



# Alabama Mushroom Society Newsletter

## October 2022

Happy Fall Y'all!

My welcome message this month is going to be short and sweet. I'm busy doing the last things to prep for the first annual Alabama Mushroom Festival coming up NEXT WEEKEND! We have an exciting schedule of presentations, forays and demonstrations covering topics such as: Alabama's native plants, lichens, crash courses on polypores and Amanitas, a blacklight foray and a mushroom dye demo and many others. We have a line up of over 25 vendors selling a wide array of mushroom art, handicrafts, homegoods, sweets, treats, tinctures, soaps, clothing, books and more!

And most importantly, it is a snapshot into the amazing mycelial network of the mushroom community. Come meet some awesome people and learn something new. Tickets and more information is available here:

[alabamamushroomsociety.org/AMF](http://alabamamushroomsociety.org/AMF)

This is the last newsletter of the year, and our final month of monthly forays until we start back up after a winter hiatus is February 2023. You will still see us active on the Facebook page, so drop in and share your fall and winter fungi finds, and as always, post those high quality observations on iNaturalist.

Until next time,  
-Alisha Millican  
AMS President



**Suspect  
Mushroom  
Poisoning?**  
Call US Poison Control  
at  
**1-800-222-1222**  
**EMERGENCY ID:**  
[FB Poisons Group](#)

AMS Board

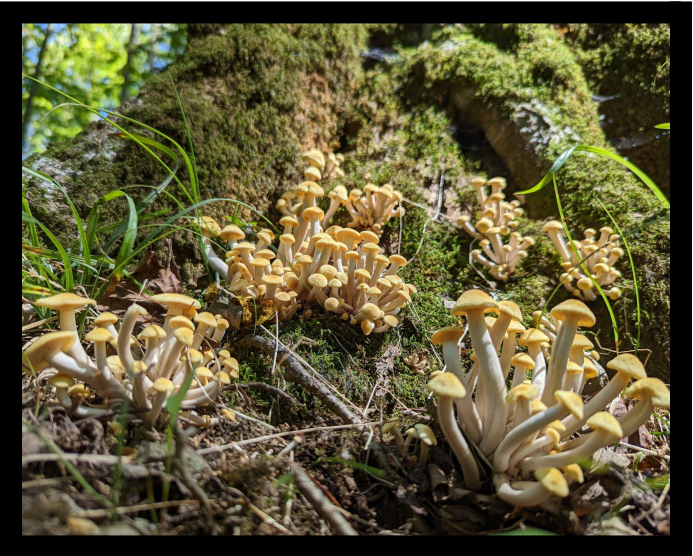
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**Alisha Millican**

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**Spencer Lowry**

Secretary  
**Becca Mahoney**



*Clavaria zollingeri*  
By Cassie Pugh



*Desarmillaria caespitosa*  
by Rocky Nadrich

### Upcoming Events

Click [→HERE←](#) for more info or to register for an event!

- Oct 8-9th ----- Alabama Mushroom Festival
  - Oct 8th ----- Baldwin County Monthly Foray
  - Canceled ----- Cullman County Foray
  - Oct 22nd ----- Elmore County Monthly Foray
- 



*Pleurotus species* by Diana Trudell



*Leucocoprinus species*  
by Ethan Hicks

# Mushroom of the Month

## **Omphalotus (sub)illudens**

**By Anthoni Goodman**



Commonly known as the "Jack-o-lantern" mushrooms, the genus *Omphalotus* boasts showy, mysterious, and toxic fruitbodies that are a delight to find. The genus is housed in the Family *Marasmiaceae* (also called *Omphalotaceae*) a split from *Tricholomataceae* with cousin Genera including *Lentinula* (including shiitake), *Gerronema*, *Megacolloybia*, and all the teeny-tiny *Baeospora*, *Marasmius*, *Marasmiellus*, and similar genera. It is almost surprising then that the genus *Omphalotus* contains such large, meaty species – though not surprising that they are saprobes like their cousins. While there are 8 or more species worldwide, North America contains 4, *O.*'s *illudens*, *subilludens*, *mexicanus*, and *olivascens*. *O. olivascens* grows in Western North America and can be used in fabric dyeing to create green hues. *O. mexicanus* is found in the highlands of Mexico and Central America and is unique in that it takes on an almost black/blue color with underlying yellow shades. *O. illudens* and *subilludens* in the Eastern and Southeastern United States, respectively.

