LONG ISLAND MYCOLOGICAL CLUB

http://limyco.org

L.I. SPOREPRINT

1973-2015

Available in full color on our website

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MUSHROOM DAY OCTOBER 18 *PLANTING FIELDS ARBORETUM 1 PM —4 PM*

This year, like 2012, has been extraordinarily dry, but despite that, we had a successful display then by many members pitching in, even venturing into other NY state areas and NJ to collect in places that held some moisture. It seems that if the current dry conditions continue, the same or greater levels of effort will be needed to insure an adequate display. So we are asking everyone to pitch in by getting out there and collecting, even if you have to invade your neighbor's watered lawns.

Additionally, volunteers are needed to set up the exhibition, so please arrive by 12 noon so that we can have all our specimens identified, labeled and arranged by 1 PM. Inform the booth attendant that you are here to help set up the exhibit, and the fee is usually waived.

After the exhibit closes we will have a short business meeting to consider members suggestions.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LONG ISLAND MYCOLOGICAL CLUB

Originally published in March-April 2015 Mycophile

In 1973 twenty members of the NY Mycological Society, residents of geographic Long Island (which includes the NYC boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens) split off from NYMS and formed a regional entity that would become known as the Long Island Mycological Club. It was felt that an island 120 miles long offered sufficient opportunity for foraging so as not to require the arduous trip off-island north and west of NYC. The emphasis here is on "club". We are an informal group of like minded lovers of fungi and amateur mycologists (there is a difference), and make no claim to be a learned "society"; the casual nature of our board meetings would strike horror into the heart of devout parliamentarians.

Although we think of ourselves as a young club, it would be more accurate to say that LIMC is middle-aged, insofar as fortyish appears to be about the average age of NAMA affiliated clubs, which range in age from the venerable Boston Club, founded in 1897, to some clubs which first saw the light of day in the 2000's. The original members were mostly from Brooklyn and Queens, and the rest from Nassau, the westernmost of the two Long Island counties. Over the years, with growing suburbanization the center of gravity of the club's population has slid inexorably eastward away from NYC with more than 50% of current memberships now residing in Suffolk County. Our total membership has waxed and waned but in recent years hovers around 120 individuals, which seems about average for east coast clubs. In the early years, applicants were vetted to assure that they were serious naturalists.

Sadly, none of the founding members are with us any longer. Our first president and guiding light was Jean Paul Latil, a courtly,

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear members, what a terrible year this has been so far. It seems like Long Island east of Queens is missing out on reliable rainfall more often in recent years. We can only hope this is not a permanent change due to global warming.

The one bright spot was a good Spring oyster season at several newly accessed Poplar spots. Other than that only a few boletes and chicken mushrooms were found.

A visit to David Falkowski's mushroom business was a hit. David explained how his operation works and lead us through his controlled growing area. Those who attended received bags of beautiful yellow and blue oysters and shiitakes. This was a great learning experience and real treat for all of us. If there is enough interest we will arrange a future visit to the farm.

Joel and I will be at the NAMA Foray in North Carolina at the end of this month. Weather conditions have been iffy down there but we will see. Anyway, there will be interesting lectures and so forth that will occupy us if conditions are not great for foraging. (I used to think that these regional forays would be intimidating but they are not. Professionals, amateurs and rank beginners attend. Think about this in case you have the urge to try one soon.)

Don't forget Mushroom Day at Planting Fields. If you can't attend and find some decent specimens, perhaps you can drop them off to a member who will attend. This is the one day that the public can be exposed to fungal biodiversity.

See you along the trails if anything pops up!

EDITOR'S NOTE

Our website is the public face of LIMC, where visitors get a first impression of who we are and what we do. To that end, the history of the founding of our club, which may be unfamiliar to new members, is now available to them, as published here on page one of this edition, and on our website, under the "Who we are" tab on our homepage, for the general public.

We also strive to improve our website for our own members, and some additional changes strive to do just that. Firstly, to enhance our members' knowledge of local species, our webmaster Dale had provided a link to photos of these species as presented on the Mycoportal site. You can access this link by clicking on the "Photos" tab on the LIMC homepage, and then on the "Mycology Collections data Portal". This lands you on the LIMC species list page, and clicking on a particular species leads to a page of herbarium specimens and/or photos. As this remains a work in progress, there are still omissions, but we are endeavoring to supply photographs for any species on our list which have not as yet been depicted.

Lastly, Alan Bessette has recently authored a key to Waxcap mushrooms which he has graciously provided us with, and which is available to the public on our website via the prominent link on our homepage, and can be downloaded, saved, or printed.

