management has also gone to happier pursuits. Sue provided risk management consultation and advice for us in our early years, did a total risk review of our foray process, and delivered a full report. She dealt with our insurers, getting us the best coverage for the least cost and made sure we got insurance for what we needed. She advised us in the drawing up of our Policies and Procedures Manual, and did most of the work in a risk management review of North American mushroom clubs. Since then Sue has retired from the risk management field and ceased to do further consultations or other active work in the field. As a good risk manager, she thought it most prudent to formally withdraw from all commitments, rather than be caught being out of date with current practices.

We thank both Jim Parsons and Sue Sullivan very much for the support and help they have given us over the years. They helped us to grow and now that we can stand on our feet, we are very grateful to have had them to lean on in the past. We wish Jim well with his practice and Sue with her retirement. Hope these wishes reach her in Florida, where she is at the moment.

Not bad for an editorial that was finished half-way through the first paragraph. Now look inside to see what goodies we have been able to scrounge up to fill out the rest of this issue!

Happy mushrooming!
andrus



The Ladder Cladonia

Cladonia cervicornis ssp. *verticillata*

Mac Pitcher

With its surreal resemblance to miniature castles, this attractive member of the family Cladoniaceae is both a common and easily recognized terrestrial lichen with a world-wide distribution. Look for it on thin soil and open ground in well-lit locations in heathlands and old fields throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Ladder Cladonia, often referred to by a shortened Latin binomial, *Cladonia verticillata*, is considered a Cup *Cladonia* lichen. This gray-green to burnished brown fruticose lichen with an indistinct squamulose base can stand up to 7 centimetres in height. It is unique for its pagoda-like structure, where a tiered series of shallow, flared cups arise vertically from the cup centres immediately below, often resulting in a stack of four or more turret-like cups. Indeed, the name Pagoda Lichen sounds

more appropriately descriptive than does the lackluster title, Ladder Lichen. Small brownish apothecia may be found on short projections arising from the cup margins.

Although the Ladder Lichen is a very distinctive and easily-recognised species, as is often the case with lichens, there is another lookalike species to be aware of. *Cladonia rappii*, the Slender Ladder Lichen, resembles a more slender version of the Ladder Lichen, with a thinner diameter of the cup stems, usually half that of the Ladder *Cladonia*. It also usually occurs on acidic bogs. Although we have an abundance of such bogs in this province, it is uncertain whether the Slender Ladder Lichen occurs this far north, and some suspected occurrences have later been determined to be the common Ladder Lichen.

Collecting lichens

Andrus Voitk

Lichens are ascomycetes with a photobiont (partner able to make sugar from atmospheric CO₂ using the sun's energy), but differ from other mushrooms in some important ways. For example, the *Leccinum scabrum* you might pick is the visible fruiting body of a large underground organism (the fungus), whose photobiont is a birch tree. Its underground part, the mycelium, is made up of a network of fibers called hyphae. Some extract water and minerals from the soil. Others wrap around the root tips of its birch partner. When you pick a *Leccinum scabrum*, you only remove a fruiting body from a large organism. The dual entity of fungus and birch is a much larger system; it would be physically impossible for you to collect such a system and take it home in your mushroom basket.

The photobiont of a lichen-fungus is not a huge tree, but a collection of unicellular organisms, so small that the fungal fibers wrap right around them, totally enveloping the partners in fungal tissue, incorporat-

ing them throughout its physical structure. It does not need a huge mycelial network to collect water and minerals from afar, because this small partners' needs are easy to satisfy. The system of fungus and photobiont is tiny, all contained within the visible fungus. Although collecting a lichen may seem similar to collecting a mushroom, collecting the lichen removes the entire organism and entire system, including both fungus and partners, not just one fruiting body. This may be fine with many of our lichen weeds, but with rare lichens it is not nearly so fine. Some rare lichens, like *Erioderma pedicellatum*, Figure 1, are only known from a handful of sites, where the number of separate "organisms" (actually mutualistic bipartite systems) are counted. To collect a basketful from such a site is not considered good form.

