Spore Print

2005 No. 3 Quarterly Newsletter of the Edmonton Mycological Society

Leccinum Boreale

Common Names:
Northern Roughstem, Red Caps
Family: Boletaceae
Season: August to September (this year we found the first one on June 18th)

If you want a good edible mushroom that doesn't have any dangerous 'look-alikes', grows for a long time period, repeatedly grows in the same area and can be found in deciduous trees, conifers and grass, then this family of mushrooms is for you. The *Leccinum boreale* was picked through a lengthy process by PAWMA (Pick a Wild Mushroom Alberta) as the representative mushroom of Alberta.

As many Boletaceae are edible, *Leccinum, Suillus* and *Boletus* alike, people are not particular as to which species they pick. As one reference states "This common and wide spread bolete has a number of look-alikes, all of which, so far as is known, are edible." There are, however, differences. As you move from delight in finding something you know is edible and celebrating the harvest of three mushrooms, you will also find yourself wanting to differentiate between varieties.

Painting courtesy of Helen Engel

Leccinum boreale is one member of the Boletaceae family that includes many choice edibles. In a good year you can see their distinctive tops from a distance in a variety of areas.

The first check is to make sure that the underside of the cap has tubes rather than gills or pores. If you cut a sample across the cap you will see the elongated tubes that form the bottom spongy matter. The second step is to check the stalk. All Leccinum varieties have tufted hairs or small scales called 'scabers' on the stalk. If you can find the tubes but not the scabers you likely have a different member of the Boletaceae family. It might still be edible but it is not a *Leccinum boreale*.

The *Leccinum boreale* has an orange-red cap, which can grow up to 16 cm across, with off-white pores and a rough stem. The stalk

(The Leccinum boreale...continued on page 3)

President's Message

Markus Thormann, president of the Edmonton Mycological Society

The past few weeks have been exciting and encouraging from many perspectives. First, our annual "*City of Champignons*" Mushroom Exposition was a huge success. Under the leadership of Pieter, we once again hosted this event at the Pine Pavilion at the Devonian Botanic Garden. This year's event featured an array of many different fungi from various habitats on large display tables, a soup kitchen, display tables of edible and medicinal mushrooms, educational materials, mushroom art, fresh and dried mushrooms for sale, a Powerpoint slide show about local fungi, mini-mushrooms forays through the Devonian Botanic Garden, a kids corner, and our usual membership and book sale table. Many, many thanks go out to the volunteers who helped make this event another winner. Have a look at our web site (www.wildmushrooms.ws) for some images from this event.

Second, speaking of our web site, I re-designed our web site with the assistance of Jon Elofson in mid-July. Jon, who designs web pages professionally, is a friend and co-worker at the Northern Forestry Centre. The EMS provided him with a small honorarium for his (continuing) time involvement and effort. I am in the process of learning how to manage our web site and hope it is informative and easy to navigate. I have a few more ideas for web content, but please let me know if you would like to see something on it that isn't there yet. All comments are welcome.

Third, we will be hosting a NAMA foray at William Switzer Provincial Park in August 2006. This park is located about 20 km northwest of Hinton on Highway 40 and is situated in a transition zone between the boreal forest and the Rocky Mountains. Louis established official contact between the EMS and NAMA over two years ago and did a lot of the early legwork on this project. More recently, Martin, Melanie, Bill, and Diane participated at the 2005 annual NAMA foray in La Crosse, WI, U.S.A. While there, the foursome continued negotiations with the NAMA executive and were successful in bringing this prestigious foray to Alberta in 2006. We are currently assisting the NAMA executive with the foray program and are organizing some of the details associated with this event.

We are now looking forward to our first annual Alberta Foray near Rocky Mountain House in early September. It, too, will be a very exciting and promising event. This 3-day event will feature numerous mushroom forays into the surrounding habitats and will give us a taste of what is to come next year at the NAMA foray.

Last but not least, I am in the process of organizing our annual *President's Dinner*. As in previous years, it will once again be scheduled in November. I have been in contact with Sorrentino's Bistro and Bare, who are interested in hosting us this year. More details will be forthcoming in the next *Spore Print* and on our web site in the near future.

