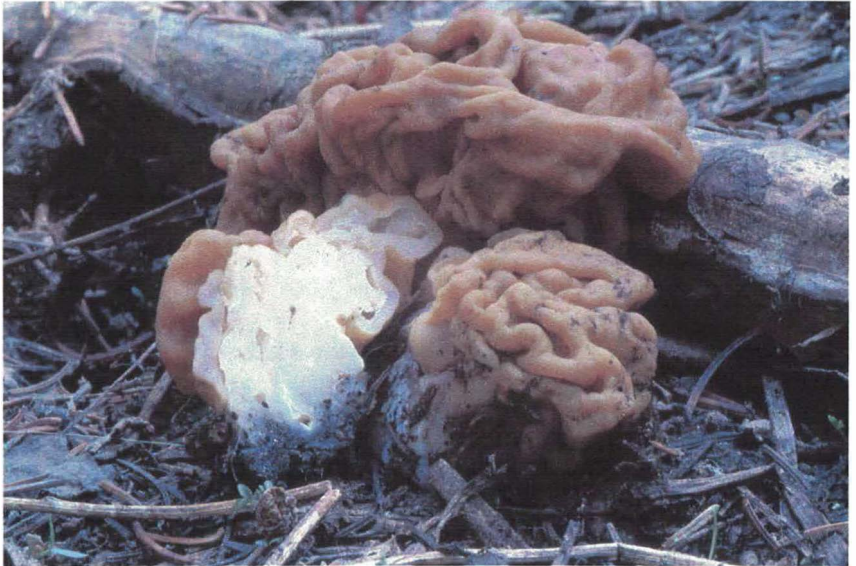




THE FUNGOPHILE

SPRING 2006 EDITION OF THE MUSHROOM SOCIETY OF UTAH NEWSLETTER



Gyromitra gigas, a very controversial edible. See article inside on page 4, Snowbank False Morel

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Visit us online at
www.users.uswest.net/~dwjohnston, or at
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MSU Officers

President	
Ardean Watts	581-1931
Vice President	
Jim Stringfellow	936-1276
Secretary	
Don Johnston	942-0637
Treasurer	
Cindy Thomas	583-9246
Membership Secretary	
Bill Thomas	583-9246

Directors

Mark Cannon	466-5124
Shernan Brough	943-6183

Letters to the Editor may be addressed to MSU Fungophile, 2373 East 6660 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84121. MSU Fungophile is published by the Mushroom Society of Utah and is mailed to all current members. To become a member or to renew your membership, please complete the form on the back cover and return it with your check to MSU.

Summer Schedule

All of our Saturday forays will be at the same time and meeting place; that is 9:00 AM at the Park & Ride parking lot on the North side of 39th South, between I-215 and Wasatch Blvd.

Local forays within the Salt Lake valley usually last 3-4 hours.

More distant forays, such as Kamas and the Mirror Lake highway usually last until mid afternoon. Bring a lunch. This is where we go as summer progresses and the valley begins to dry up.

Now to the schedule;

Saturday, April 15, Somewhere in the Salt Lake Valley, possible oyster mushrooms, morels, or Agaricus.

Saturday, May 6, Again in the Valley or possibly lower elevations of the local canyons

Saturday, May 20, Same as May 6, with a greater possibility of morels. The snowbanks may also hold a few goodies.

Saturday, June 17, Time for the higher elevations and snowbanks.

Saturday, July 15, Same as June. We'll probably have to look for places that have had the most rainfall.

Saturday, August 5, Hopefully the monsoons will have had an impact by now.

Our annual Fall Foray will be Friday thru Sunday, August 25, 26, & 27 at the Francis town hall.

Beginner's Guide to Hunting Wild Mushrooms

Welcome to the enjoyable and rewarding world of stalking wild mushrooms. This guide is intended to get you started and give you some very basic information. Fungi can be studied for a lifetime, but wild mushrooms can be harvested and eaten quite safely from day one if you follow some simple guidelines, learn to use the field guides and seek the advice of more experienced mushroom hunters. Most of these folks are more than happy to share their knowledge with you.

Some basic Dos and Don'ts:

Do not eat any wild mushroom unless you are 100% certain what it is. Many common edible mushrooms have poisonous look-alikes. Use the field guides to carefully identify the mushroom, and double-check your identification with an experienced mushroomer. When in doubt, throw it out!

Do not eat any wild mushroom raw. Wild mushrooms should always be cooked in order to kill bacteria and other “germs” that are present in the soil. Commercially farmed “grocery store” mushrooms are raised on sterilized manure and are generally considered safe to eat without cooking. Many people find that raw mushrooms of any kind are more difficult to digest than cooked ones. Use your own judgement and experience on this.