Therein lies the difference between mushrooms and lichens. Both are fungi, but with one, what you see is a small part of the organism, whereas with the other

Figure 1. Erioderma pedicellatum, boreal felt lichen. Very rare in Newfoundland, which has 90% of the world population of this lichen. Not particularly distinctive, if I did not know, I might well fill my basket with them, were I out collecting lichens.

Photo: Mac Pitcher.



what you see is the entire system, fungus and photobiont partner. Hence the first difference between collecting mushrooms and collecting lichens. Unless you know lichens and know exactly what you are collecting, you could remove the last representatives of a species on this earth. For this reason, lichens collecting should be left to experts. Mushrooms, on the other hand, can be collected by all of us in virtually any quantities.

If you have collected mushrooms for even a short time, you know that they follow Ecclesiastes: to every thing there is a season. Morels fruit in the spring, chanterelles in the summer, pine mushrooms in the fall and *Stromatocyphella conglobata* during periods of thaw in the winter. Fruiting may be seasonal, but the organism is always there. Just like the lichen. Except that the lichen organism is visible and may fruit all the time (Figure 2). A single tree may have literally thousands of individual lichens (Figure 3), on it all the time. With such abundance, making several collections of lichens does not add much real information. Even for people who can tell the lichen weed from the last species on earth, good practice is to collect or record one species per region/area/trail; an estimate of abundance can be done accurately by means other than counting collection numbers.

This explains why our lichen data merely indicates the presence or absence of a species. Because lichens are visible, an accurate representative count is possible that reflects all species and their relative abundance in a region. This sort of recording is appropriate in a more controlled and scientific setting than an amateur foray. For mushrooms, whose organisms are not visible except for the fruiting bodies, the abundance numbers we record are a very rough estimate for fruiting bodies. This may not correlate with the abundance of



Figure 2. *Cladonias* and others. Note the happy little British soldiers (*Cladonia cristatella*), no followers of Ecclesiastes, fruiting away with their red apotheciae three days before Christmas. Photo: Henry Mann.

organisms, and is certainly incomplete for the number of species. Not good, but the best we have.



Figure 3. *Parmelia squarrosa*, bottle-brush lichen. One of the very common lichens in our province (see Mac Pitcher's article, *OMPHALINA* II (7):18-19;2011). There were literally hundreds, if not thousands of them on this fallen tree, some happily in fruit in February, nadir of our dark winter. Photo: Maria Voitk.

Book review

Andrus Voitk

2011

Lawrence Millman

FASCINATING FUNGI OF NEW ENGLAND

Kollath + Stensaas Publishing
Duluth MN

134 pp.

\$14.95

If you like to read but do not have much time, buy this book. **Fascinating Fungi of New England** is short and rewarding, whether read for information or entertainment. Disguised as a “mushroom book”, it can be enjoyed like a “normal” book. The author states that the purpose of the book is, “to introduce the curious amateur to the fascinating world of fungi.” If you are this “curious amateur”, be forewarned: the content is so insidiously accessible that it just might get you hooked on mushrooms.

Lawrence Millman is an adventure-travel author, with many books about remote regions and cultures to his credit. **Fascinating Fungi of New England** is his shortest travelogue, opening a small window on the largest, strangest and remotest Kingdom he has yet explored. With a keen eye, and a witty, imaginative and original turn of phrase, Millman proves to be an enthusiastic guide on a pleasantly civilized punny-funny sortie through this weird Kingdom.

The short introduction is a gem. Millman uses humour to maintain interest and to drive home a point. You stumble on profundities like “the purpose ... [of a mushroom is not] ... to aid and abet biodiversity”. Sounds stupid, but think about it. Or, that imperfect fungi (those prudes that reproduce asexually) might consider the others (those dabbling in sex) less than perfect? Surely, such a description will ensure that the concept of imperfect fungi will gain entry

to neurons beyond the reader’s retinal cells? Similar observations continue into the species descriptions, both in the descriptions themselves and in multiple sidebars scattered throughout, filled with personal insights, informative facts and delightful mycotrivia.