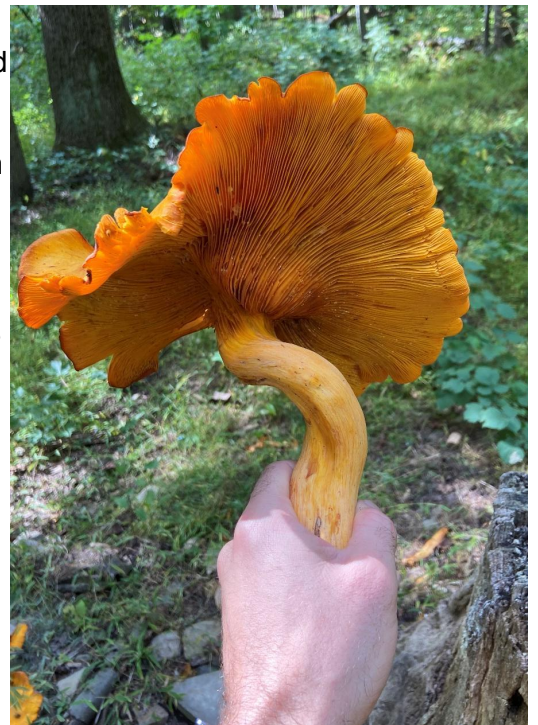


*Omphalotus (sub)illudens* is a bombastic pumpkin-orange mushroom which makes a timely appearance in the Autumn. Fruitings can be individual or gregarious but are most commonly clusters or even dozens of clusters appearing at the base of dead or dying hardwoods. The genus are saprobes and will fruit from the bottoms of dead wood or buried roots as they break down the woody lignin forming a soft rot. Individual mushrooms can range from a couple of centimeters tall to well over 20 cm in height with cap diameters ranging from 2-3cm to 14+cm.

The hymenium (spore bearing surface) is slightly lighter/brighter in orange gills (lamellae) with frequent short gills, no forking, and a decidedly decurrent attachment type. The gills glow green in the dark, but very weakly, and the majority of specimens will not emit enough light to be detected by the naked eye (alas, even in a perfectly dark room).

Closeup of the decurrent gills

*Omphalotus* are all quite toxic and should not be eaten. They contain several toxins ranging from muscimol to several illudens which lead to extreme nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea to the point that hospitalization may be necessary. This is unfortunate because they are confused for chanterelles (despite only being similar in color and having decurrent lamellae) and have led to many poisonings.



The flesh of the cap and stipe/stalk are meaty and robust (somewhere between a mushroom and a carrot) and have no discernible odor and a vegetal root-like flavor (please don't eat these). *O. illudens* and *subilludens* are extremely difficult to separate from one another but the cap width to stalk height may be a rudimentary way to estimate which species has been found with *O. illudens* featuring a long stipe compared to the cap width, and *sub*(as in below or smaller)*illudens* has shorter or stubbier stalks compared to the cap width.

## **Fungi Foragecast**

As always, rains continue to determine our mushroom hunting success. A good rain map will be your key for determining the best locations for a good forage. **This map** is my go-to.

October brings lower temperatures and (hopefully!) scattered rainfall for most of Alabama, this will dramatically shift our fungal finds. These changes will be most obvious following cool rains and sudden temperature shifts ushering in our cool-weather fungi while warm-weather fungi will 'migrate' South (and I don't mean a literal migration!).

Cool weather will see polypores popping from added growth rings of *Fomes* or similar hard/woody and long-lasting fruitbodies to the lovely lavender of *Trichaptum sp.* For the best polypore finds, wait 3-8 days following several intermittent rains or a big rainfall. Seems like a perfect time to pick up the latest Bessette book on Polypores (*Polypores and Similar Fungi of Eastern and Central North America*).

Cool-weather polypores will include tremendous flushes of *Trametes* such as *T.'s betulina*, *versicolor*, *lactinea*, *aesculi*, and *hirsuta*. Look for them on almost any dead wood, especially somewhere near a source of water (creek beds are especially popular hangouts for *betulina*). *Trichaptums* and *Stereums* will also see massive growth adorning the deadwood with violets, whites, orange, and vermilion - perfect for autumnal photography.

This is also the beginning of the "big-birds of the wood's" growth season in the South. This means *Laetiporus* (already being somewhat frequently encountered in September) species (the Chicken of the woods [C.O.W.]) will become more and more commonplace (you're looking for *L.'s cincinnatus* on the ground, *sulfureus* and *gilbertsonii* on deadwood). *Meripilus sumstinei*, the black-staining polypore and jokingly called 'Rooster of the Woods' by Michael Kuo, will also make a more pronounced appearance alongside some *Bondezarwia berkelyi* (Berkeley's polypore). Last but certainly not least of the 'Big Birds' is *Grifola frondosa* - the Hen of the woods (also maitake, sheep's/rams' head, etc.) which will start showing up in greater numbers as autumn swings into full gear. Look for these at the foot of oak trees.

