



Summer 2024

Fungi Kingdom News

The newsletter of the Pioneer Valley Mycological Association

© Peter Russell



© Mary Obrzut



Omphalotus illudens, the “Jack-o-lantern,” fruiting in Northampton in August.

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Cortinarius semisanguineus, spotted by Mary Obrzut this summer.



Pioneer Valley Mycological Association

Board of Directors:

Jess Evans, President

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Mike Ostrowski, Treasurer

Dianna Smith, Chief Mycologist

Stephanie Reitman, Secretary

Other Members:

Mary Obrzut

Paul Thomas

Jonathan Kranz

Anna Seitz

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Pioneer Valley Mycological Association is dedicated to enhancing the public's knowledge and appreciation of the fungal kingdom by providing ongoing educational programming in the form of guided mushroom walks, lectures, newsletters, information on multi-day regional and national forays, and citizen science projects. Because fungi are integral components of complex ecosystems, we are committed to advocating for responsible and sustainable study and collection methods. We focus on, but are not limited to, the three counties of the Pioneer Valley in western Massachusetts (Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden).

PVMA is a member of the Northeast Mycological Federation (www.nemf.org) and the North American Mycological Association (www.namyco.org).

www.PVMAmyco.org

Also visit Dianna Smith's educational site fungikingdom.net for articles, fungi photos, and more.

Submissions Welcome!

This is your newsletter; we'd love to have you contribute to it! Art, prose, photos, drawing, recipes, scientific observations— send them all to:

jessicabensonevans@gmail.com or jonkranz@kranzcom.com

From the President

Wow— another summer is almost ending! We've had a wonderful walk season so far, with just the right mix of rain and warm temps. Members have reported a banner year for choice edibles such as black trumpets, and we're already seeing some beautiful *Grifola frondosa* finds across the Pioneer Valley.



Looking ahead, there's so much more to come for our members before the season ends! We have a number of great walks on the schedule, which you can see on page 11 as well as a few regional forays.

As always, I'm so grateful to the many volunteer walk leaders and members willing to share their knowledge at our walks! Your help makes it all possible— thank you!

Looking forward to seeing you all soon,

- Jess

nemf.org

Lectures and Workshops




Jess Evans

*Open Art Workshop
with the Pioneer Valley
Mycological Association*

2024
NORTHEAST MYCOLOGICAL FEDERATION
SAMUEL RISTICH FORAY

www.nemf.org/foray-presentations

October 11-14, 2024 on Cape Cod!

[#nemf_fungi](https://twitter.com/nemf_fungi)

Coming to NEMF in October? Jess will be offering an open art workshop (free/by donation) for attendees to create a variety of mushroom art!

Members' Summer Mushroom Sightings!

©Mike Ostrowski



Pluteus thomsonii, spotted by Mike O!

©Peter Russell



A particularly photogenic *Tapinella atrotomentosa*, captured beautifully by Peter Russell.

©Jess Evans



Amanita subcokeri, ring detail.

My Secret to Cooking Mushrooms

Anna Seitz

I was going to write about cooking mushrooms - foraged mushrooms. I was trying to figure out how I do the one tablespoon here, one teaspoon there, and so many minutes, till last night when I was not feeling energetic, and my husband finished cooking the dinner which included making a mushroom sauce out of cremini mushrooms. He had all the ingredients in front of him, but I forgot to reveal to him my approach - or techniques – in the cooking process.

The most important part of cooking mushrooms is not about the exact amount of each ingredient, but to know what to do with the pile of mushroom sitting on the kitchen table, daring you to make it not only edible, but delicious.

One of the first things to remember is that this beautiful mound is mostly water – over 90 % of it. If you want flavor out of it, you need to get rid of this water.

So, we begin with this water problem.

Most instructions emphatically demand that you never clean your mushroom with water. You are supposed to clean it with a soft brush or with a wet paper towel. These instructions come mostly from chefs who have a retinue of minions to clean it that way for them. I am alone in the kitchen, and by the time I finish cleaning my mushroom that way my dinner companions would be fast asleep.

Just go back and think about the mushroom you have in front of you, sitting in the forest or on your front lawn. Where are their umbrellas when it rains?

Now back to the kitchen. Mushrooms are not afraid of water. Give your mushroom a shower or a quick dip in water, to get rid of the dirt, if any. However, no soaking. Shower, not a bath. Make sure the water is cool like rain.

After the rain, the sun comes out, the breeze returns, and the mushroom is no longer wet. So, in the kitchen, either let the mushroom air dry, or give it some tender loving care and towel dry it.