If you fear information overload and look on entertainment as an unnecessary frivolity, and your only wish is for help to identify the mushrooms of Newfoundland and Labrador, this book may not be for you. Millman states that the book provides, “an introduction to selected New England species”, and advises the use of other resources as well, to which he provides a list. Of the 135 species described, almost 25% are not known from our province (and several of our common species are not included). Millman’s classification is simple: mushrooms are either gilled or not, and both kinds grow on one of: ground, wood, or other substrate. If the gilled mushroom you pick up from the ground is not among the 28 lamellate terrestrial fungi described in the book, you may be stuck. *Cortinarius* gets its own “Typical cort” description, and the sidebars contain some generic information on the genera *Russula* and *Lactarius*, but most of the time you will be unable to narrow it to a genus. Know what you expect, heed the author, and seek additional resources with keys beyond the reach or intent of this small introductory guide.

In this digital age **Fascinating Fungi of New England** opts for coloured drawings to illustrate the species. Although many illustrations are pretty and some dramatic, some miss the advantage drawings have over photographs to stress field characteristics (e.g. *Amanita rubescens* could show some red staining and *Cortinarius semisanguineus* its diagnostic blood red gills). Some others do not communicate the species to me. I also question the preeminence given common names, to the point of devising new ones. Gary Lincoff chuckles publicly about how he was required to invent “common” names by the publishers of the Audubon Guide. Why, then, would another editor or publisher voluntarily demand that the author propagate uncommon common names to the point of making up yet more and different new ones? Yes, some are cute, and most work within the context of the book, but... Common names that are in use (the true common ones) need not be shunned, especially in a regional book—mention in the body of the text should be adequate. To us in Newfoundland and Labrador, if it ain’t Newfonese,

FASCINATING FUNGI OF NEW ENGLAND



by LAWRENCE MILLMAN

Foreword by GARY LINCOFF

Illustrated by RICK KOLLATH

it's all foreign anyway, so why make us learn two sets of names, your common and the scientific? Come to our foray and start talking about devil's snuffbox, and it would take us several 1892s to catch on that you means harse farts. Talk about fusing fairy stools into fairy sofas, and there ain't nuff beer, b'y!

As opposed to his view of mushrooms, Millman has no compunction about abetting mycodiversity. Thanks to his wider scope and special interest in polypores and relatives, his selected species consist of 80 non-gilled species and 55 gilled, even if the latter are by far the commonest on most people's mycoradar. As a result the reader meets many bizarre denizens of this Kingdom, not available in many standard guides, surely a bonus for neophyte and veteran alike.

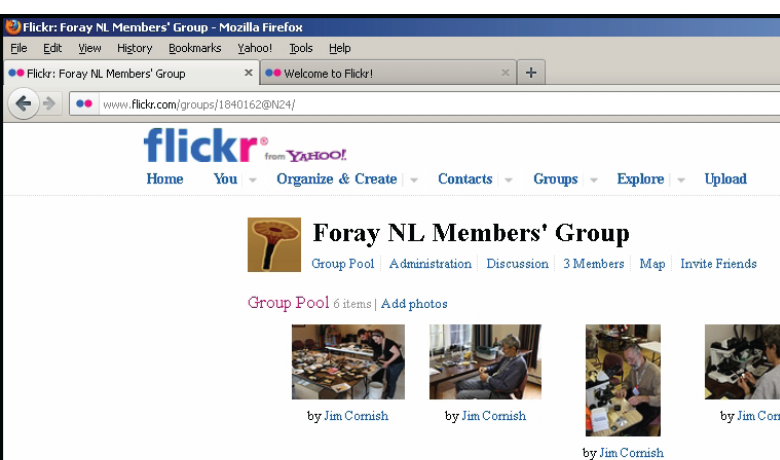
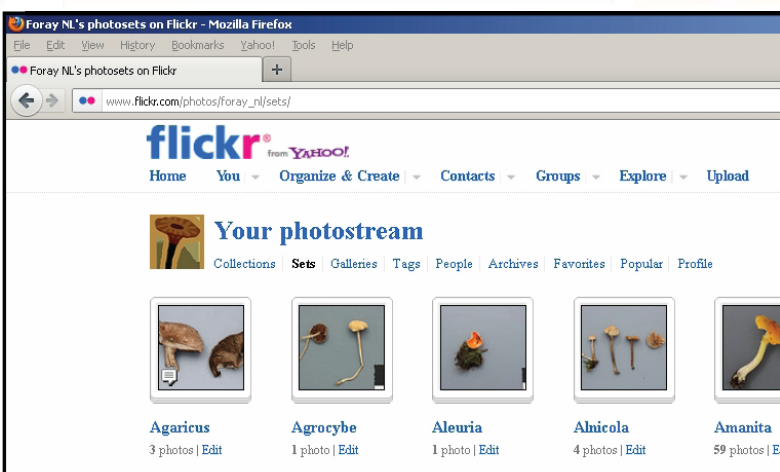
Fascinating Fungi of New England lives up to the title's first word and exceeds its stated goal. It certainly introduces the curious amateur to the fas-