Until then, cheers to all, Markus

2005 Executive
Edmonton Mycological Society

President: Markus Thormann
(780) 432-1392
mthorman@nrcan.gc.ca

Past President: Peter Arabchuk
(780) 479-6630
petarab@interbaun.com

1st Vice President: Mike Schulz
(780) 939-2106
mjschulz@wildmushrooms.ws

Membership: Alan Fleming
(780) 463-8540
afleming@cha.ab.ca

Treasurer: Loretta Puckrin
(780) 458-9889
loretta@second-impressions.com

Secretary: Melanie Fjoser
(780) 987-4412
mfjoser@wildmushrooms.ws

Foray Coordinator: Bill Richards
(780) 998-3507
emsforays@wildmushrooms.ws

Program Director: Martin Osis
(780) 987-4412
mosis@wildmushrooms.ws

Newsletter Editor: Geri Kolacz
(780) 475-7927
gkolacz@telus.net

Mailing: Diane Murray

Directors-at-large:
Pieter Van Der Schoot
(780) 696-2436

Robert Rogers
(780) 433-7882

Mailing Address:

Edmonton Mycological Society
1921, 10405 Jasper Avenue
Standard Life Building
Edmonton, AB T5J 3S2

Website Address:
www.wildmushrooms.ws

The Leccinum

(continued from page 1)

is white and solid varying between a few centimetres to almost 15 cm in height depending on the growing conditions. Normally it is 10 cm in height and 3 cm in width, generally wider at the bottom than at the top but without a veil or volva. The spore print is yellow-brown to dull cinnamon or medium brown. When growing in the forest the *Leccinum boreale* likes clearer areas where the undergrowth is minimal but it also grows quite contentedly in knee high grass!

With the Boletaceae family, the staining colour is often one of the major ways of telling these varieties apart as the cap colour can be difficult to define and will often overlap from species to species. The *Leccinum boreale* stains dark when cut. For this reason many pickers choose not to clean their mushrooms until they get home. Other people insist on cleaning the harvest, mushroom by mushroom, as they are picked. Why the big difference? One group does not like the staining colour and if the mushrooms are cooked very soon after cutting the discolouration is minimal. Cooking inhibits the discolouration process. The second group cleans on site because they feel that the staining is secondary to removing maggots from the mushroom. Yes, the insects, and even squirrels, enjoy this mushroom as much as people. By cleaning the mushrooms and removing all intruders you don't give the 'wildlife' time to eat more of your harvest. This does, however, give your harvest the look of paper leaves and sticks rather than mushrooms.

Whether you clean on site or at home it is important to know where the insects are most likely to be. You can't assume that because it is a young mushroom it will be clean. There have been times when a mature species was clean and a young specimen just beside it was full of insects. The first step is to cut off the stalk. The maggots generally travel up the stalk to freedom at the top of the cap. Often the path will be along the centre of the stalk. Cut the stalk horizontally to check infestation. If the damage is along the centre you can often remove the centre portion leaving the majority of the stalk for you to enjoy. If you get the idea that the stalk is a treasured part of the mushroom you are right! With the cap, often the infestations are limited to the spongy pores on the underside of the cap and marginally the cap itself. Cleaning off the spongy layer will often be sufficient to prepare the cap for cooking. The centre of the cap can be infested while the outside edges are clean. You need to check all the parts carefully if you don't want a high protein content in your dish.

Do you ever wonder where they get the official names for the mushrooms? In this case the 'leccinum' is from Italian meaning mushroom while the 'boreale' is Latin for 'of the north'.

Leccinum boreale as well as other members of the family often grow to large sizes. The trick is to find them and pick them before the other members of the forest do.

This variety of mushroom can be dried or cooked and then frozen. The dried mushrooms are easy to use and can later be crushed to a powder. The frozen mushrooms, if frozen in an ice cube tray, are ready to use and don't need re-hydrating. The choice is personal but most people agree that the best way, as with all wild mushrooms, is to eat them fresh.

Loretta Puckrin

Photos in this article by Loretta Puckrin

The rough stem of the Leccinum boreale is very distinctive (top). The photo on the left shows one environment that these mushrooms love.

Memories of NAMA 2005

Four members of the Edmonton Mycological Society (Bill Richards, Diane Murray, Martin Osis, and myself) ventured forth to the **North American Mycological Association's National Foray** on June 21-24. Events were held at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse. Our host was the colourful Dr. Tom Volk, who instructs his students in: Mycology, Medical Mycology, Plant Biology, Plant-Microbe Interactions, and Latin & Greek for Scientists. For your interest, check out Tom's website: TomVolkFungi.net , where you can see an article on the Foray in the LaCrosse paper, as well as many other interesting items on fungi.