If my mushrooms are large, I cut them up to the size I want, just before I am ready to cook them.

Here is the next trick. Put a little oil in a hot pan and place the mushrooms in it. Now cook it, and stir it periodically, till it becomes partially dry, and may be a little brown at the edge. The idea is to maintain a high enough heat to evaporate the liquid that comes out of the mushroom. Low heat, however, would not do, the mushroom would stew, and it would end up being a soft mess.

How much time does the process to remove the water take? As long as it takes. It depends on the mushroom, the condition of the mushroom (e.g. if you pick it after a heavy rain), the quantity in the pan, the heat level. Some take 5-10 minutes, some a lot more. Be patient.

My mushroom, now reduced to 10-20% water, is ready to meet up with the rest of the dish. Here is when I begin to construct my recipe.

The ingredients in a recipe consist of three parts: flavoring, other bulk ingredients and finally the milieu they all enjoy sitting in.

Flavoring: I apply this depending on the mushroom: a pad of butter, a teaspoon of light soy sauce, a tablespoon of oyster sauce, or vegetarian oyster sauce (the flavor comes from mushroom, not an oyster), thyme, tarragon.....

Bulk: this can be vegetables - especially alliums (onion, shallot, leeks), peppers, fennel - or meats of any kind.

Milieu – it can be dry, or wet (like a sauce), or very wet (like a soup). A splash of wine, a ladle of broth or a cup or two of broth or cream.

Chanterelle In Cream Sauce with Pasta

I would like to dedicate this recipe to Jessica Benson Evans, without whom I would never have discovered how almond milk potentiates the flavor of chanterelles. My experience with cooking chanterelles is that I usually meet up with a handful or two, and never really experience its exquisite, delicate flavor, till I took a walk with my college friend, Maggie, one summer in Maine. A large patch of orange. Something to explore. Chanterelles! We collected over five pounds of it. Made a cream sauce with it for pasta. That was Chanterelle heaven. We all enjoyed it - that was me, my husband, my friend's children and grandchildren, etc. My college friend did not partake of it. There were leftovers. The next morning, we woke up bright and cheery, and ready to enjoy the day, when Maggie announced that the left-over pasta was all hers. I never experienced Maggie to be that cautious, but when it comes to wild mushrooms.....

Ingredients

Chanterelles, depending on whatever amount you have
Onions, chopped – about the same volume as the chanterelles
Oil, enough to cover the pan
Butter, about a tablespoon for flavor
Almond milk or heavy cream, or both
Pasta, I prefer tagliatelle or angel hair for this.
Salt – to taste

Directions

Set a pot of water to boil for the pasta.
Clean the chanterelles and cut them into bite size pieces.
Select a large enough pan to hold the pasta, onion and mushroom. Using high or medium high heat, cook the chanterelles in a little oil till they lose most of their water and acquire a touch of color (5-10 minutes). Add the butter and stir to let it melt into the chanterelle. Remove from the pan.
Set the heat to medium and cook the onions in a little oil till they are translucent and start to color. Return the chanterelle to the pan. Add almond milk / heavy cream. Simmer, till the sauce thickens. The amount of liquid depends on the amount of pasta. (You can always add more later if necessary.) Taste and adjust seasoning. Turn the heat off.
Salt the pasta cooking water. Cook the pasta till al dente – (almost cooked). DO NOT DISCARD THE PASTA WATER.
Turn the heat back on the sauce and bring it to a boil. Turn the heat down to medium and transfer the pasta to the pan with the sauce, along with some pasta water. Mix till the sauce coat the pasta. Check the pasta to finish cooking it to your liking. To continue the cooking process, add more pasta water. When it is all done, there should be just a little liquid at the bottom of the pan when you part the pasta to check. Taste and adjust seasoning.