Do not eat large quantities of any mushroom that you have never eaten before. Some people are allergic to certain species of wild mushrooms, and it is best to start slowly and find out whether the new mushroom agrees with you or not. It is also best to eat only one new variety at a time. If you have a reaction, you will know which mushroom caused it.

Do learn how to properly collect wild mushrooms: When collecting unknown mushrooms for identification, be sure to collect the entire mushroom, particularly the base of the stalk. Dig the mushroom from the soil using a knife or trowel, and wrap it in waxed paper or a small paper bag. Keep different types of mushrooms separate from one another. When collecting known mushrooms for the table, use a sharp knife to cut the stalk through near the level of the soil, to keep the mushroom as clean as possible. Brush or trim off remaining dirt and try to keep it gill-side down. Wrap in waxed paper or paper bags, again, keeping different types of mushrooms separate from one another. Ask any of the experienced mushroom hunters to show you how to do this. There is a special procedure for *puffballs*- see the field guides or ask about this before eating them.

Do show the mushrooms you have collected to one of the experienced mushroom hunters before heading home to cook them. (see first Do not, above.) Before cooking, wash off any remaining dirt using a wet brush or cloth, or under running water.

Do buy a basic field guide to mushrooms and learn how to use it. There are several good field guides available at your local bookstore. They contain a wealth of information and are fun to read. Most experienced mushroom hunters have a stack of them.

Some things to bring along when hunting mushrooms:

Large basket or shopping bag to carry your mushrooms without smashing them
Large knife or trowel for digging up mushrooms
Small, sharp pocket knife or paring knife to trim and clean mushrooms
Brush for cleaning mushrooms. A small paintbrush or kitchen brush works well.
Waxed paper roll, waxed paper bags or small paper bags
Field guide or two
Magnifying lens or loupe
Drinking water, lunch or snacks, sturdy walking shoes, light jacket, hat, sunscreen
Walkie-talkie radios- good for keeping track of each other in the woods

Some good field guides, in no particular order:

Peterson Field Guides - Mushrooms

Kent and Vera McKnight, Houghton Mifflin, 1987

The Audubon Society Field Guide To North American Mushrooms

Gary Lincoff, Borzoi books, Alfred Knopf, 1981

Mushrooms of North America

Orson K. Miller, E.P. Dutton, 1981

Eyewitness Handbooks- Mushrooms

Gary Lincoff and Thomas Laessoe, DK publishing, 1998

Mushrooms Demystified

David Arora, Ten Speed Press, 1979

All That The Rain Promises And More

David Arora, Ten Speed Press, 1991

Mushrooms of Utah

Don Johnston- Available only through Mushroom Society Of Utah

Additional Saturday forays will be weather dependent and will be announced at the Fall foray.

Presidents Message

I will celebrate my 78th birthday this year, the last 50 of which have been as a mycophile. I no longer feel compelled to climb every mountain nor identify every obscure L.B.M. But --- I give advice with little or no encouragement. In that spirit, I am proposing your consideration of a few courtesies, which would make our forays even more enjoyable and effective.

Be Prepared! Bring your own tools: pad and pencil, wax paper, loupe, brush, knife, basket, water bottle, etc., --- every time.

Clean your mushrooms thoroughly at the picking site. This benefits the experts, the cooks, the eaters, the people you would like to impress and leaves the debris in the forest where it belongs.

Keep a lifetime mushroom journal including information about habitat and substrate, date and place. Number each collection and try to identify it yourself. Use question marks for uncertainty and page numbers from your favorite field guide. Your journal could have value to posterity.

Leave some specimens growing where you find them. It's a courtesy to your colleagues and assures that some will live to complete their life cycle.

Share the goodies with your less fortunate friends.

All members of MSU take an unwritten oath to educate others in the fine art of finding, identifying, appreciating, eating, and understanding fungi. Be good buddies to those who know less than you do.

My deepest gratitude to those of you who don't need this reminder.

Ardean Watts

Good Morel Season Expected in Idaho

For those who missed the article in the Tribune a week ago, our neighbors in Idaho are expecting a good Morel season for two reasons. 1- There were not enough forest fires last year that left burns that would attract professional pickers. 2- There was enough rain last fall before the ground froze to give the morels a chance to grow. So if you know a good place to find morels in Idaho, this might be the year to do it.

Hopefully, the same could apply to Utah, although I don't recall all that much rain last fall. At least we usually don't have to worry about professional pickers.