Martin & I arrived early, as Martin was invited to take part in the Trustee's Meeting, which took place one day before other registrants began arriving. This meeting included Executive Directors, Trustees, Committee Chairs and Regional Representatives from all over North America, who conducted the business portion of NAMA's annual meeting.

Once the Foray officially began, participants were offered a variety of instructional programs each day, ranging from mycology topics at the molecular level, to tours of fungi in other countries, to dyeing wool with mushrooms, and everything in between. Scientific displays were arranged amid a trade fair, where one could purchase all manner of items to do with mycology. One special highlight was the Mycophagy session, where the edibles were transformed into delicious morsels that we all gathered around to sample.

We enjoyed a choice of several forays each day, being bused to some, car pooled to others. At the end of each foray, we sorted and labelled each specimen, which then went to be verified by a mycologist, recorded in a database, and returned to display tables. This was a huge undertaking accomplished very efficiently by the many scientists and volunteers in attendance. In the end, the specimens were dried and will go to the NAMA herbarium.

At mealtimes, all joined together to mingle and nourish. Every evening a banquet was held, followed by a program of speakers, including the NAMA Photo Contest winning photos presentation. Our last evening included a raffle, where our Edmonton group managed to clean up on prizes nicely, followed by a jazz band and dancing.

Following evening activities, many folks gathered in the dormitory lounges, enjoying beverages and discussing (what else?) mushrooms, and everything about mushrooms. The evenings were very warm, and others gathered outside singing, reciting, eating, drinking, and talking about – mushrooms!

The very best aspect about this foray was the warm welcome we Canadians received. Once it was announced that the **NAMA 2006 National Foray is to be Edmonton-based**, we were inundated with remarks on how excited people are to come to Alberta! Based on how smoothly the Wisconsin foray ran, we have our work cut out for us to put on a top-notch foray and welcome the astute scientists and other attendees by treating them to the best of Alberta mycology and hospitality.

(Details of the NAMA Foray 2006 will be released as they become available).

Melanie Fjoser

Recipe

Wild Mushroom, Leek, Cheese and Walnut Risotto

1 tbsp olive oil
2 cups arborio rice (short-grained)
1/2 cup dry white wine
4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
1 tbsp butter (or olive Oil)
2 cups sliced leeks
1 tbsp minced garlic
2 tbsp fresh thyme
1/2 lb wild mushrooms (chanterelles, boletes, hedgehogs, morels)
1/2 cup crumbled cheese (goat preferred – any strong cheese works well)
3 tbsp Italian parsley, minced
1/2 cup freshly toasted walnuts
2 tbsp Parmesan cheese, grated

1. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium-high heat, add oil and rice. Toss well to coat the grains and cook until rice turns opaque and starts to stick to the bottom. Add wine and stir until the liquid is absorbed. Repeat with stock, 1 cup at a time, stirring constantly and adding more liquid as it is absorbed. The process should take about 20 minutes, or until grains are tender but still firm to the bite.
2. Meanwhile, in a non-stick skillet, heat butter over high heat for 30 seconds. Add the leeks, garlic, thyme and mushrooms. Saute for 5-6 minutes, or until the leeks and mushrooms are dry and beginning to brown. De-glaze the pan with 2 tbsp of wine, and add vegetables to the risotto.
3. Fold in the cheese, parsley, walnuts and Parmesan. Add a little additional stock to make a soft, moist risotto. To serve, mound risotto in the centre of serving plates and garnish with additional parmesan cheese, fresh pepper and a sprig of parsley.

City of Champignons - Mushroom Exposition

Some of the approximately 400 people that came to the Pine Pavilion at the Devonian Gardens on August 7 to see the displays, watch the slide presentations, enjoy some delicious mushroom soup and/or mushrooms on toast and learn about mushrooms - both edible and non-edible. Photo: Markus Thormann

I had never been to the Devonian Gardens before – so when my friend Geri invited me to come to the Mycological Society's "mushroom fair" to be held at Devonian, it seemed a good idea – I'd get a double deal: mushrooms ***and*** the gardens.