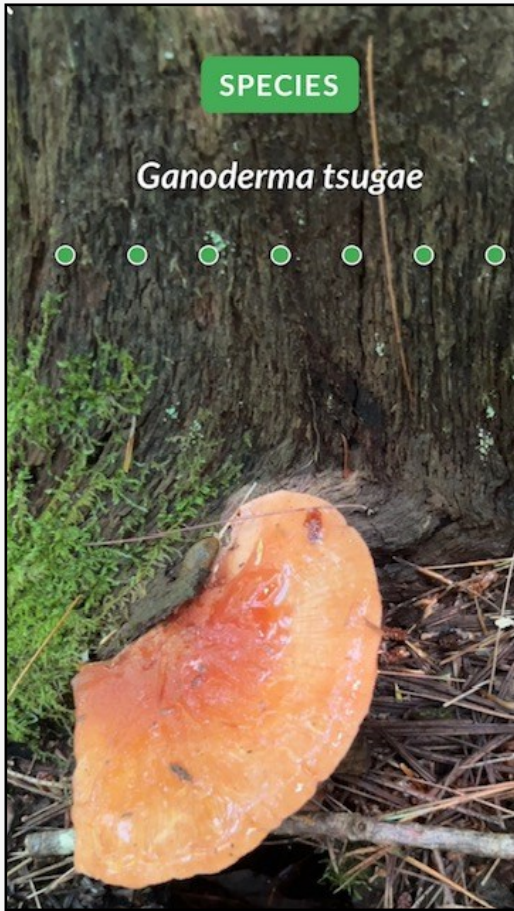
Anna Seitz with member Brenda Clark and lots of chanterelles!



Chanterelles: *Cantharellus sp.*

SEEK Fails: The Hazards of App-based IDs

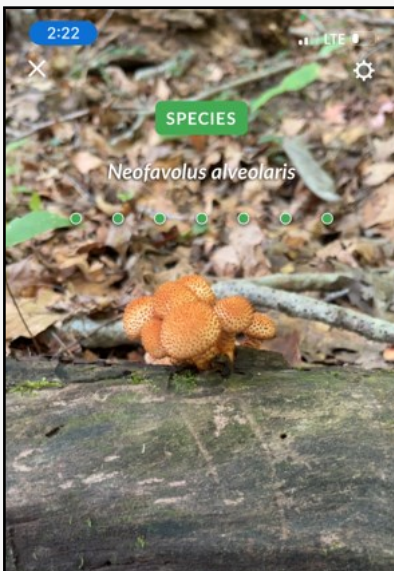
Karen Hidalgo



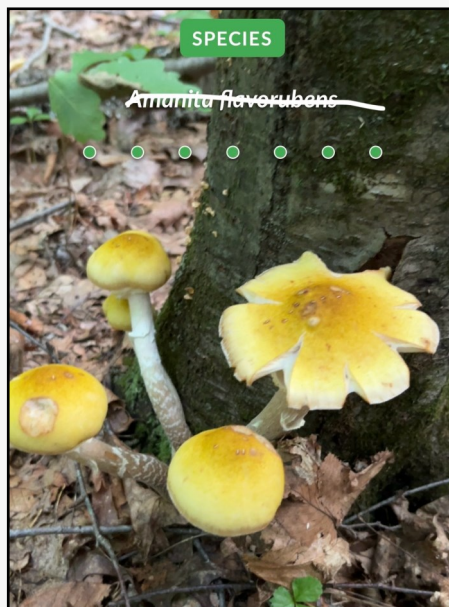
This is not a Ganoderma. Instead, it's *Fistulina hepatica*, the "beefsteak polypore."



Seek suggested *Hericium americanum* for this crust fungus, which is actually something like *Radulomyces copelandii*.



Nope, not *Neofavolus*! This one is a *Pholiota* species.



Seek suggested *Amanita flavorubens*. These are actually honey mushrooms: *Armillaria* sp.



Way off! This is *Cortinarius corrugatus*.

What The Fungus?

