



Artist Conk signed by members during the 2018 Fall Foray

## A Letter from our President

Dear Mushroom Society Members,

This year has been one of extreme disruption.

I find myself surrounded by news articles and comments and complaints about how badly the COVID pandemic and its associated “social distancing” have devastated people’s lives, the economy, even the very fabric of our society. And granted, these are serious problems.

But on a more local level, I have been astounded by the resiliency of those same institutions, and the measures that average people have taken to support and help those around them. I’ve seen so much more friendliness between neighbors and even perfect strangers, genuine interest in how others are coping with today’s challenges, and most importantly, actions (even inconvenient actions) taken in pursuit of others’ welfare.

Regarding mushrooms, it's also been a challenging year. I've spent the last week camping with my family in the Uintas, and small forays in 7 different locations yielded a paltry 15 specimens of 6 different species. (Okay, two of them were young *Boletus*, so I suppose that makes up for something.) But talk about dry! And most of the state seems to be faring about the same.

But at the same time, I've been astounded by the resiliency of MSU! Under the leadership of the most incredible board of directors I could ask for, and with the supporting hard work of our committee members, MSU has not only remained active but accelerated our offerings this year, with "virtual forays," cultivation seminars, increased collaboration with other mushroom groups in the area, a new mushroom cookbook, an art contest, and even the first issue of *Fungophile* in I don't know how long. I'm excited that this year's "socially-distanced" Fall Foray protocols will allow a much broader involvement throughout the state, and I expect we'll do more virtual forays even after restrictions on social gatherings are lifted.

In short, MSU is flourishing even in the absence of rain and of much in-person social interaction. I can't wait to see what will happen in a really good mushroom year, and when we can get together and celebrate a profusion of fungal fruitings in person again.

Hopefully soon, we'll find out.

Adam Luker

President, Mushroom Society of Utah

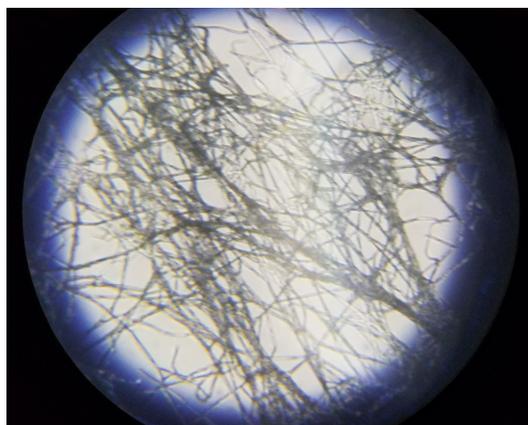
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### **Adapting Mushroom Cultivation**

At first, the idea of teaching mushroom cultivation online felt impossible. How could I translate a hands-on task from my living room to yours? By April, it became apparent that there wouldn't be another option any time soon. So I did what we have all been doing and adapted.

I have learned so much about how to overcome logistical challenges and communicate through electronic barriers. In some ways, teaching online has sharpened my skills. I have to hold people's attention through a screen while YouTube and Netflix are ready to replace me should I become boring or incoherent. I like this. It keeps me from taking anybody's time for granted.

Of course, we all have the distractions of home life. My dog has barged in on multiple classes and insisted on getting in front of the camera. I have overheard unmuted conversations about people's dinner plans, like who does and doesn't like kale, which plates should be used, and when the meal will be ready. I have seen people from strange angles, like forehead only with a clear view of their ceiling fan. These moments serve as beautiful reminders that we are all just humans finding our way through it.



I had the privilege of teaching mushroom cultivation through MSU on July 12<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. By then, we were all several months into this new normal, and Zoom had become a widely known tool. That's not to say there weren't still small mishaps, but all in all we got the job done. I want to thank everyone who participated and the folks at MSU who worked with me to put this all together.