cinating world of mushrooms. No doubt sediciously seducing some of these naïfs to explore the woods and answering some of their initial questions. That may be all it takes for addiction, in which case it has served a noble purpose. More than that, this travelogue also entertains and informs the veteran fungal wanderer. Like a book of poetry, you can dip into it again and again, whether in search of contemplative serenity, or a quotable nugget.

Oh, and putting *Lophodermium pinastri* after the Appendix was a Millman masterstroke.

To order autographed copies, go to:

<<http://lawrencemillman.com/fungi>>



Foray Newfoundland and Labrador has changed its Web presence <nlmushrooms.ca> with a new look in search of a more user friendly face. All of the resources (OMPHALINA, foray information, species lists, foray reports and publications) are still available, with plans for additional features of use to members and visitors. If there is something mushroom-related you would like to see added to our site, please contact me <webmaster AT nlmushrooms DOT ca>.

We have also created an account on Flickr, an online photo sharing site, where we have Roger Smith's voucher photos of the mushrooms collected at our past forays <http://www.flickr.com/photos/foray_nl/sets/>. Images are organized in Sets based on genera, and Sets are grouped into Collections following the groupings in FNL's Annotated Cumulative Species List (available on our Web site). This should provide a useful identification reference. You can also access the site by clicking the Flickr logo on our homepage.

We have also created a Flickr FNL Members' Group <<http://www.flickr.com/groups/1840162@N24/>>. Members with a Flickr account can upload images of the "human" side of the foray after joining the Members' Group. You can create a Flickr account for free, or send your images to me to upload.

One of the features we are working on is **Mushroom of the Month**. Members send in their photos and each month we show thumbnails of all submissions and select one to feature in full size, with a description. Identified mushroom images will be archived, building another identification resource. We have not worked out all the details yet, so visit our site to find out how to participate, or learn a new mushroom every month.



The Bishop's Sketchbook





Fairy rings

Andrus Voitk

The propensity to grow in fairy rings has given mushrooms a magical aura for generations. Hence the name *Marasmius oreades*, shown in the title banner, oreades meaning fairy. Science has destroyed this romantic mysticism, explaining that the fungus grows underground, widening out evenly from its beginning point, thus taking on an ever enlarging circular form. For some fungi the outside border is the most active part, the part which forms fruiting bodies. If they appear at the same time, a fairy ring is seen, and, indeed, *Marasmius oreades* is the poster boy for the fairy phenomenon. It is a saprobe, or a decomposer of organic material in the soil, going further afield in search of more food.



Mycorrhizal mushrooms can also form fairy rings, as the *Hygrophorus pudorinus* around balsam fir in the picture at the bottom of the page. In this case, the organism is tied to the roots of the tree, and the fruiting bodies appear in a circle around it.

