
MID HUDSON MYCO-NEWS

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Development May Claim Prized Dutchess County Morel Territory

**St. Andrews Village Project Proposed for 340
acres in Hyde Park**

by David C. Work

Well, the writing was on the wall...According to a front page article in the Poughkeepsie Journal on February 27th, the Gagne Development Co. of Stamford, CT intends to fast-forward proposed plans for an enormous multiuse complex on the wooded property across Route 9 from The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park traditionally used by the MHMA for an annual Morel Walk. Those who attended last year's foray in Hyde Park bore witness to the telltale earthwork indicating the looming possibility of such a development, but I don't imagine any of us envisioned a project of such scale. The plans for the St. Andrews Village, which evidently are yet to receive final approval from town officials, are slated in the next 5 years to include a two hundred room hotel/conference center, 100,000 square feet of office space, 300,000 square feet of retail, restaurant and theatre space, 330 village apartments, 50 single-family homes, 96 townhouses, 82 duplexes and a 10 acre parcel

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DEP Watershed Lands Collaboration Update

**MHMA Collaborates with DEP to Present
Mushroom Program**

By David C. Work

Do you remember in the last newsletter when I musingly expounded that, "I can't help believing that by finding and speaking to the correct person, we may be able to make some progress toward legally turning these lands into a mushroomers paradise..." hoping that if someone out there in our membership had some kind of connections in the DEP that might engender some kind of dialogue leading to greater access and collaboration between our groups? Well, enter long time members Renee Danboise and Phil Eskeli, both of whom happen to work for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Renee and Phil approached me at January's presentation of Taylor Lockwood's Mushroom Identification Trilogy DVD (more on that presentation on page XX) to discuss making an introduction to the appropriate folk in the DEP to propose some kind of a collaborative program/walk as part of their pre-existing Interpretive Hike Series. Besides the potential for gaining greater access to these lands, another potential side benefit of a collaborative program with the DEP would be exposure for the MHMA. The DEP puts out a newsletter, *Watershed Recreation*, which is mailed directly to 80,000 outdoors oriented people in our region.

Well, Renee went right to work and put me in email contact with a couple of folks in Kingston. To make a long story less long, I tossed around some program ideas and the next day they wrote back to say that they really liked the sound of, [Roles of Fungi in the NYC Watershed](#). This walk will focus on ecological contributions of native fungi and how they might impact the NYC watershed, focusing on mycorrhizal relationships and the abilities of various fungi to remove certain toxins from surrounding soils and surface water. The walk will take place on July 16th at the Acorn Hill Unit up near the Ashokan Reservoir, an area where friend and DEP land steward Austin Schneller has observed that there are many mushrooms. The walk will be announced in the spring issue of *Watershed Recreation* so we

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for the Culinary Institute to build an 85,000 square foot continuing education building. The only seeming saving grace is that it appears as though amidst these plans, the developer intends to keep 230 acres of the property as "green space." Whether or not any of that space will retain any of its present vegetation, however, remains to be seen.

Not that I want to be a complainer, and not that there is ever really a convenient time for such axes to fall, but what do these people have against us?! It seems as though just when interest in mushrooms in our area is rising dramatically, something like this comes along. Attendance was heavier than it had been in quite some years on last year's Hyde Park walk, with many excited fresh members quivering with anticipation at learning more about and finding morels for the first time. Countless MHMA members have found their first morels magically waiting for them at the soon to be decimated site in Hyde Park. It will be the passing of an era.

Unfortunately, this is not the only prime mushroom area to stare down the sights of the developer's carbine in the past few years. One of my favorite areas in the Kingston area to forage for everything from Maitake, to Chanterelles, Chicken Mushroom, Lobster Mushrooms Hedgehogs and many other delicious species, and an area where I have brought many members of the club numerous times suddenly sprouted test holes all over the 400 acre expanse. A phone call to the owners revealed potential plans for a retirement community. I also lost a favorite area for Morels and Fiddleheads a few years ago to logging operations....

I suppose, of course that I am part of the problem, a transplant from elsewhere who moved into the area 6 years ago. As the populations increase, this scenario will continue to appear and ever since 9/11 the process has accelerated considerably. Maybe concerned landowners could consider putting together some sort of Land Trusts?