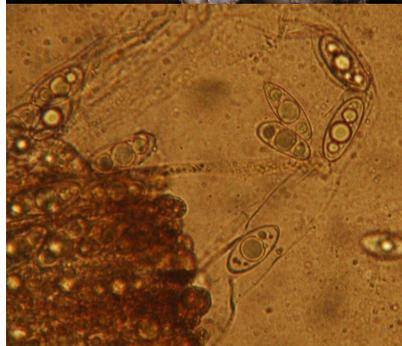
I am hopeful that in person classes will be held with abandon in the not too distant future. While I look forward to working with MSU in this capacity, I will not forget the lessons I learned from online teaching. Like mycelium, people enjoy connecting and growing together, and I am so happy to be a part of that. -Katie Lawson of Fungal Focus

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## "False Morels"



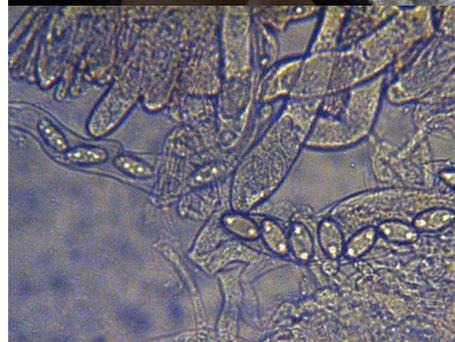
*Gyromitra montana* (left) is a very common sight in UT mountains as the snow banks melt. 'Gyro' means convoluted and 'mitra' means turban. *G. montana* has a tanner appearance than *G. esculenta*, with looser folds. It's stipe is typically very wide, but not as wide as the cap itself. Some guides caution against eating this mushroom, citing the presence of the toxin gyromitric acid, though many people in the western states (the only place this one grows) have enjoyed it for myriad years. **COOKED.** You should always cook mushrooms, but this one will make you sick if eaten raw, just like morels are likely to do. Spores: 3 oil droplets per spore.



*Gyromitra esculenta* (right) is much less common. Its folds are tighter and more red in color than those of a *Gyromitra montana*. They're also said to be hollow, compared to a *G. montana*, but the chamber size in both can vary. The



stipe of a *G. esculenta* is generally narrower than a *G. montana*. It contains significant amounts of the toxin gyromitric acid, which gets converted to monomethylhydrazine (liquid rocket fuel) in your stomach. Interestingly, *Esculenta* means 'edible', and this mushroom is known as a prized edible in parts of Europe, where a special method of boiling and discarding water breaks down gyromitric acid (but it does go into the cooking steam). If you want to be absolutely sure of your ID, check out the spores under a microscope. Two oil drops per spore. -Ashley Simon



## Favorite Edibles

People often ask What's your favorite mushroom? I can never answer them with one word or with one mushroom type. I have many favorites. Further complicating the answer is the fact that some of my favorites are not socially acceptable. Let me list my top 5.



Morel(Left), black, yellow, etc., *Morchella* species: very flavorful. Some of the world's favorites. I will not attempt to describe the flavor. Most of you will hopefully know about it. My favorite dish is in an alfredo sauce. It should be thoroughly cooked before adding to the sauce. In fact all morels must be thoroughly cooked or they can be very toxic.

Snowbank False Morel, *Gyromitra Montana*: Taste is very similar to a morel, and it can be used any way a morel can. Some people are intimidated by reports of gyromitrin levels in *G. Montana*. Modern science has been unwilling to commit to a meaningful definition of those levels. You must make your own decision on edibility of this species. You must also be aware of a very toxic look-alike, *G. esculenta*, that we also have in Utah. They can be differentiated in the field based on macro features. As with morels, *G. Montana* must be thoroughly cooked or they can be toxic.

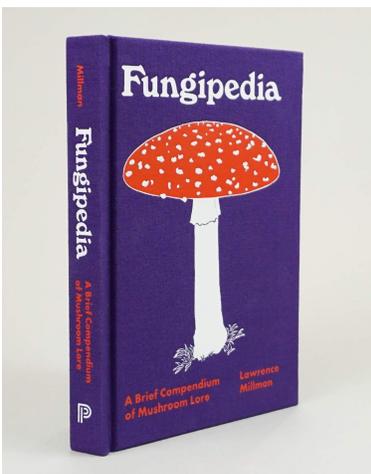
King Bolete, *Boletus edulis*, *barrowsii*, *veris-regis*: Perhaps more commonly known as porcini in regard to cooking. It has a different common name in almost every different language in the world. It is universally known and is popular world wide. When dried it takes on a unique fragrance that is excellent when added to almost any recipe for soup or stew, or added to eggs. Grind it up and use it in a shaker as a condiment for almost anything. King boletes are one of the few exceptions to the rule on cooking. It can be eaten raw.