I was not disappointed. The Devonian Gardens were lovely – but the highlight of the day was most certainly the "mushroom tent". There I discovered more kinds of mushrooms than I ever knew existed. And not just ***pictures*** of mushrooms – but the real thing.

The mushroom fair was a real feast for the senses. There were very colourful and informative posters of mushrooms, a silent auction of mushroom artwork, a great slideshow about mushrooms, and the chance to taste some wonderful soup made from mushrooms.

The best part of all, however, was the people – the members of the Mycological Society. I met many delightful, friendly, and helpful people, all of whom share a passion for mushrooms!

As a result of my Devonian mushroom excursion I have now become a member of the Mycological Society. I look forward to many mushroom-hunting missions, and I eagerly anticipate a myriad of marvellous mushroom meals.

Lyn Boire

Martin Osis and Pieter van der Schoot explaining the identifying features of various mushrooms to some of the visitors to the Pine Pavilion. (Pictures of the Devonian Exposition are posted on our website at www.wildmushrooms.ws) Photo: Markus Thormann

Remember the Alberta Foray

September 2,3,4 & 5, 2005 at Crimson Lake. See the summer issue of *Spore Print* for details or log on to our website at www.wildmushrooms.ws.

Leonard Hutchison, a distinguished mycologist, has agreed to join our Alberta Foray.

If you are still planning to attend any/or all the days, please register *immediately* so that the organizers can obtain enough groceries for all the meals.

One of the many mushrooms featured at the Pine Pavilion, the Russula is a favourite of some mushroomers and left alone by others. The line between edibles and non-edibles is sometimes blurred. Photo: John Thompson

Click Before You Pick

This sample of a mushroom shot has a number of good charateristics. The photograph is technically correct - the mushroom is in focus, the lighting is even and bright enough. It also shows not only the gills but the cap of the mushroom. Although the environment is artistically out of focus it would be easy to determine where this mushroom grows due to the angle of the shot. Photo: Martin Osis.

All of us have been new to mushroom picking at one point in time. We all felt the frustration of not being able to find our varieties in the books that dealt with mushrooms from all across North America *(or even European based volumes).* The descriptions sometimes can leave you confused and uncertain. Whoever coined the phrase 'a picture is worth a thousand words' must have been thinking about mushrooms!

You can now do something about this!

Whether you know the mushroom or not, take a photograph. This will help you determine characteristics after the sample has been picked. **Next** send a copy of that photo to EMS (Edmonton Mycological Society) for the photo contest. The goal of the contest is to create a resource library of photos for educational use by the EMS club and its members and presenters. The more photographs we get the more future presentations can show you what it means when you read that the gills are "attached " or "closely spaced."

All photography formats are acceptable but digital images are preferred. Please ensure that the files are **.jpg** or **.tiff** rather than a format specific to your camera. This will enable all systems to see the photos.

Eligibility

The contest is open to EMS members and friends (in other words, everyone with an interest in mushrooms and/or nature photography)

Closing date

October 15, 2005. We encourage entries to be submitted throughout the summer as they become available.

Subject Matter

Any member of the fungi kingdom.

Categories

1. Best overall mushroom photo.
2. Best photo of the Provincial mushroom (*Leccinum boreale*).
3. Best mushroom identification series

Judges Criteria

1. Best overall mushroom photo. The objective is to find a single photo suitable for display or illustration in a book or calendar. This requires that the species be identifiable and show the characteristics common to that mushroom. Criteria will include both technical (focus, depth of field, exposure, lighting, colour) and artistic appeal (composition, colour, background, lighting) aspects.
2. Best photo of the Provincial mushroom (*Leccinum boreale*): The objective is to find a single photo suitable for use in our bookmark, poster, and calendar. Criteria will include both technical (focus, depth

of field, exposure, lighting, colour) and artistic appeal (composition, colour, background, lighting) aspects.

3. Best mushroom photo series. Photo series will include 3 to 5 photos displaying the following: Fruiting body, growth habits (i.e. in rings, on wood, under or with spruce, etc), gills or fertile surface, cut through of mushroom, important ID details (i.e. ring or veil, volva, bulbous base, etc.). The series photos will be judged based on the visual images showing critical identification features. Emphasis is placed on key visual characteristics being present to be able to identify the mushroom at least to genus. Subjects may be shot in the field or studio. While both technical and artistic consideration will be given to the judging, the main criteria will be on the identifiability of the subject.