In any case, the situation places us, as a group, in a position to where MHMA members really need to actively volunteer new areas where the group can take walks. Whether that is property actually owned by ourselves or by friends or publicly owned lands, new places are needed! If you are a member who lives some distance from where our walks have been in recent years, this is your opportunity to participate in landing some walks closer to your area. Also, the more we move around to different areas, the more information we will be able to gather regarding species distribution and ecosystems in our region. Let's try to make it happen! ❖

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may see quite a number of new faces. I am quite excited about this whole development.

Some of you may be wondering about how participation in this walk will work out for people who don't hold DEP access permits already. Although not all of the details of our group access have been sorted out yet, it has been indicated that with Renee and Phil present as DEP officers, access permit applications can be processed on the spot and permits issued immediately rather than waiting weeks or months as it sometimes does through the mail. More details on the issue will become available in the following weeks, so keep your ears open.

Now, my feeling has always been that if the MHMA could successfully offer our services to the DEP as an educational body that hopefully sometime someday we might be able to gain greater access to the DEP lands as a club. Now, as a beginning has been made, it is more important than ever for us to respect the DEP's regulations so as not to endanger any further developments.

Many kudos and thanks to Renee and Phil for stepping up to the plate to assist in this exciting new beginning for our club! ❖

The Down and Dirty Story of Medicinal Mushrooms

George J. Dagis MSN FNP

Many people tramp our woods yearly in search of any number of our local wild mushroom species. On some spring days in very late April and early to mid May, one will spy many a suspicious looking character lurking in some very, out of the way woods, supposedly just out "for a walk". Yeah, tell me about it ! If one were to observe one of these characters more closely, they may be forced to admit that they resemble themselves in many ways. They are just looking for that special spot that they wouldn't give knowledge of for no reason imaginable to mere mortals. If you ask them they will manage a strange sardonic smile. You move on quickly for your safety. Morel hunters are dangerous people!

After just a taste of this fever that hits so many with so much force it's only a matter of time before most people begin to desire even MORE excitement. They really want to "own" the fungal kingdom. What about all those very strange looking things that appear so other worldly? When they question one of the more knowledgeable people in the club they sometimes receive the answer that they are not poisonous but, at the same time, they are not edible. What's THAT supposed to mean? To make matters even MORE confusing; the neophyte sees some of the harvesters yanking these things off the tree stumps and putting them into their bags. "What's going on?" is a very understandable question for the non -initiated. The fact is that

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many of these mushrooms aren't for the benefit of the palate but are intended to be utilized to work miracles for a person's health. These are immune system builders and the woods are full of them even here in southern New York State. Right under our feet, right here in the Mid Hudson Valley region. !

Now before we go on and rave about all the very substantial benefit these ugly monstrosities avail us of; let's be frank. They are UGLY. Not only that but they are almost always of a consistency that is equally



Trametes versicolor or Turkey Tail, has been traditionally used as a powerful medicinal for millennia.

appalling. They appear to be invariably indestructible. Any attempt to prepare them for consumption in the usual manner (could one stand the taste) will meet with certain dismal results. No, one first imagines these are for kicking and flinging and . . . Wait a minute! What you are destroying may actually save your life! It's not just an oriental quirk that makes some of these things so very sought after by those of Asian lineage. As a matter of fact; these very homely things are now being used for cancer therapy in as prestigious an institution as Sloan Kettering Hospital! These are NOT one of the many bogus immune boosters you see in many Health Food stores. Some of these stores still continue to sell formulations of Echinacea which has been demonstrated to have no affected whatsoever on a human's immune system. It's no wonder why a consumer, and, yes, a mushroom lover, would shy away from medicinal mushrooms as just another of those "cure-alls" we read and hear about all the time. Another quack remedy just like all of those that even otherwise reputable stores sell.

People are justifiably tired of spending their hard earned money (and even endangering their health) on just another gimmick. Just more hearsay! But hold on; there's much more to THIS story than one would imagine. These mushrooms haven't been discovered just recently (3000 years of detailed documentation existent on them). Their benefits haven't been trumpeted by someone hawking them. These have been used as medications for thousands of years with demonstrable, efficacious results. Why, one might ask, hasn't our Western branch of medicine caught on? I hate to be the bearer of bad news but there is very little profit to be made from these plants so what they can do for our health is immaterial to any that might provide them to us. A way of producing the plants commercially is impossible at this time, since they can't be grown artificially. The cost of supplying

them in the quantities that would be needed is grossly prohibitive. Those in the "know" are one step ahead of other people in searching for a potion that will really help them realize a robust immune system. Those who have stumbled upon this knowledge; usually people who have a medical background and who have come to be amateur mycologists for unrelated reasons, are among the first to spread the news. Add the internet to the mix of medicine man (or woman) turned mushroom lover and you will soon have a person eager to shout the benefit of some of these mushrooms from the highest roof or mountaintop. It's exciting, and the reason is simply because there is ample evidence that we "in the know" will be able to provide for ourselves and our loved ones, not only tasty treats for the table but also powerful medications that may even save their lives should the avian flu situation get out of hand. Yes; there IS hope for those who learn which mushrooms harbor these life sustaining chemicals.