MATERIAL FOR THE WINTER, 2015 EDITION SHOULD REACH THE EDITOR BY DECEMBER 1ST.

(Submissions may be forwarded by email in any format or typed.)

(All unsigned articles authored by editor.)

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NEMF 2015 SAMUEL RISTICH FORAY, NEW LONDON, CT

NEMF FACULTY

Rear, left to right: Gary Lincoff, Arlene & Alan Bessette, Rod Tulloss, Doroty Smullen, René Lebeuf, Walt Sturgeon, John Plischke III, Ed Mena. Front: Delmar Small, Susan Hopkins, Rick Van de Poll, Bill Yule, Dianna Smith.

Dry conditions that prevailed on Long Island extended to southern Connecticut, but there were less extreme, and the hilly, pond and stream rich terrain held boggy and moist areas, making for collecting that was more than adequate, leading to a total of over 350 species (including lichens). The array of lectures and workshops presented by the faculty was just as rich, presenting dilemmas over what to attend. The presentations ranged from Alan Bessette's workshop using his Lactarius guide's identification keys, to Rene Lebeuf's lecture on the updated Bolete taxonomy, Rod Tulloss' workshop on Amanita toxins, Walt Sturgeon's presentation on Russula field identification, Roz Lowen on Ascomycetes, and more.

The postprandial evening lectures are often the highlight of the presentations, and these were no exception. Gary Lincoff, schmoozer and stand-up raconteur *par excellance*, both titillated and educated the audience with a talk entitled "Central Park Mushrooms-Myco-diversity in an urban Landscape" which described the NYMS's efforts at year-long collecting, even during the depths of winter. These efforts have disclosed a surprising number of species that can then be encountered, mainly the often ignored crustiform fungi and other twig dwellers. Leave it to the New York crowd to come up with fanciful but descriptive common names such as Giraffe Spots (for *Peniophora albobadia*) and Bacon Strips (for *Punctularia strigozonata .)* One species that we should be on the lookout for is the tiny *Xylaria liquidambaris* which grows on Sweetgum balls. Gary's website, which contains a good deal of this information, is highly recommended: garylincoff.com

Other evening speakers, although less entertaining, were equally informative. Ed Mena, an independent researcher affiliated with the University of Connecticut, for whom LIMC has in the past provided specimens, described his attempts to find bioactive compounds in fungi. Although none of his assays have made it into the human trial stage, he continues to search for antiviral and anti-carcinogenic compounds, for which purpose he collects many of the discards at the forays end. He strongly deplored the sale of various fungal tinctures online for health reasons, which are unproven. John Plischke III, a stellar amateur photographer, identifier and researcher, presented his "Fungi on Fungi" program, displaying the myriad of varied fungal forms that parasitize other fungi.(To download a copy of his Fungi on Fungi key access http://goodmushroom.weebly.com/ and click on the illustration of the key.)

Foragers look forward to the evening award events, when those who came up with unusual, rare or interesting finds receive their 15 seconds of fame. These included the following species: *Amanita rhacopus grp, Lentinus levis, Dendrothele nivosa,* and *Boletus pseudosulphureus,* the latter two, new to the NEMF list, have been found on Long Island. The award for the largest mushroom went to a huge *Bondarzewia berkeleyi* almost three feet in diameter.

Alan Bessette, rt; Bill Yule, left

One odd fact which came to light was a comment by Bill Yule, the foray chairperson, at one of Alan Bessettes' talks at the collecting tables. It seems that while collecting Boletes with Noah Siegal, they were puzzled by a bluing reaction with normally non-bluing Boletes, and finally figured out that the *Lactarius corrigus* latex on their fingers was causing this. He then demonstrated this reaction with the Lactarius and Boletes available, to the amazement and edification of all. We will have to experiment on our own to see if the latex of other species of Lactarius has a similar effect.

To go from identification to consumption, the

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LIMC TOURS BRIDGEHAMPTON MUSHROOM FARM

Although they were nowhere to be found in the wild, LIMC was privileged to view a plenitude via a tour of David Falkowski's mushroom farm, which is also an organic farm known as Open Minded Organics. (Website at http://openmindedorganics.com/)

He opened the farm 12 years ago, on land that was formerly his father's tree nursery, after enrolling in Paul Stamets' course, followed by some back-yard experimentation with Shitake logs. He now supplies high-end restaurants from Bridgehampton to Montauk and his wares are a daily presence at farmer's markets on the East End; his previous week's production amounted to 400 pounds.


photo©Rich Capaldo

David is also an excellent lecturer, presenting the fine details of the exacting process of mushroom cultivation with infectious enthusiasm. Sterile conditions are required for the initial germination and cloning, and closely monitored light, temperature and humidity for successful cultivation. He pointed out that the species he raises, Oyster and Shitake, are primary woody decomposers and *Agaricus bisporus* (button mushrooms) which are secondary decomposers, require a different process.