Ownership of images

All copyrights will remain with the photographer. The entrants consent to allow the EMS to use the photos as they see fit, both in EMS publications as well as part of our digital image library and educational programming.

Entry Fee

All entrants must fill out the entry form and submit it with the fee of $5.00. This is for the first image. An entrant can submit as many entries as they wish for an additional cost of $1.00 per image. Remember, the more the entries the larger the prizes.

Loretta Puckrin & Martin Osis

A Pleurotus ostreatus (oyster mushroom) photograph that as well as being technically correct shows both the cap on the lower growth and the gills on the upper samples. The environment (growing on the side of a tree as well as the forest) is evident in the shot. Photo: Martin Osis

EMS Entry Form
Annual Mushroom Photo Contest

Closing Date: October 15, 2005

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Competition Categories

1. Best overall mushroom photo.
2. Best photo of the Provincial mushroom *(Leccinum boreale).*
3. Best mushroom identification series

Every entry should have a photo number, or name (if you are submitting more than one) and the date taken.

Entry Fees:

Registration fee
–covers the 1st photo $ 5.00

Additional entries ___ X $1.00 $_____

Total $_____

Submit entry fee by mail to
Edmonton Mycological Society,
1921 – 10405 Jasper Avenue ,
Standard Life Building,
Edmonton, AB, T5J 3S2.

Payment should accompany entries. Any entry not paid in full by October 15th is disqualified for the competition.

Entries may be submitted by mail to address above or email to photocontest@wildmushrooms.ws.

Ashland Dam Foray and Campout - July 9/10, 2005

Everyone brought their precious finds and then we all tried our hand at identifying the various mushrooms using Martin's key. Photo: Loretta Puckrin

As new members of the Edmonton Mycological Society we weren't quite sure what to expect from the July 9/10 foray to Ashland Dam, although its billing as a *Boletus edulis* habitat certainly increased our anticipation. Camping and mushrooming for two days sounded like a whole lot of fun. Our 7 year-old son insisted on a bit of bug collecting and fishing as well. What better way to spend a couple of summer afternoons, especially with a communal mushroom feast to follow the foraging.

As these things sometimes go, the mushrooms were fairly uncooperative but the mushroomers were superb. It took a while for everyone to find the site and introduce themselves before the business of the foray began. People dispersed to pick mushrooms in the woods before lunch, bringing back specimens for more experienced folks to sort and classify for the demonstration table. The Ashland Dam area offers diverse woodlands, largely aspen parkland interspersed with a few spruce and pines. The site looked very promising and the mushrooms found were quite diverse but the abundance of any particular mushroom was low. The king of mushrooms, *Boletus edulis*, chose not to appear at all!

After a picnic lunch, with lots of sharing food back and forth between participants, Martin Osis introduced his "Key to Alberta Edible Mushrooms" and talked about what mushrooms and mushrooming are like in Alberta. Everyone had an opportunity to work through Martin's key with selected species from the demonstration table. He emphasized that his key is not intended to work as a stand-alone reference but provided useful shortcuts when used in tandem with a more comprehensive reference such as "Mushrooms of Western Canada". Working in small groups we keyed out at least 2 or 3 different mushrooms. That was enough science – back to the woods for more foraging this time to get enough mushrooms for the big pot of communal mushroom soup!

Few mushrooms were found in the afternoon but everyone managed to gather enough for soup. Dinner was a lot like lunch, with more people there to share. Nobody really knows what all went into that soup but it sure tasted good, especially when a thunderstorm hit the camp just in time for dinner. Thank goodness Ashland Dam site had a shelter big enough to accommodate everyone who wanted to stay out of the rain while eating their potluck supper. We were happy we had pitched our tent before the storm began! Even though the rain didn't last very long it encouraged many folks to go home early. We enjoyed our first trip with members of the Edmonton Mycological Society very much and look forward to many future forays.