For those who cannot come with us on one of our many walks; I would suggest that an Internet search be done using the words "medicinal" and "mushroom". "Reishi" may be another good key word, as is "Ganoderma". Try to avoid any of the readings on sites that are selling the products. In my studies of the subject, I have come upon a number of places which offer some of these mushrooms in various mixtures that haven't been studied extensively enough to warrant my approval. After the lengthy reviews I have done on the thousands of sites with applicable information; I cannot say that anyone would be seriously led astray. Most of these mushrooms do not have poisonous relatives and the usual "worst case scenario" from eating a relative of the intended is a little belly ache. I STILL advise those interested, to forage with someone who knows the mushrooms first hand that they are safe and are of a variety that is truly health enhancing. We look forward to seeing every one of you, our friends, in the bountiful woods this year. Happy,

Myco Media in Review

Morels by Dr. Michael Kuo, University of Michigan Press, 2005, ISBN 0-472-03036-1

By David Work

Some of you, in your digital meanderings, looking for mushroom information on the web, may have run across a most excellent website, www.mushroomexpert.com. It is a well-organized and accessible gold mine of fully researched mushroom information, keys, articles, advice and photography. A couple of weeks ago I had the opportunity to meet the website's creator, Dr. Michael Kuo, at a lecture on Morels hosted by the New York Mycological Society at the American Museum of Natural History. I must admit that I had "met" Michael a couple of weeks earlier when he contacted me to inquire about using one of my photos in his upcoming book, *100 Edible Mushrooms*, but this was my first opportunity to meet him in person. Kuo is an unassuming guy and somewhat apologetic for what he considers to be the assuming and arrogant name of his website, which he never thought would take off like it did. He also hastens to

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Cooking Program Rescheduled for Summer

Due to David Work's sudden admission to the hospital with lung troubles in January and his subsequent protracted recovery, the Mushroom Cookery program which was scheduled for our February meeting had to be postponed. On further consideration, it almost makes more sense to schedule a cooking program at a time of year when we have plenty of mushrooms to cook anyway. Think Chicken Mushroom Bacon, Mushroom Pate, Hot and Sour soup with pickled mushrooms and ginger, Pork Loin stuffed with Black Trumpets with Truffle Oil, stuff like that. Stay tuned for a summer reschedule date in future communications! Volunteer cooks also welcome to share recipes or participate! Call David. ❖

MHMA Event & Regional Calendar

◇ **Wednesday, April 19th, 7pm**, Marbletown Community Center in Stone Ridge, NY -- -- Learn about photographing mushrooms from your fellow club members with veteran professional photographer and author, Frank Spinelli and avid mushroom photographer, David Work. David and Frank will cover some general photographic principles pertaining to both film and digital photo formats, with examples and suggestions on choosing equipment, technique and composition. They will share personal preferences with capturing images in the field as well as techniques for photo editing. This will also be an opportunity to see some of Frank and David's latest work, including Frank's new book and David's 2005 NAMA award winners.

Saturday, May 6th, 9am -- Morel Walk -- Details TBA-- Open to Current Members Only

Saturday, May 13th, 9am -- Morel Walk --Details TBA-- Open to Current Members Only

Saturday, June 10th, 9am, at the Hurley Rail Trail -- Tree Identification for Mushroomers. A skill often overlooked, recognizing trees is frequently necessary for the proper identification of various fungi. This walk will give folks a chance to learn the attributes of a variety of our native trees. Come along! We'll find mushrooms along the way.

Saturday, July 29th, 9am, Hemlock Ridge Walk

Saturday, August 5th, 9am, Summer ARC Walk, Agricultural Research Center, Acra, NY--John Boyle, leader. Always a good source of interesting finds, John takes us through an expanse of private property across the street from the research center. Bring a bag lunch as we will walk until around noon then eat lunch and identify species at the ARC building for a while after that.