Recipes from our November 2005 Feast

Chris' Pasta

1.5 lbs fresh sliced mushrooms
3 slices thick cut bacon
1/3 cup chicken broth
1/2 pint heavy whipping cream
1/2 cup sour cream
1 lb rigatoni
1 lg sweet onion (walla walla, etc.) diced
1 A head garlic peeled and minced
% cup fresh thyme leaves (no stems)
1/2 stick unsalted butter
1/3 cup olive oil
fresh chopped parsley leaves
salt

fresh ground pepper

Cook bacon slowly to crispy, drain. Cut into small strips. Set aside.

Melt butter with olive oil over low heat in heavy kettle. Add onions, salt and pepper to taste, stir regularly. Add thyme; cook until onions have lost their crunchiness, approx. 20 minutes. Add garlic in the last five minutes of cooking.

Increase heat to medium. Add chicken broth to onions, stirring and deglazing the pot. (Here is the place to add wine for flavoring). Add mushrooms, cook for several minutes, stirring. Add cream and sour cream, cook on low heat, stir occasionally until slightly reduced. Add bacon. Salt and pepper to taste.

Mix the mushrooms with the cooked rigatoni (al dente); sprinkle the parsley over the top.

Chris Barry

Chanterelle Soup

1/4 pound Chanterelles
1/8 cup butter
1/4 cup onions, finely chopped
1 teaspoon flour
1 cup cream
3/8 cup milk
3/8 cup beef stock
1/8 cup wine
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper

Tear, chop, or slice the Chanterelles into the size pieces you prefer. Melt butter and saute the chanterelles and onion in it. Sprinkle the flour over the mushrooms and stir to remove any clumps.

Add beef stock, cream, and milk. Simmer for 15-20 minutes, stirring frequently. If desired, add corn starch to thicken. Add a little wine of your preference, white, sherry, or port. Salt and pepper to taste.

Don Johnston

Mushroom Caviar

4 servings

3 tablespoons butter
½ pound mushrooms, wiped
clean and finely chopped
4 shallots, minced
1 tablespoon dry white wine
1 garlic clove, minced

2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts
1 to 2 tablespoons sour cream
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Boston lettuce
Sesame crackers

Melt butter in large skillet over high heat. Add mushrooms and shallots and saute, stirring frequently, about 5 minutes. Stir in wine and garlic and cook another minute. Remove from heat, transfer to bowl and let cool.

Gently mix in pine nuts and sour cream and season with salt and pepper. Cover and chill until ready to serve. Mound on lettuce leaves and accompany with sesame crackers.

Pat Glenn, from Bon Appetit Appetizer book

Mushroom Zucchini Soup

2 pounds of chopped mushrooms. Saute a la J. Czarnecki — add soy sauce and sugar to taste. Cook until the liquid is reduced by at least half.

4 6-inch zucchinis sliced in 1/2 inch rounds. Steam in a cup of water with chicken bullion and tablespoon of Italian spices added. Blend slightly when tender.

Combine the above and bring to boil

Add one pint of low-fat sour cream and stir. Don't bring to a boil again.

Roast Duckling with Wild Mushroom Sauce

Look for domestic duckling in your supermarket's freezer case. Thaw it in the refrigerator for 24 hours before roasting.

Snowbank False Morel

Gyromitra gigas has been bantered around for years for being a suspected poisonous mushroom. In some eyes it still is just that, a suspected poisonous mushroom. Dennis Benjamin's 422 page book, *Mushrooms, Poisons and Panaceas*, does not offer conclusive evidence that *G. gigas* is poisonous, even though he cautions against eating it. While there are members of the *Gyromitra* genus which are poisonous, and there are close look-alikes, *G. gigas* is not one of them.

Back in the mid 1990's Kent McKnight stated that *G. gigas* does not have gyromitrin. Many of us heard Orson Miller say essentially the same thing at our Fall foray last August.

All that said, do not throw caution to the wind. We also have *Gyromitra esculenta* in our area which is poisonous. *G. esculenta* looks very similar to *G. gigas*, but is darker and more red. Consult a good field guide for more details or ask one of our local experienced mushroomers for help in identification.

One final note, as with any wild mushroom, do not eat the same mushroom in excessive quantities or for consecutive meals.

Here's how to join MSU

Pass this on to a friend who may be interested in mushroom hunting.

\$15 Family Membership in MSU

\$47 Family Membership plus membership in NAMA

\$30 Student Membership in MSU and NAMA

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

Family membership includes all members of your household. Fill out the form above, make check payable to MSU and send to: Bill Thomas, 1148 Sunnyside Avenue, Salt Lake City, UT 84102. If you have any questions call 801-583-9246