He now raises two varieties of *Pleurotus:* the Blue Oyster *P. ostreatus columbinus*, (originated by Stamets) and the Golden Oyster *P. ostreatus citrinopileatus,* a native of Asia. The latter has a more fragrant aroma. In fact, the odor of the misty cultivation room (photo rt.) was so rich and heavy as to be intoxicating to fungiphores like us.

Shiitake logs of pressed sawdust are obtained from a commercial provider and raised to maturity (photo below). At certain stages, all cultivated mushrooms are prone to infection, for which reason the air is filtered to reduce all particles from many thousands to about 150 per cubic foot. Despite this, infections occur, the most common of which is *Trichoderma* (Green mold disease) last year causing a significant crop loss. But David is constantly fine-tuning the process to eliminate such events.


photo©Barbara Bobrick

At the end of the tour, he generously produced several boxes of each species for us, and even shaved a bit of White Truffle for us to taste. We have promised to bring him samples of the Spring Oyster, *Ostreatus populinus,* which tastes uniquely of anise, so that he can attempt to clone it and hopefully to raise it to maturity.

NEMF 2015 *(Continued from page 3)*

mycophagy event was superlative, a truly gourmet mushroom experience, rated with the highest praise by all who took partook. The trio that originated and prepared this delicious feast call themselves the "Three Foragers" and their website http://the3foragers.blogspot.com has illustrations of the dishes they prepared at NEMF with some recipes; simply click on the "Wild Mushrooms" tab to view. You can get some idea of the originality and attractiveness of their creations by some of their names: black trumpet soup shooter, morel and ramps biscuit, maitake duchesse potatoes, hen jerky, etc. (see photo on the right). We can only hope that they will repeat this performance at the next NEMF, which


Mycophagy, NEMF 2015

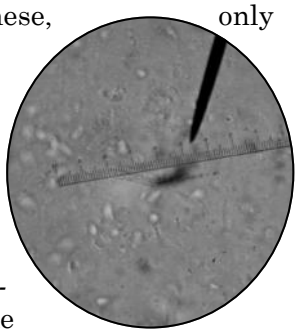
takes place July 28-31 2016 at Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg, MA under the auspices of the venerable Boston Mycological Society. We hope to see more of our members in attendance there.

FINDINGS AFIELD

"'Tis an ill wind that blows no good" reads the proverb, and in this case it was a rain storm on August 11 whose 1" of rain failed to stimulate any gilled mushrooms into above-ground existence. What it did accomplish was to bring many limbs crashing down, causing significant electrical outages on L.I. But it also brought down some branches on our property that held a few welcome curiosities of the fungal variety, which were new to me. Luckily, I was able to identify several, while several others will provide fodder for speculation.

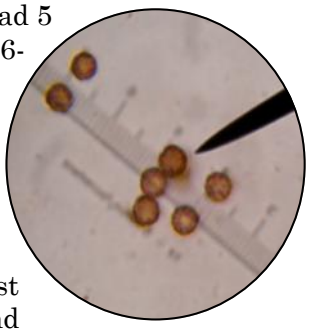
One that I identified is a crustlike form that we usually ignore, but, any port in a storm, right? It is not possible to make a solid determination without a spore, and unlike gilled mushrooms, getting a spore deposit from crusts is like finding gold. I had to keep this specimen moist for an extended period, and then soaked a small bit for hours before sectioning a microscopic sliver. Luckily that worked, producing a view of many spores, (photo below) which was gratifying. Since my knowledge of crusts is meager, I used the Matchmaker Crust section (see article page 7) to enter its macrocharacters , which resulted in more than a dozen choices, which were reduced to three after introducing spore shape and size. Of these, only *Meruliopsis corium* had the proper combination of characteristics, including habitat on hardwood twigs; whitish, minutely wrinkled (meruliod) fruit body, and roughened hyphal walls. Its preferred name is now *Byssomerulius corium,* and it is found worldwide throughout NA, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. However, it appears to be overlooked, judging from its absence from the cumulative NEMF foray list, or perhaps misidentified, due to a superficial resemblance to *Irpex lactea.*