Thurs-Sun August 17th-20th, NAMA Foray 2006 VentureScape Wilderness Retreat William Schweitzer Provincial Park Alberta, Canada.

Saturday August 12th, 10am, Vernooykill Hike & Splash Foray, at the Vernooykill State Forest, Palentown, NY. This location always has something to offer! With a moist low lying area with several streams and a stiff 2 mile hike to magnificent falls (and swimming holes), this walk takes us through several types of terrain and promises cool relief to weary hikers. Also a spectacular location for photography. Access to falls is also available from above to those with 4 wheel drive vehicles.

Thurs-Sun August 24th-27th--The 2006 Clark Rogerson Foray, sponsored by the Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association (COMA) at the Cave Hill Resort in Moodus, CT. Take a bunch of great mycologists, mix in some high end chefs, 300 (on average) varieties of mushrooms and a beautiful location and you get a really great regional event! If you plan to attend this event, sign up early as housing is limited to around 75 people. Day-participation is not limited. More info available soon at the COMA Website.

Fri-Mon, September 1-4, 12th Annual Samuel Ristich Foray, St. Anthony's Hermitage, Lac Bouchette, Canada-- in the unique boreal forest 250 miles north of Montreal. More info at the CMM website

Sunday, September 17th, A Mushroom Day This will be an all-day affair with multiple walks/leaders with some tables for IDs, a fire pit available for grilling beast or tofu, BYO beverages and BYO lawn chairs and canopy or whatever for resting. The brainchild of John Boyle, this walk's location is undetermined as of yet but will be somewhere up in his familiar environs of Greene County

Saturday, September 23rd, Black Rock Forest Foray, David and Barbara Plume, Leaders. Our southernmost walk location, with the exception of last year, Black Rock Forest has been heavenly in past years with the number and variety of mushrooms which thrive here.

Saturday, September 30, 9am, Annual Locust Grove Foray at the Morse Estate in Poughkeepsie, NY

Saturday, October 7th, 9am (date change), Annual Educational Foray at Minnewaska State Park

Dates and times are subject to change. As we get closer to the spring, a full schedule with directions will be sent out to the full membership.

Ramblings on *Megacollybia* and its Associates

by John Boyle

Megacollybia platyphylla [(Persoon) Kotlaba & Pouzar 1972] is the first medium to large mushroom, with gills, that fruits in our area each Spring. I call it The Broad Gill, which describes it quite well and comes from its species name [platy = wide and phylla = gills]. Others prefer the more commonly used “Platterful Mushroom”, which comes from an alliterative playing with its species name along with some hinting as to its edibility and size of fruitings, plus a little 6th grade humor. For me this old friend is a sign of the seasons. Morel fruitings are ending, Chanterelle season is starting, and soon many other varieties will again be around. Although it can be quite noticeable, and not that hard to identify for experienced mushroomers, I find that many do not know the Broad Gill.

I learned this mushroom as *Tricholomopsis platyphylla*; and most of your books will probably have it in this genus, since it spent quite a while there. Later in this Rambling I’ll talk about its travels and brief stops as a *Oudemansiella* and even a *Clitocybula*. First, before confusing things with some of these technical details, I’ll explain how we easily identify the Broad Gill.

The Broad Gill is always found on or near wood [usually hardwood stumps or logs]. It has to be, since it is lignicolus, which means it grows on or in wood. It is a medium to large mushroom with grayish to gray-brown or darker caps, which are normally streaked with dark fibrils, especially near their centers. Mature caps are convex to flat and usually have a broad umbo [rounded hump at their centers] It has attached gills, which are usually notched [sinuate¹] or broadly attached [adnate¹]. These white to grayish gills are very wide [measuring from bottom toward cap top]; and they are well spaced. On older specimens, caps will occasionally turn upwards displaying these broad gills, which will often have ragged [eroded²] gill edges. The stalk is stout and more or less central; and often has white “strings” [rhizomorphs] at its base. There is no volva nor annulus; and it has a white spore print³.

Pluteus cervinus, the deer mushroom, and other *Pluteus* species are often mistaken for *Megacollybia platyphylla* by the unwary or inexperienced, since they both fruit on wood and have the same general appearance. It is fairly easy to avoid making this mistake. Look at the gill attachment. The gills of *Pluteus* species are not attached to the stalk and are said to be “free¹”. [if you’re not sure what this looks like, buy a Portobello, or a button mushroom, and look at its gill attachment.] *M. platyphylla* may appear to have free gills, if you are not familiar with notched gills. Look closely at the area between the gill and the stalk [use a hand lens, if you have “old-eyes” like mine]. On mushrooms with notched gills, there will be a small section of gill attached to the stalk at the bottom of this notch. Also, *Pluteus* species have pink spores and *Megacollybia* has white spores.