As for the Agaricales (those gilled toadstools) - expect another dramatic shift which will follow the cool temperatures from north to south and promote absolutely humongous honeys (genus *Armillaria* and ringless pseudo-genus *Desarmillaria*), lots of *Laccaria* (especially in sandy-piney areas), ramped-up *Russula* production (expect lots of the red and purple-capped varieties), and plenty of *Pluteus* & *Pleurotus* (with less and less bugs as temperatures drop, also more *Pleurotus dryinus/levis*). *Lactarius* species will shift from the heat loving varieties to the hyper-colorful *Lactarius deliciosus* groups (section *Deliciosi*) which include *L.'s indigo*, *subpurpureus*, *paradoxus*, *chelidonium var. chelidonioides*, and other green-staining *Lactarius*. Other *Lactarius* include: *salmoneus*, *atroviridis*, *croceus*, *hepaticus*, and so many others (for more information on this group see [Kuo's page here](#)). If you're far enough South, you might also find some of the late *Craterellus* flushes.

Wax-caps (family *Hygrophoraceae*) and *Tricholomas* are also going to start showing up. From the extra-viscid *Gliophorus*, to the extra-waxy *Hygrophorus* and *Cuphophyllus*, and many of the brightly colored *Hygrocybe* such as *miniata* found in moss-beds, *cantharellus*, *coccinea*, *conica*, *flavescens*, *punicea* (under beech), and so many others.

Also expect Countless *Cortinarius*.

Remember in earlier newsletters when I omitted *Amanita sect. lepidella*? That's because we're going to start seeing them in ridiculous amounts now. Most *Amanita* are mycorrhizal, so knowing their favorite tree-hosts will help us track them down. Almost as importantly is the season, and let me tell you the Big, hyper ornamented, big bootied, and sometimes stinky lepidellas love early Fall. Keep a lookout for *Amanita abrupta*, *atkinsoniana*, *(sub)cokeri*, *daucipes*, *mutabilis*, *onusta* (in the Northern portion of the state), *ravenelii*, *rhopalopus* (pronounced rope-a-lope-us!), *roanokensis*, *thiersii*, and the absolutely unique *A. westii*.

Don't forget to post your cool and unusual finds both on our Facebook group and on iNaturalist!

*Strobilurus conigenoides* by Khloe Ilsey This species only grows on Magnolia cones and is the only agaric known to grow on Magnolia cones



September's Monthly Foray in Cullman County



## **Calendar Contest**

Congratulations to our September winner Joel Pounders with his photo of *Exudoporus frostii* in Franklin County!

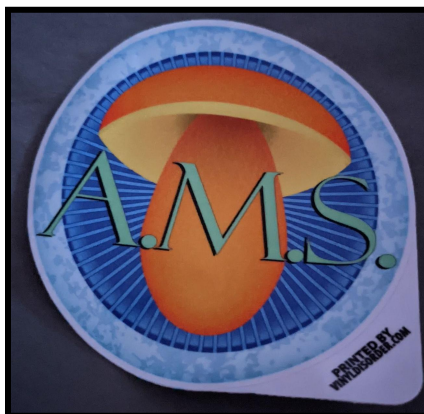


Go submit your own mushroom photos for September's Calendar contest on Facebook!! [Go now!](#)

**AMS Merch Now Available!**

[>Check it out now!<](#)

New shirts are up! Along with all kinds of new merch goodies!! We also now have AMS vinyl stickers and macrochem kits available in person at any Cullman event



# **In The Kitchen**

By Kevin Hébert

## **Black-Staining Poly Burger with Scallion Aioli and Potato Wedges**

It's that time of the year when you are walking in the woods and you think you see a new frisbee in the distance, but then you realize that you just found a giant black-staining polypore! The smell is overwhelmingly sweet and earthy, and you know what you need to do. This recipe combines black-staining polypore, black beans, feta cheese, and caramelized onions, smothered in a creamy scallion sauce to give your mouth an experience you will not forget.



### **Ingredients (about 2 servings):**

1 large Black-Staining Polypore  
(*Meripilus sumstinei*)  
3/4 cup cooked black beans  
4 medium potatoes  
1 large onion  
1 large bunch scallions  
5 cloves garlic

1 cup feta cheese  
2 egg yolks  
2-3 cups canola oil  
1 tbsp creole mustard  
5 tbsp butter  
2 burger buns  
salt and pepper



## **Directions:**

### **Step 1: Prep the ingredients and start the onions and potatoes**

Cut the onion in half, then thinly slice into half rings. Heat a saute pan on medium low. Add the sliced onion and 4 tbsp of butter. Cook, stirring occasionally until the onions are caramelized (this can take a while). Preheat the oven to 400 degrees and prepare a baking sheet with foil or parchment. Cut the potatoes into wedges then lightly coat with oil, salt, and pepper and toss on the baking sheet. When the oven is preheated, add the potatoes and roast for about 40 minutes, or until crispy, turning them halfway through. Clean the polypore and tear into pieces, starting with the outside edges. The core may be too woody to use, but they vary. Mince the mushroom into “ground meat” size pieces, or use a food processor on pulse to achieve the desired chop. Thinly slice the scallions, separating the green parts from the white parts. Mince the garlic. Roughly chop the black beans. Separate the egg yolk. Set the feta out to reach room temperature.