We have discussed before how orchids, tied to mycorrhizal fungi, also grow where these partners grow.¹ Orchid seeds are so small that they contain genetic material only and require a source of food to germinate and develop. Seeds fall everywhere, but plants grow only where the fungi are, feeding the germinating seed. An example of an orchid forming a relationship with a saprobic fungus is the beautiful round-leaved orchid, *Platanthera orbiculata*. Studies of its root have found two fungi, a *Sebacina* species and *Leptodontium orchidicola*.² Both are wood decayers, found in old growth forests where there is a buildup of old wood, covered by moss to keep it moist. Thus, it should be no surprise that *Platanthera orbiculata* is also found in old growth forests. Often it grows in long rows, perhaps where an old tree trunk has fallen in the past and rotted. In untouched old growth forests the orchid can also be found in fairy rings just like those of *Marasmius oreades*.

The picture on the next page shows one such ring, where it is not too difficult to imagine a former rotten old stump in the centre, from which the fungus grew out in search of new food, just as the fairy ring mushroom in the title banner. Attached to the pe-



Photo: Maria Voitk

riphery of the centrifugally enlarging fungus are the orchids, forming their graceful circle. These are two fungi that behave both as decayers with old wood and mycorrhizal partners with the orchid.

Yes, we are all interconnected, bound by invisible ties. Amazing, but all of nature can be accommodated between the pages of a mushroom journal!

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1. Voitk A: The ties that bind us. *Omphalina* 2(2):14-19. 2011.
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THE ANISEED COCKLESHELL

HENRY MANN

The old fallen log, bark-less and grey, lies straddling a small streambed as it has for decades. About 35 cm in diameter, the wood of the log bridge is remarkably intact unlike the ends in contact with the stream banks which show considerable decay. I have walked, skied and snow-shoed 5–6 meters from the log countless times in the past ten years or so, in all seasons and weathers, without the slightest idea of the mycelial activity within. This October 13, 2011, near its centre the bridge sprouted a mushroom species I had not encountered before (Figure 1). Naturally my naturalist curiosity kicked into high gear. With some help I decided it was a *Lentinellus*, possibly *L. cochleatus*, the Aniseed Cockleshell. It had a distinct aroma, but identifying smells is not my strong suit. However, my wife Phyllis assured me that the aroma was indeed anise-like. Most of the characteristics described for this species fit my Pasadena Ski Trails specimen: caps half-rounded, tightly overlapping, pale-brownish, bracket-like, 4 – 7 cm wide, with



Figure 1



Figure 2

hardly a stipe; flesh pinkish; gills decurrent, irregularly notched and pale flesh-coloured (Figure 2); spore print white, globose spores 4 – 5 μ m in diameter (Figure 3).

However, one feature troubled me; my specimen was distinctly tomentose to tufted-hairy (Figure 4), something not seen in the many on-line photos or mentioned in the general references which I had available. Surely a feature this distinct should be noted by others and at least show up in some photos if within the range of variation in this species? Then I discovered the description on the Mycoquébec site, describing the cap as “pruineux ou souvent avec fibrilles dispersées”¹, and the Pacific Northwest