Tricholoma species can be mistaken for the Broad Gill. Trichs are known for having notched gills; and there are species colored somewhat the same and having stout stalks.

However, *Tricholoma* are terrestrial mushrooms; which means they grow on the ground and do not grow on wood. The Broad Gill is always found associated with wood.

Remember, it is lignicolus, which means it “grows on or in wood”. It is when this wood is buried that there is a chance for confusion. *Tricholoma* species do not have ragged [eroded] gill edges and white rhizomorphs [strings or cords connecting stalk base to ground]. Sometimes these rhizomorphs are hard to find, or absent, on Broad Gills, even after digging under the stalk base. *Tricholoma* can also be separated from *Megacollybia* microscopically. Broad Gills have many “conspicuous” and “voluminous” balloon-shaped cells [cheilocystidia] on their gill edges; *Tricholoma* species do not.

There are stout, terrestrial species of *Collybia* [or what used to be *Collybia*⁴] that can also be mistaken for *Megacollybia*. These species do not have eroded gill edges and white rhizomorphs. Some *Entoloma* species somewhat resemble the Broad Gill and can be mistaken for it, if one is unaware. *Entoloma* are mostly terrestrial and do not have all the characteristics of *Megacollybia*. They are easily separated by their pinkish spore prints. Microscopically these spores are angular shaped [no other genera or species mentioned in this rambling have angular-shaped spores]. Since many mushroom hunters do not use microscopes for identifying, and since some of these differences are not that easy for all to see, most gatherers make sure their Broad Gills are growing on, or very near, wood.

The Broad gill has been moved into a variety of genera before finding its current home in *Megacollybia*. It started as an *Agaricus* in the late 1700’s [but who didn’t]. After trying on a few different species names, it moved into *Collybia* in the late 1800’s. Then in 1911 it was a *Tricholoma*⁵ for a little while. Here are a few of it’s more modern genera with some of my ramblings:

Tricholomopsis - [*Tricholomopsis platyphylla* (Persoon) Singer 1939] For a long time the Broad Gill was in *Tricholomopsis*, although it never really looked like the others. I recognize *Tricholomopsis* species by their often yellow flesh and gills and the colorful contrast between the cap color and its often black to red or purplish-red scales. These characters are definitely not found on Broad Gills. What these species all have in common are their habit of growing on or in close association with wood [usually Broad Gills with hardwoods and the others with conifers]; and large and noticeable cells [cheilocystidia] on their gill edges. When reading descriptions for the Genus *Tricholomopsis*, from this time, the characters for the Broad gill seem to stand out, like exceptions, which only apply to “*platyphylla*”.

*Clitocybula*⁶ - [*Clitocybula platyphylla* (Persoon) Malençon & Bertault 1975] This was a short [not popular] attempt to place the Broad Gill with other mushrooms with the same lignicolus growth habit and having some similar microscopic characters. Indeed there is a *Clitocybula* which looks quite a bit like our Broad Gill - except that it’s a much smaller version. This is *Clitocybula lacerata*, which was once Indeed there is a *Clitocybula* which looks quite a bit like our Broad Gill - except that it’s a much smaller version. named *Collybia platyphylla* ssp. *lacerata*. They only really look-a-like at a quick glance, especially from the top of their caps, which share similar coloration and are often streaked with dark fibers. But one look at their stalks is all

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it takes to tell which is which. *Clitocybula* all have small diametered stalks; and *C. lacerata* has been known to have a stalk as thick as 5 mm or 3/16 of an inch. The Broad Gill has a thick stalk. Its smallest diameter is given as twice this, 1 cm or 3/8 inch; and it's known to get up to 3/4 inch, or even an inch, in diameter. Another difference between *Clitocybula* and the Broad Gill was that all "other" *Clitocybula* have amyloid⁷ spores, while the Broad Gill's spores are inamyloid. Spores which are amyloid react by turning blue or blue-black when iodine [or an iodine solution such as Melzer's or Lugol's] is applied to them.