Byssomerulius corium



Another recent find, by Peggy, did not receive any help from a wayward wind, and is attributable only to her sharp eye for detail. It was found on September 5, during a forest amble, when the continuing drought had made us to forsake any thoughts of fungi. Or so I thought. Then Peggy pointed out some tiny white bodies at the side of the trail in Rocky Pt. Preserve, which resembled miniature opened turtle eggs. Looking at them in hand, we noted their resemblance to Earthstars, and collected them. They did in fact turn out to be Geasters, but not one we had previously collected. They were in a dried state, with algal deposits, having apparently overwintered. Their tiny size, as well as the distinctive shape of the spore case mouth, (peristome) which is grooved (sulcate), combined with its short, smooth base (pedicel) and the spore characteristics (globose, with smallish warts-see photo below), were enough to eventually clinch the identification as *Geastrum schmidelii,* commonly called the Dwarf Earthstar. Often found in sand dunes, these were in sandy soil, and most had 5 rays. *Geastrum minimum* has 6-10 rays, and larger, coarser spores. It is widespread in the USA, but also apparently overlooked, perhaps due to its small size, with no NEMF records. However, there are over 100 records in Mycoportal, most dating back to the late 19th and early 20th century, with occurrences also in Europe, Australia and India.

Geastrum schmidelii



Both the above species will be added to the LIMC checklist & specimens donated to the NYBG herbarium.

Ref's: Gastromycestes E.US & Canada. Coker & Couch; Matchmaker; Mycoportal.

FORAY RESULTS SUMMARY

For the first, and hopefully the last time, there are *absolutely no foray results to report*, since each and every scheduled foray from July 11 to the present has had to be cancelled due to drought. Characterized by the National Weather Service as moderate, we had only about 20 inches of rain from Jan 1 to Sept 9, compared with an normal of 32.

As I write this, the sound of falling rain is musical, and we devoutly hope that its promise will soon be fulfilled.

Humans & Pine Barrens ***(Continued from page 1)***

witty man whose Thurberesque cartoons continue to be reprinted to grace the pages of this newsletter. His wife Jacqueline was elected vice-president and also served along with Jean Paul as co-editor of the newsletter until 1993. Marge Morris was elected secretary; Marge was an avid myco-educator who lectured at various schools and inspired many, including Rytas Vilgalys (pers. comm.) head of the Vilgalys Mycological Lab at Duke University. Since Jean Paul, we have had only four more presidents; there is no club rule whereby a sitting president cannot be reelected. (Peggy has been president since 2002.) In fact, there were no established club by-laws until 2000 when our then president Dominick Laudato drew them up and they were approved by the membership.

JEAN PAUL LATIL

Since inception our club has held a scheduled foray most every Saturday morning during the season, which is a long one on Long Island, stretching from the end of April to the end of November, sometimes into December, This late collecting has enabled us to add uncommon species, particularly of *Tricholoma* and *Hygrophorus*, to our ever-growing checklist, which has grown to about 950 species. This effort began in earnest in 2000 with 405 species and every passing year has added from 10 to 50 to the cumulative total. This checklist is publicly accessible on our website limyco.org as well as the Mycoportal site. Another public contact point are occasional lectures on fungi and their role in the environment presented at various venues such as garden clubs, Audubon chapters, etc.

Our membership fees have remained modest and unchanged for our entire history: $10 for an individual and $15 for a family. The membership includes people from all walks of life, from plumbers to physicists, and from many nationalities, with a strong European contingent, reflecting a shared family culture of mushrooming. Not all of our members are active and a significant percentage only rarely, or never, attend a foray but seem content to participate vicariously through the pages of our newsletter, the Long Island Sporeprint. Over the years the publication has grown from a couple of mimeographed pages of text to a quarterly eight paged newsletter available to members in full color on our website . As editor, the author attempts to merge local data, such as previously unrecorded taxa and newly available collection sites, with more general developments in mycology, by gleanings from the technical journals. Identification hints are also published to supplement the instruction supplied in the field to novices.