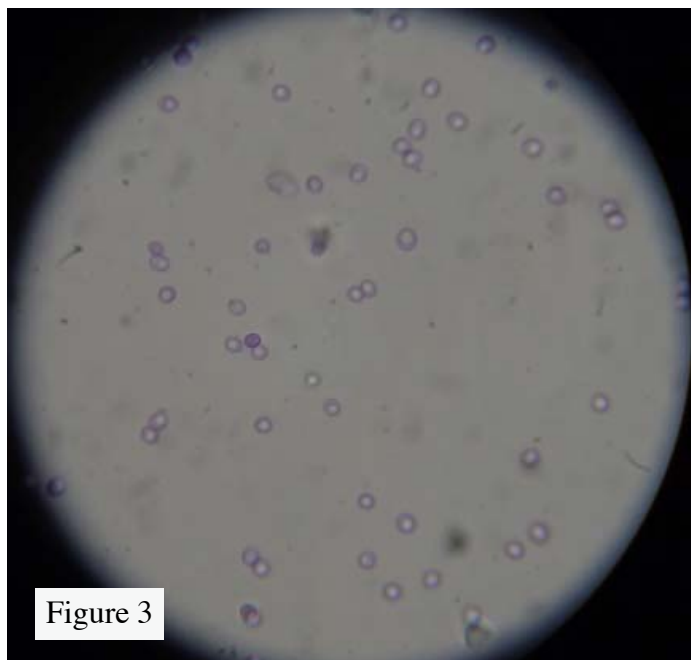


Figure 3

Key Council keyed out *L. cochleatus* from a “cap hairy” choice². Lastly, I consulted the 2004 monograph by Petersen and Hughes³ obtained by loan through our MUN Library. I discovered that this was not light bed-time reading for the average naturalist, however, was I able to decipher enough to determine, “Pileus ... smooth, pruinose, or with fine spiked or disorganized tomentum inward, smooth outward, occasionally with raised ridges and/or talon-like scales”. Apparently the hair tufts are expressions of the “suprapellis”, but let’s not go there.



Figure 4

Suffice it to say that the cap surface of my hairy mushroom is within the range recognized for this species. With the Québec crowd, the Pacific Northwest crowd and Petersen and Hughes on side, I was in good company, even if dozens of internet photos do not show this feature—just like Andrus Voitk’s photo from the Humber Valley of a glabrous (bald, i.e. smooth) mushroom in the title banner.



Figure 5

L. cochleatus is reported to grow on hardwood. Hand sections of the old grey log confirmed that this was Red Maple (Figure 5). Mushrooms often have very strict host preferences, making identification of the host or substrate a good identification feature. The microscope enables you to distinguish coniferous wood from deciduous, usually determine the genus and often the species, even when the wood

The Cockleshell is said to be edible, but somewhat tough, although I cannot vouch for this. North American books indicate that it appears in early to late autumn and that it is not a commonly encountered species. Genetically it is a relative of *Russula* and *Lactarius*.

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2. <http://www.svims.ca/council/Lentin.htm>
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THE MAIL BAG

OR WHY THE PASSENGER PIGEONS ASSIGNED TO SERVE THE
LAVISH CORPORATE AND EDITORIAL OFFICES OF OMPHALINA GET HERNIAS

Greg Thorn corrected the *Hygrocybe nitida* article:

Both Miles Joseph Berkeley and Moses Ashley Curtis were long gone by 1916. Index Fungorum dates Berkeley as 1803-1889, and Curtis as 1808-1872.

The correct date of the publication by B&C is 1853, viz Berkeley MJ, Curtis MA, 1853, *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* 12: 424. The combination is by WA Murrill in 1916: *Hygrocybe nitida* (Berk. & M.A. Curtis) Murrill 1916.

Inexplicably, Index Fungorum lists *Hygrophorus nitidus* Fries (1863) as basionym, but this species is a later homonym of B&C's and was renamed *Hygrophorus friesii* by Saccardo (1887).

Ed note: error was Editor's, not author's.

What was the response to a Taxonomy issue? Well, not as bad as I thought. Perhaps the negative opinions remained unwritten?

Overall "good reading", with reference to taxonomy 5 (I said taxonomy is interesting and I said it is confusing). Four of the five were mycologists, though.

Liked the *Macrotyphula* article 3.

Liked the *Phyllotopsis* page (the last-minute non-taxonomic filler, inserted just to make an even number of pages) 2.

Interesting to learn that *Hygrocybe nitida* is a good and true species 1.

The primer on DNA sequencing is a model of its kind 1.

Loved the cover photo 1.

Will be sure to try the recipe 1.

Ed note: there was no recipe!



Dear Editor,

A previous article suggested that birdhouses are just an artificial replacement for *Fomitopsis pinicola* + woodpecker, both inextricably linked with small owls and the like. Owls are not the only ones to nest or rest in such cavities. Perhaps a follow-up article of the Unbroken chain is warranted?

MJ

Ed note: Thanks for tip, MJ. Have commissioned a piece at great expense for next issue. Pls send donation to cover cost.

WANTED

Short article about *Lachnellula aggassizii*. If you know and love this beautiful spring mushroom, please write an article and send it in. We can work with you, if you wish. Instant fame guaranteed.

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*tentative at time of publication

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