Chanterelle, *Cantherellus roseocanus/cibarius*(Right): This is one of our most aromatic mushrooms. Our version has a sweet aroma of apricots, that other species around the country do not. It makes a wonderful soup or addition to almost any pasta sauce.



Shingled Hedgehog, *Sarcodon imbricatus*: This is another controversial edible mushroom. Many people, my wife included, do not like it because of bitterness. To me it comes across as a very highly flavored mushroom, perhaps

the most strongly flavored of any wild mushroom with no bitterness. It pairs well with other strong flavors such as bacon and/or blue cheese. -Don Johnston



### Book Review- Fungipedia: A Brief Compendium of Mushroom Lore

by Lawrence Millman

Hardcover: 200 pages: ISBN-10: 0691194726: ISBN-13: 978-0691194721

A compact read with delightful factual and folklore information laid out in an encyclopedic format. Easy to pick up and read a few entries at a time with topics ranging from notable mycologists to obscure fungi. While some topics are common among mushroom fans, many of the entries were new and unique to me at least!

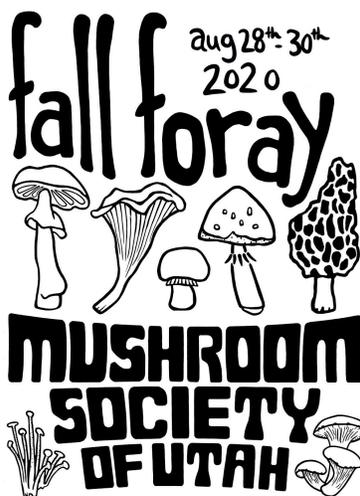
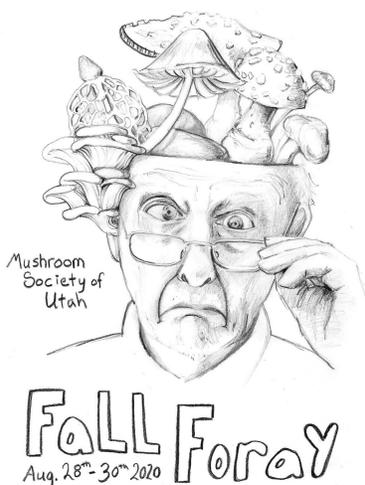
-Alison Neville

### Fall Foray Information

Annual Fall Foray August 28th - 30th

Our event will be a bit different this year but just as full of *mushroom* information. Sign up for limited small guided forays across the state, give us your t-shirt size, and get more information about digital identification classes on

[utahmushrooms.org/fallforay](http://utahmushrooms.org/fallforay)



Wonderful submissions for our t-shirt design competition from left to right Robin Luker, Ben Morgan, and Curie Ganio.



2020 Fall Foray t-shirt design winner is Aaron Hokanson of Ogden

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### Board Information

President	Adam Luker	<a href="mailto:adam@utahmushrooms.org">adam@utahmushrooms.org</a>
Vice President	Vacant	
Treasurer	Carolyn Orthner	<a href="mailto:treasurer@utahmushrooms.org">treasurer@utahmushrooms.org</a>
Secretary	Alison Neville	<a href="mailto:alison@utahmushrooms.org">alison@utahmushrooms.org</a>
Board Member	Ashley Simon	<a href="mailto:ashley@utahmushrooms.org">ashley@utahmushrooms.org</a>
Board Member	Ed D'Alessandro	<a href="mailto:ed@utahmushrooms.org">ed@utahmushrooms.org</a>

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### How to Join or Renew Your Membership

The Mushroom Society of Utah (MSU) is a non-profit, all volunteer organization that depends on membership fees for support. The fee is \$20 per household per calendar year. A household is defined as all family members residing at the same street address. The benefits of membership include free admission to all MSU-sponsored events, such as special lectures, mushroom hunting forays and social events. There are two ways to join the MSU.