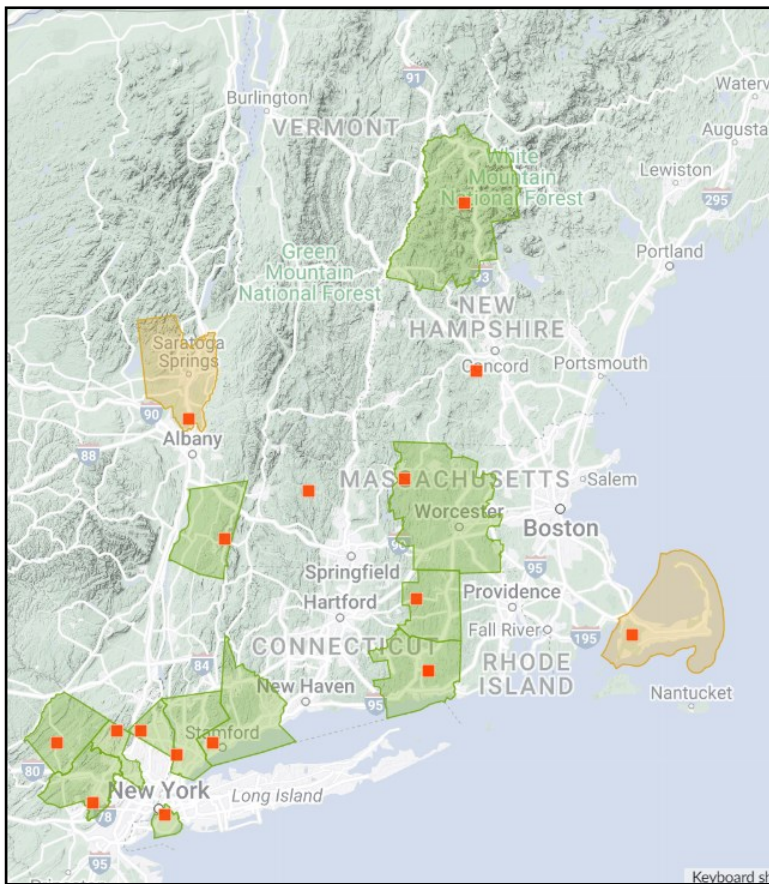
© Jess Evans



I spotted this edition's "What The Fungus" during our joint walk with the Berkshire Mycological Society at the William Cullen Bryant Homestead in Cummington on August 17th. As we rounded a corner along the trail, I spotted a rotting log that had some lovely *Scutellinia* (eyelash cup fungi) on it. I went in for a closer look and saw small *Mycena*-like fruiting bodies coming from the well-rotted wood and adjacent soil. As the group moved on without me, I picked one and expected to see plain, *Mycenoid* gills. I was shocked to see red gills underneath, instead! This was a brand new species for me.

A: This species is *Melanophyllum haematospermum*, the "Redspored Dapperling." One of the most thorough online resources I found with a full species description was on a site featuring the fungi of California: Mykoweb.com. That resource notes that this species is "a rare, small brown mushroom with striking pinkish-vinaceous gills and a distinctive granulose cap decorated with marginal veil fragments." This certainly fits my find!

Interestingly, this mushroom has had many names over the years! Previously, it was placed in various genera including *Agaricus*, *Pratella*, and *Lepiota*. In addition, it's also synonymous with *Psalliota echinata*, *Cystolepiota echinata*, and even *Agaricus hookeri*, among many others. It sounds like this rare, weird find has been an evolving mystery for many mycologists over time!



Occurrence map on iNaturalist for *Melanophyllum haematospermum*: As you can see, Massachusetts has only one other observation of this species besides mine. (Mine's the red dot corresponding to Cummington, MA).



Cap detail.

Redspored Dapperling (*Melanophyllum haematospermum*) needs ID Edit

A photograph showing a person's hand holding a small, young mushroom specimen on a piece of dark wood. The mushroom has a reddish-brown cap and a pale stem. The background shows a forest floor with fallen leaves and green plants.

jbe16
180 observations

Observed: Aug 17, 2024 · 11:51 AM EDT
Submitted: Aug 17, 2024 · 5:55 PM EDT

Cummington, MA, US

Be the first to fave this observation!

I'll be sending this specimen off to the Mycota Lab led by Stephen Russell for DNA sequencing, as part of his Summer Continental MycoBlitz. More details to come in the future!

Species Description at Mykoweb.com: https://www.mykoweb.com/CAF/species/Melanophyllum_haematospermum.html

Fungi in the News

“The Future is Fungal: Fungi that live in healthy plants are sensitive to climate change...”

<https://phys.org/news/2024-02-future-fungal-fungi-healthy-sensitive.html>

“Pioneer fungi sequester carbon in the soil...”

<https://phys.org/news/2024-07-microscopic-fungi-soil-carbon-storage.html>

“Why scientists are now racing to stop a mass plant extinction...”

<https://www.sciencefocus.com/nature/race-against-plant-fungi-extinction>

“Mushroom edibles are making people sick...”

<https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2024/08/21/nx-s1-5066893/amanita-magic-mushroom-gummies-diamond-shroomz>

“This robot is being controlled by a King oyster mushroom...”

<https://www.popsci.com/technology/fungus-robot/>

Found any interesting news about fungi lately? Send the links to us!