Oudemansiella - [Oudemansiella platyphylla (Persoon) M.M. Moser 1983]

For a time The Broad Gill was in *Oudemansiella* along with *Oudemansiella radicata*, the "rooted *Collybia*" or "beech roter", which has also been moved into its own Genus. It is now *Xerula*⁸; and "*radicata*" is now four species with *X. furfuracea* being the most common. The Rooted *Collybia* has always been fairly easy to identify, unless one breaks off its long rooting stalk when gathering it. This long, deep-rooting stalk, and it's cap with rubbery skin [or cuticle] are two of its main identifying characters. *Collybia radicata*, as it was known at the time, was among the favorite edible mushrooms I helped an older Italian gather for a Hunting Lodge's snacks back in the '70's. Although the Broad Gill and *Xerula* do look a little alike, they are easily separated by *Xerula*'s rubbery textured caps. This is caused by a gelatinous layer, which is under the cap skin [cuticle or pileipellis] in *Xerula*. *Megacollybia* does not have this layer; and does not have rubbery caps. One of the reasons they were together in *Oudemansiella* is that, under a microscope, both have many, large and noticeable cells [cheilocystidia] on their gill edges.

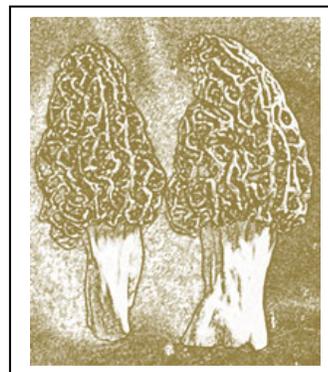
As I hinted earlier, some of us eat the Broad Gill. May I suggest that if you have needed my comments on gill attachment or taking spore prints, you might want to wait a season before trusting your own ID here. Let someone who has more experience, and is familiar with the Broad Gill, verify your ID. Some of its look-a-likes can be poisonous; and some *Entoloma* are quite poisonous. Although not that difficult to identify, *Megacollybia platyphylla* is not a beginner's mushroom, especially if one gathers specimens not obviously growing on wood. AND - even correctly identified, it has caused poisonings⁹! For anyone eating this mushroom, I recommend trying only a small, well cooked portion, at first, to make sure there are no problems. I do this whenever I gather them from a new area, and even for their first fruitings each year.

Notes:

1. There are good diagrams, showing different types of gill attachment, in some of our better field guides. Check David Arora's *Mushrooms Demystified* or Gary Lincoff's *Audubon Field Guide To North American Mushrooms*.
2. There are many terms for describing the gill edges [or bottom-most side of a gill]. They can be "smooth", without any breaks or tears. Those that are "eroded" look very ragged and torn; and these tears do not have any pattern. Gills sometimes are finely toothed, like the teeth on a saw, and are called "saw-toothed" [or serrate]. Others are broken into a regular pattern and can be "scalloped", or if finer "crisped". Most field guides do not give

diagrams for types of gill edges. If you're interested check out *How To Identify Mushrooms To Genus I* by David L.argent

3. To obtain a spore print cut the mature cap from the stalk and place it, top side up, on a sheet of white paper, or a paper plate, or a piece of glass. [Colored paper only sounds like a good idea; although many use paper with black and white stripes.] Cover this with a bowl to keep it from drying out; and wait for the spores to drop from the gills. This can take anytime from a few hours to most of a day.
4. *Collybia* was once a large genus with many species. It now retains only a handful of small mushrooms which grow from sclerotia and/or on rotting mushrooms. The rest of the species have been placed in *Gymnopus* [if white-spored] or *Rhodocollybia* [if pinkish spored]; or at least that's the general idea. For more information of this and a good key to genera and species go to: <http://www.nybg.org/bsci/res/col/colintro.html>
5. *Tricholoma tenuiceps* ... it was not *Tricholoma platyphyllum* [*platyphylla* would be incorrect "Latin", since it has to agree in gender with *Tricholoma*]. *T. platyphyllum* is the name of another, different, mushroom; and should not be confused [because of its name] with the Broad Gill.
6. For more information and a key to *Clitocybula* species see the 1973 monograph in *Mycologia* [vol. 65 pages 1101-1116] by Howard E. Bigelow.
7. To do this test you will need Iodine [tinctures sold at any drug store], and a spore print taken on glass. [paper will test amyloid with iodine] After you get a thick spore print - if it's not thick, scrape it together with a razor - place a drop of iodine on the glass near the print. Then allow it to run into the spores while you watch for the color change. If they turn Blue, Blue-black, or grayish violet they're amyloid; if they don't, or even if they turn other colors, then they are inamyloid. Spores that turn red or reddish-brown are also called dextrinoid. White paper, or a white surface under the glass, makes it easier to observe this color change.
8. There is a good a key to *Xerula* in *Mushrooms of Northeastern North America* by Alan & Arlene Bessette and David Fischer. For more information check the 1987 article in *Mycotaxon* [vol. 30 pages 357-405] by Scott Redhead, J. Ginns, and R.A. Shoemaker.
9. For two reports of documented poisonings from Broad gills see *Mycologia* [vol. 72 pages 433-435] and *Mycologia* [vol. 76 pages 350-351]. © John Boyle