Deb Moon

Ashland Dam Foray List

Agaricus sylvaticus
Chalcipterus piperatus – Pepper bolete
Clavicorona pyxidata
Clitocybe gibba
Cortinarius alboviolacious
Fomes fomentarius – Tinder conk
Fomitopsis pinicola – Red belted conk
Ganoderma applanatum – Artists conk
Geastrum c.f. *pectinum*
Gomphus clavatus – Pigs ear
Hericium ramosum – Coral tooth
Hydnum repandum – Hedgehog
Hypomyces lutoevirens – green lobster
Inocybe sororia- Corn silk inocybe
Lactarius deliciosus – delicious milk cap
Leccinum boreale – Red top group
Leccinum insigni– Red top group
Leccinum snellii– Red top group
Lepista nuda - Blewit
Leucopaxillus giganteus
Lycoperdon perlatum
Lycoperdon pyriforme
Lyophyllum decastes – chicken of the woods
Melanoleuca cognata
Peziza anthracophila
Peziza repanda
Phellinus tremulae
Philitopsis nidulans – stinky oyster
Pholiota squarrosa
Piptoporus betulinus – Birch polypore
Pluteus cervinus – Deer mushroom
Polyporus badeus
Russula aeruginea – green russula
Russula borealis – northern russula
Russula brevipes – short stalked russula
Russula chamaleontina – small yellow russula
Russula decolorans – greying russula
Russula fragilis – Fragile russula
Russula subfoetens – Stinking russula
Ramaria abietina – green staining ramaria
Ramaria sp.
Scutellinia sculellata – eyelash cup
Trichaptum sp.
Tricholoma flavovirens – man on horseback

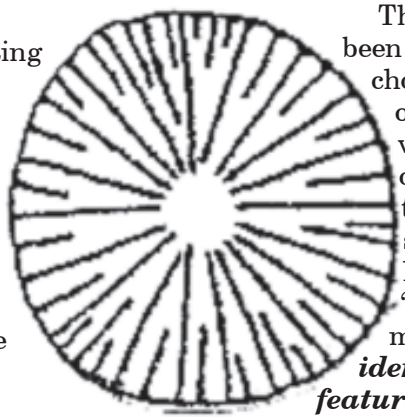
Fairy Rings – Love 'em or Leave 'em

What's "up" with all those mushrooms poking up through the lawn? A couple of days of rain and then it seems overnight they are popping up here and there singly or in groups, in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours.

The mushrooms that we typically know are actually the fruiting bodies of a fungal organism. These organisms live in our grass or on a piece of buried wood debris year after year. When all the conditions are right, the fungus shoots out a fruiting body and this usually happens after a good soaking rain. Fungi consist mostly of water, so they require a goodly amount to be able to produce the mushroom, which in turn produces spores to continue its life cycle.

Fungi are the great recyclers of the world and they play an essential role in returning nutrients for all types of life, both plant and animal. Different than plants, and more like us, they do not produce chlorophyll but usually rely on plants for their energy source. In this process they exude enzymes, breaking down dead plant material releasing nutrients for use by both plants and animals.

One of the best recognized of these fungi is the "fairy ring mushroom". It must be noted that there are a lot of different fungi that grow in rings and most (not all) of these fungi growing in rings on your lawn are recycling dead grass. The fungal organism itself grows in the ground as a mass of tiny threadlike structures, called mycelium. Some have been known to be 800 years old. The ancients believed that at night, tiny fairies came out and danced around in a circle. When they needed a rest they would sit down on the mushroom. In the forest, rings with different but larger mushrooms grew providing a rest stop for larger fairies who, being bolder, were not afraid of the forest.



The "fairy ring" has been rated by some as a choice edible, so one of the most efficient ways of getting rid of them is to eat them! But make sure that what you have is a true "fairy ring mushroom". ***(see identifying features)*** There are many "little brown mushrooms" or LBM's that grow on lawns and should be avoided. Regretfully, not all these LBM's, which are notoriously difficult to identify, are little nor are they all brown. Mushrooms picked for the table must always be positively identified, and when eating these positively identified mushrooms for the first time try them in small amounts as there is always a possibility of an allergic reaction.

If you observe the fairy ring, you will notice greener and faster growing grass on the outside of the ring. This is from the nutrients being released by the fungus. The reason that often the grass dies in the centre is that the root work or mycelium of the fungus is slightly greasy and grows so densely that it chokes off the water supply to the grass. If you want your grass to look good, aerate the ring with a garden fork, breaking up the fungus to allow water penetration to the grass. An application of soapy water also helps break down the greasy or oily mycelium. This works best when the ring is still young, allowing both the mushrooms and the grass to thrive. With proper fertilization the rest of the grass looks like the greener grass growing on the edge of the ring, making the ring hardly noticeable.