Like other clubs, we have had problems with access to collecting sites, but over the years have established relationships locally with various parks, arboretums, etc., which approve our activities. (We have learned that it is best to deal with local managers rather than navigate the treacherous headwaters of the bureaucracy.) However, the largest areas of natural habitat, the pine barrens, are under the jurisdiction of the NYS DEC, which prohibited the harvesting of any natural product (other than game animals, which required a license). We did obtain a dispensation based on our research collecting of *Hebeloma* which also entailed the submission of specimens to the NYS Museum. By doing so we tread in the footsteps of Charles Horton Peck, the NYS botanist, who collected widely in Suffolk County, and it is a thrill to come across the very species (sixty-two in all) whose type specimens derive from here (e.g., *Boletus illudens, Cortinarius pulchrifolius).* It was not until 2012, when several natural history organizations prevailed upon the DEC, that they altered their regulations so as to permit the harvesting of forest products such as mushrooms and berries. Ironically, now that we have access, the pine barrens are under serious threat from the Southern Pine Beetle which has recently infested over 1,000 acres in Suffolk County. Measures including felling of infected trees have already begun this winter when the insects are dormant and cannot fly off to infect other trees. We have had a we presence since 2001 (despite the initial misgivings of some older members) and group email notifications to members re foray conditions since that year as well. This has permitted us to cancel forays when adverse conditions prevail thus sparing members a fruitless trip. On the other hand, some may argue that the experience of failure makes success all the sweeter. Our website regularly produces new member applications and makes our presence known to a wider audience. Previously

(Continued on page 7)

MATCHMAKER A FREE MUSHROOM ID PROGRAM NOW AVAILABLE FOR MAC & SMARTPHONE

Observant readers will have noticed how often we have relied upon the use of the Matchmaker ID program to help identify an unfamiliar species. It has been available to Windows users since its inception in 1999, and on the Web as well. Now it is available as a free download for Mac users, which is considered to be in the Beta, or first release state, and does have some limitations, but has functioned smoothly, in my limited experience. It is a synoptic key, meaning that one enters multiple characteristics as search items in a process which differs for different groups of fungi, e.g., gilled mushrooms, boletes, polypores, toothed, puffballs (which includes earthstars), etc. It is also possible to browse similar species in a genus, say Russula, by entering the genus and then selecting a color, for example. This is the best and most inclusive key or app available, and is free, made available as a community service by the Pacific NW Key Council. Although it emphasizes fungi of that area, at least 60% of Eastern NA species are to be found here. Even if your particular species is not included, a search will usually turn up the correct genus.

To download the program, simply enter matchmaker.com for the url, and then follow the instructions. As noted, some features (non-essential) are not operative in the Mac version, and these are listed in the instructions. This is a large file of almost 900 MB, and may take up to an hour without high speed access. The instructions to load the app to iPhone, Kindle and Android are a bit more complicated, but if you have internet access you can simply use the key online without downloading the bulky file. Again, simply go to the Matchmaker site, click on "Put new Matchmaker...on your Smartphone" and then click on "..use the PNW Mushroom Pictorial Key".

There are now over 4000 descriptions of gilled and nongilled mushrooms, with detailed technical descriptive data difficult to obtain elsewhere, along with 5700 photographs, as well as copious references, an extensive glossary and other interesting features. Its usefulness in helping beginners as well as more advanced mushroom aficionados cannot be overstated.

Brief History of LIMC *(Cont'd from page 6)*

our annual public mushroom display at Planting Fields Arboretum, with whom we have a long standing relationship, was our only avenue to attract new members, other than word of mouth. We have also been fortunate in that over the years, Newsday, the leading newspaper on Long Island, has several times brought attention to the club by full page articles of our activities. Further attention was created by Dom Laudato's 2012 publication of his memoirs, "Mushrooming on Long Island: Selected Memoirs of an Obsessed Mycophile", which contains accounts of the club's activities over the years, as well as seasonal check lists, etc. Some members of the public become aware of us only after being referred by the Cornell Agricultural Extension to identify a suspect species consumed by their unfortunate canines (which seem to have a fatal attraction to *Amanita bisporigera)* or their grazing toddler.

Over the years, we have collected for various research projects, among them Benjamin Wolfe's doctoral thesis on the evolutionary development of symbiosis in Amanita; he is now Assistant Professor of Microbiology at Tufts University and our science advisor. We continue to supply collections of *Hebeloma* for Prof. Henry Beker, the Belgian researcher whose European guide is scheduled for publication this year; a North American guide is to follow. Collections from our own herbarium (back to 2001) continue to be accessioned at the NYS museum and the NY Botanical Garden for coordination with our published species checklist on the Mycoportal website, the public face of the Macrofungi Collections Consortium.

When founded our stated mission was "to improve the members' knowledge of mushrooms on Long Island"; it would now be more correct to add "also to contribute to the public awareness of fungal biodiversity and to the science of mycology".

IN THIS ISSUE

"If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough."
Attributed to Albert Einstein

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