New Guide available for pre-order: *Mushroom Finder* by Jacob Kalichman, illustrated By Roo Vandegrift

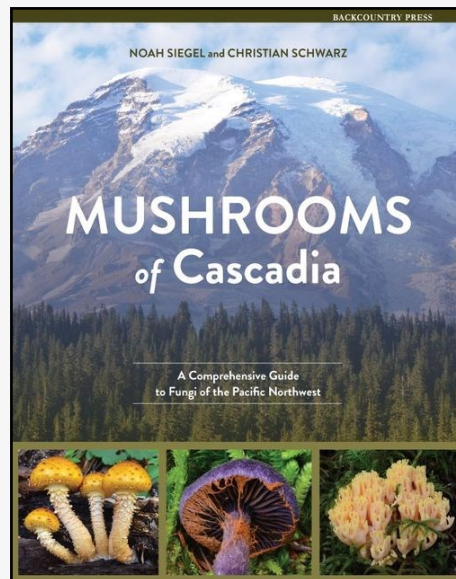
“Begin to identify mushrooms across North America with this pocket-size guide.

Not your typical mushroom guide, the booklet is aimed at breadth rather than depth—so you’re likely to find the content that you’re looking for, but you might not be able to identify a given fungus to its specific species or genus. To that end, *Mushroom Finder* provides a dichotomous key to identifying fungi. Simply answer a series of simple questions about the location, shape, or appearance of the mushroom, including its cap, spores, and stem. Along the way, professional illustrations by Roo Vandegrift help you arrive at a positive general identification.”

Link to purchase: <https://shop.adventurewithkeen.com/product/mushroom-finder/>



Noah leads a PVMA walk



***Mushrooms of Cascadia*, by Massachusetts-native Noah Siegel and Christian Schwarz**

Although this guide features fungi from an entirely different habitat than Western Massachusetts, early reviews suggest that any mushroom enthusiast would enjoy and learn from this brand new guide to the Mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest region of Cascadia. This team of mycologists previously authored *Mushrooms of the Redwood Coast*, and Noah has led a number of walks for the PVMA over the past years. Expect beautiful photography and great information in this gorgeous book.

Link to purchase: <https://backcountrypress.com/moc/>

Scenes from Summer Walks



Upcoming Walks and Forays

*** Saturday, September 21, 10:00 a.m., Valley Community Land Trust in Colrain, MA with Gabriella Leah and Club Officers**

Directions: 273 Shelburne Rd., Colrain, MA. From 1-91 take the exit for Greenfield and go up the hill on Rt. 2W, then make a right on Colrain Shelburne Rd., until you get to Brooks Rd., take a right on Brooks Rd. and then a quick left on Fiskmill Rd. Fiskmill Rd. turns into Shelburne Line Rd. Park along the road

*** Sunday, September 22, 10:30 a.m., Joint Foray with BMC at Harvard Forest in Petersham MA.**

Directions: Meet in the main parking area. <https://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/directions>.

*** September 27-30, COMA Foray, Copake NY.** Details here: <https://www.comafungi.org/clark-rogerson-foray/> (Registration has closed.)

*** Saturday, October 5, 10.30 a.m. Joint walk with Smith college at MacLeish Field Station in Whately.**

Foray with students from Smith College in the woods around their field station followed by a table walk. Attendees should be willing to share their expertise with the students. Directions: 80 Poplar Hill Rd., Whately, Massachusetts; park in the car park at the gated entrance: [https://beanumber.github.io/sds192/handouts/Directions to MacLeish.pdf](https://beanumber.github.io/sds192/handouts/Directions%20to%20MacLeish.pdf)

*** Sunday, October 6, 10:00 a.m., Dufresne Park in Granby, MA with Mike Ostrowski.**

Directions: Use Kendall St entrance, meet at the trailhead directly across from the pavilion. Mostly flat with a couple of slight elevations. <https://www.granby-ma.gov/dufresne-park>

*** October 11-14, NEMF Foray, at Hyannis Cape Cod, MA. Details: www.nemf.org (Registration has closed.)**

*** Sunday, October 20, 10:00 a.m., Mt. Tom, MA with Karen Hidalgo.**

Directions: Reservation Rd. parking area, off route 5 in Holyoke. Parking past Lake Bray on the left. Easy walk along low-elevation trails that can be muddy.

*** Saturday, October 27, 10:00 a.m., Federated Women's State Forest in Petersham, MA with Jonathan Kranz.**

Wide well-trodden mostly flat trails with deep leaf litter in a predominately oak and conifer forest. A wonderful home for fungi! Directions: From Rte. 202 turn onto Rte. 122, go 3.6 miles, turn right onto State Forest Rd, follow for 1.7 miles to gated entrance and pull-ins for parking. We will meet at the parking area in front of the gate. See www.mass.gov/dcr/massparks/region-central for directions from other parts of the state.