Healthy grass, delicious mushrooms, sometimes, you can have your cake and eat it too!

Martin Osis

The "Fairy Ring" mushroom
Marasmius oreades

Habitat: The fairy ring mushroom grows on lawns in partial rings.
Cap: The cap is bell-shaped when young, flattening out as it ages, often with a small bump on top. Ivory coloured to light brown after it has been rained on.
Stalk: The stalk is tough and a bit darker in colour than the cap.
Gills: Gill colour similar to the cap. The gills are widely spaced with shorter intermediate gills between. The gills are barely touching the stalk.
Spore colour: White or very light cream.

EMS Calendar of Events for 2005

Please Join Us!!

All forays are undertaken at your own risk. You are responsible for transportation and accommodation.

September

3-5 *Long Weekend Foray - First Annual Alberta Wide Foray*

Mushroom: *Leccinum, Russula, Lactarius* and other agarics

10/11 *Weekend Foray to the Foothills - Campout*

Mushroom: Hedgehog and Honey Mushrooms
Location: Foothills - TBA

28 *MEETING - Topic TBA*

October

26 *MEETING - AGM*

*****The date for our annual general meeting may change. See NOTICE below regarding Changes to the EMS Bylaws*****

November

TBA *President's Dinner:*

See President's message on page two for some details.

22 *Mushrooms in our world - by Markus N. Thormann*

Location: Riverbend Public Library, 7:00-8:45 pm

Proposed Change to the EMS Bylaws

The executive of the Edmonton Mycological Society (EMS) proposes to hold the annual general meeting (AGM) in February of each year.

Members in good standing, who are in attendance at the regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, September 28, 2005, will be able to vote on this proposed change of the bylaws. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact me via e-mail at mthorman@nrcan.gc.ca

Thank you,
Markus Thormann
President, Edmonton Mycological Society

Our September 10-11 Foray and Campout has not been finalized at the time of printing. Please check your email or contact our Foray Director Bill Richards*(contact information on page 2 of Spore Print)*.

The President's Dinner slated for November is still in the works. Please watch for further details as they develop. Remember we do have an excellent website that is full of information. Log on at www.wildmushrooms.ws and check it out.

General Member Meetings

Fourth Wednesday of every month.

Time: 7:00 pm **Location: Riverbend Library**

Mushroom Walk & Dinner

The Annual Mushroom Harvest begins in September at Sorrentino's. Each location will be having a feature mushroom menu and cooking classes will be offered.

Mushroom Walk & Dinner
Sorrentino's West
6867 - 170 Street, *just south of Whitemud*
Saturday, September 10, 2005

Martin Osis will lead us on a little walk through the nearby ravine to see what wild mushrooms are growing in our neighbourhoods. This will include many interesting tidbits on wild mushrooms with a chance to ask questions. After a short stroll, we will be back at Sorrentino's West where chef Garrett will have prepared a three course mushroom pasta dinner which we will enjoy with a glass of wine. (If weather doesn't permit, we will have a wide selection of wild mushrooms to see and talk about at the restaurant.)

Cost: $40.00 per guest. Please reserve early by calling Arleigh Stockwell at 474-6466 or email to: arleigh@sorrentinos.com.

Space is limited so Reserve Early!!

Other happenings at Sorrentino's

On Monday, September 12 Global TV host Lorraine Mansbridge will be on site at Sorrentino's from 6:30-9:00 am. Melanie and Martin will be bringing mushrooms and talking about the photo contest and update viewers on the provincial mushroom.

October will feature a Truffle Dinner with proceeds going to Compassion House.

Foray at Whitemud Creek Ravine

Looking out my office window on the morning of August 17, I was wondering how many brave souls would show up for the foray at the Whitemud Creek ravine that evening. It had been raining for three days straight, and there seemed to be no end in sight. Thankfully the weather forecast was right on! It did stop raining early in the afternoon and began to clear thereafter. By the time the foray started around 7 p.m., 12 of us had gathered at the Whitemud Creek ravine parking lot, ready to search for fungi. Among them, several new members of the Edmonton Mycological Society came to experience their first foray.