Online: Go to MSU's website (utahmushrooms.org) and click on the Join MSU Tab. You will be given the option to Sign Up or Log In. You may pay by Credit or Debit Card.

US Mail: Fill out the form below, make a check payable to MSU and mail the form and check to:

Carolyn Orthner

Treasurer, MSU

8185 S. Danish Road

Cottonwood Heights, UT 84093

Name(s) of  
Adults \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of  
Youth \_\_\_\_\_

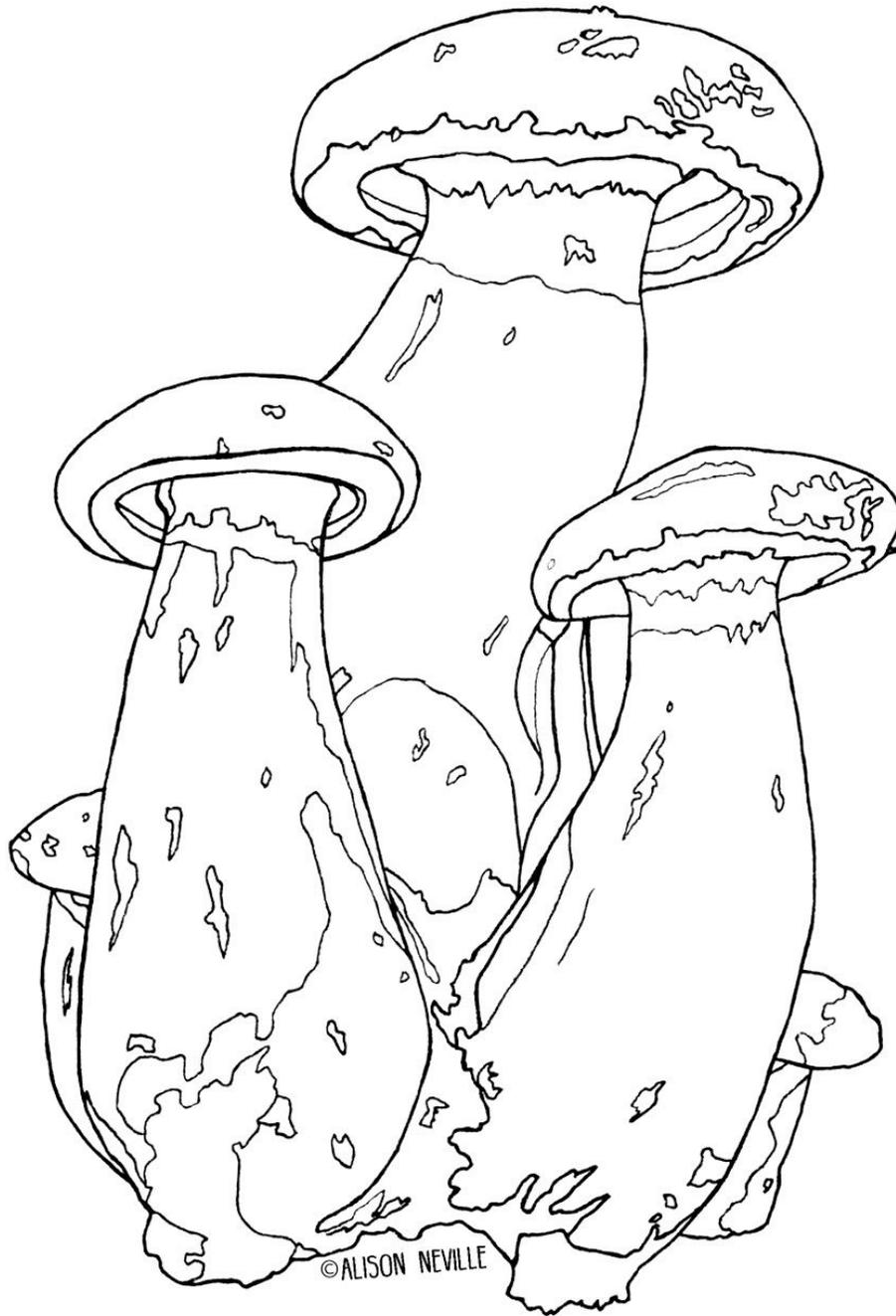
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