### **Step 2: Prep the burgers**

In a large bowl, combine the chopped mushroom, black beans, white scallion bottoms,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the minced garlic, 1 egg yolk, a drizzle of oil, salt, pepper, and stir to combine. The mixture should turn into something that resembles ground meat. Form the mixture into patties. If it is not clumping together when you patty it, add a little more oil and mix it up with your hands.

### **Step 3: Make the scallion aioli**

In a medium sized bowl, add 1 egg yolk, sliced green tops of the scallion,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the minced garlic, and the creole mustard. Whisk to combine. While whisking with one hand, slowly drizzle canola oil into the bowl with your other hand and continue until you have added about 2 cups of oil. It should look like a thick, creamy, bright green sauce at this point. Add salt and pepper to taste, then cover and set aside.

### **Step 4: Cook the burgers and toast the buns**

When your onions are caramelized, and the potatoes are about 10 minutes out, heat a drizzle of oil in a saute pan at medium high heat. Add the mushroom patties and cook for 5 minutes per side, flipping only once. They will form a nice crust on both sides. Remove the patties from the pan, reduce the heat to medium and add 1 tbsp of butter to the pan. Add the buns face down and toast until golden.

### **Step 5: Finish it up!**

Build the burger with the bottom bun, mushroom patty, caramelized onions, feta cheese, then cover all ingredients with the scallion aioli and add the top bun. Serve the potato wedges on the side and use the remaining scallion aioli as a dipping sauce. Pair it with a hoppy beer and enjoy!

## Meeting Information

**AMS meetings take place the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm CST via Zoom, Feb-Oct and are open to the public, so invite your friends!**


**We will not be holding an October meeting this year, due to everyone being at the Alabama Mushroom Festival! Come see us in person!**

# *Schedule of Events*

All events except Collection Foray are held in, or will be leaving from, the Speaker Tent

### SATURDAY

### SUNDAY

Gates Open	9 AM	
Mushroom Photography with Alan Rockefeller	10 AM	Mushroom Cultivation Demo with Tim Pfizer
All Day Collection Foray Begins Meet at ID Tables	11 AM	Common and Unusual Amanitas of Alabama with Jay Justice
Mushroom Dye Demonstration by Ashley Sisco	12 PM	Intro to Identifying Polypores of Eastern and Central North America with Alan Bessette
1:30pm- 3:00 Lichens with Curtis Hansen Presentation and foray immediately following.	1 PM	Coming To Your Senses: The Subtle Art of Mushroom Identification with Arleen Bessette
Mushroom Forms with Jacob Kalichman	2 PM	Through The Eyes of a Forager Presentation and Foray with Jesse Akozbek
Alabama's Native Plants with Kyle Larbarger	3 PM	From Spore to Fruit; Instructional Research at a Small Mushroom Farm with Gowin Valley Farms and Christopher Cornelison
Bugs, Slugs, and Other Mushroom Thugs with Bill Yule	4 PM	Festival Close
UV Blacklight Foray with Alan Rockefeller	5 PM	
Bring Your UV Flashlight!	6 PM	
	7 PM	
	8 PM	

## 2022 Scavenger Hunt



EVENT IN PROGRESS

AMS 2022 Scavenger Hunt

JAN 1, 2022 - DEC 31, 2022

About

Members 9

This is our yearly scavenger hunt to see who can make quality observations of the most different species of fungi! We give away \$200 worth of prizes to winners- 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. MUST BE A PAID ALABAMA MUSHROOM SOCIETY MEMBER TO QUALIFY FOR PRIZES

Read More >

Your Membership

Edit Project

Project Journal

Have you heard about our scavenger hunt yet?! Find and properly identify as many mushrooms in Alabama as you can and win prizes at the end of the year! You get credit for finding the mushrooms when you add them to our project on iNaturalist. Read the full rules on our website [here](#). Any observations you upload to iNaturalist will be automatically submitted to the project after joining. Joining the project is easy!

1. Download the iNaturalist app on your smartphone or access it via the website [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org).
2. Sign up for free to make your account.
3. Join the iNaturalist project titled “AMS 2022 Scavenger Hunt”  
→Must be a paid AMS member to win←



Amanita jacksonii by Ethan Hicks

Is there something you would like to see included each month? Do you have foray photos, a recipe or something else you would like to contribute? Reach out to us at [www.almushroomsoc@gmail.com](mailto:www.almushroomsoc@gmail.com)