As we started to walk along the multi-use trail, encountering joggers, hikers, and dog-walkers, it quickly became apparent that all the rain had done wonders for the local mushroom "flora". Many different species of "little brown mushrooms", or LBMs, had sprung up from the leaf litter, defying identification due to their lack of easily identifiable characters. In addition to this ubiquitous group of fungi, we collected numerous puffballs, bracket fungi, coral fungi, and many different wood decay fungi.

Approaching 8:45 p.m., we decided to return to the parking lot to start the identification process of the bounty in our baskets. Most of the fungi we collected were basidiomycetes; however, we also came across a few ascomycetes, a jelly fungus, and a couple of slime molds, which are not true fungi. After identifying as many fungi as we could on the nearby camping tables and chatting about some of the more interesting specimens, we left most of the fruiting bodies for the chatty squirrels and chipmunks that had accompanied us on our foray that evening. Overall, it had been a very successful and enjoyable foray for all.

Markus Thormann

Species list for Whitemud Ravine Foray

Agaricus silvicola
Apiosporina collinsii
Apiosporina morbosa
Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa
Clavicorona pyxidata
Fomes fomentarius
cf. *Fomitopsis cajanderi*
Ganoderma applanatum
Helvella crispa
Hericium ramosum
Laccaria amethystea
Laetiporus sulphureus
Lycogala epidendrum
Lycoperdon perlatum
Lycoperdon pyriforme
Marasmius palladicephalus
Peziza repanda
Pholiota destruens
Pholiota squarrosa
Pleurotus ostreatus
Ramaria abietina
Ramaria stricta
Sepultaria pellita
Trametes pubescens
Tremella mesenterica
Trichaptum biforme

Mushroom Environments

"Mushroom hunting is not simply a matter of traipsing through the woods after it rains. It is an art, a skill, a meditation and a process. If you proceed at a careful, deliberate rate, you'll enjoy much more success than if you rush around frantically picking whatever mushrooms you see, then stuff them in your basket, bring the whole mess home and dump it on your table," states David Arora in Mushrooms Demystified.

Knowing what environment is preferred by a particular mushroom, or conversely which mushrooms you can expect to find in a given environment, is a critical factor in successfully concluding your 'mushroom hunt.' It is equally important for you to know what you are seeing when you look for that environment.

It is easy to differentiate between deciduous and coniferous environments and you can learn the various trees so you know which poplar is most likely to grow oyster mushrooms. But when a mushroom is found do you take the time to notice where exactly it is growing?

With some mushrooms it is easy to see that they are growing in an open field. That means they grow on grass right? Not necessarily. Tree roots extend far beyond the edge of the leaf canopy and branches can fall to the ground to be hidden by the rapid growth of grass.

It is hard to discipline yourself to stop and check out why that mushroom is growing in one particular area but not a foot away. Could it be possible that there is some wood buried that it needs for its growth? Could it be getting shade from the strong afternoon sun? Is it at the bottom of a rise or hill where it would get the water that runs off the high slope?

Often it is not possible to categorically state which is the case unless you have had some experience with that species of mushroom and know its habits. When you are trying to identify a new species you can't judge by a single specimen. Be aware that many descriptions contain wordings such as "is commonly found", "may be present" or "has been known to". These are all ways to say that a mushroom follows its own rules, which we understand, to a limited degree. Those ways are always changing to adapt to changes in the environment.

Another important factor is how the mushroom grows in relation to others. Do they cluster in a group but stand separately? Do they cluster and appear to originate from a common point? Do they grow in a circular pattern? Do you find one, and then walk a bit before you find another? These are all clues as to the mushroom variety as well as being important to remember if the species is a favourite edible.

In addition to all the information about the environment of a particular mushroom species is the nomenclature of describing the mushroom itself. Most texts about mushrooms have a brief outline of the shapes and gill attachments that are commonly used in the identification of mushrooms. You can't use a key to determine which mushroom you have in hand if you don't understand the names given to the various features. To help you understand the terms and show you what they mean will be the objective of a new series of articles starting with the next *Spore Print* publication.

Sometimes it is evident what substrate the mushroom is using for food but other times looks can be deceiving. Shown in the photographs are a happy grouping growing on wood chips; the field mushroom hiding in the grass and a mushroom poking up through the litter of pine cones. Photos: Loretta Puckrin

Loretta Puckrin