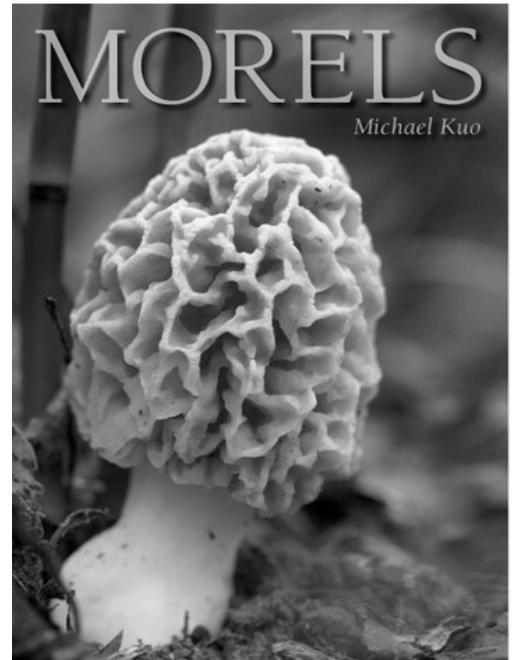


qualify his "Dr." title with the explanation that he is not a scientist at all, but rather an "English Teacher." Dr. Kuo, however, is lacking neither in knowledge, humor, questions, answers or insight.

In his recent offering, *Morels*, Kuo, with the aid of friend and talented photographer Mark Davis and others, has delivered a visually satisfying book filled with narrative which is at once personal, informative, humorous, contemplative, intelligent and compelling. From his cold and moist description of finding his first morels in the muddy and ridiculous environs of Pigdog Gulch, to his musings on the ways that people think about mushrooms, Michael lends a very human voice to a subject which can sometimes lack imagination and insight.

This book is not, of course, all about beautiful writing. It contains, like Kuo's website, some very valuable and unique descriptive, analytical and historical material. He goes into the history of the taxonomy of morels and their relatives. He talks at length about toxicity, economics, culture and the sheer insanity surrounding this favorite of all mushrooms. Perhaps the most intriguing portion of the book for me is his presentation of the project he is working on with mycologist, Carol Carter, on mapping the genetic species of morels in North America, of which they have determined, according to DNA testing, there are eleven (not including multiple species of Half-Free Morels)!

In any case, *Morels* is a marvelous read which is bound to be a valuable resident on my mushroom bookshelf for years to come! ❖



Membership dues to increase May 1st

After a survey of many mushroom clubs near and far, it has become clear that the MHMA's \$10 membership dues are a bit out of sync with our compatriots elsewhere. Also, in order to afford producing the newsletter four times a year, the club needs to raise revenue a little bit. So, with the deliberation of the Executive Committee, it has been decided to raise membership dues to \$15 beginning May 1st. To avoid paying the increased dues for 2006 and to guarantee your attendance for the members-only Morels Walks, just make sure to renew before May 1st.

MID HUDSON MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP / RELEASE FORM

Dues (Please circle one) Family: \$15 Individual: \$10 Full time student: \$5

***beginning May 1st, 2006 MHMA annual membership dues will increase to \$20 for a Family, \$15 for individuals and \$10 for Students. To avoid paying higher dues for this year, renew before May 1st!**

Name(s) _____

Address _____

e-mail (important!) _____ Phone _____

RELEASE

I (We) realize that when engaged in wild mushroom activities, that serious physical injury and personal property damage may accidentally occur. I (We) further realize that there is always the possibility of having an allergic reaction to or being poisoned by the eating of wild mushrooms and that these adverse reactions to eating wild mushrooms range from mild indigestion to fatal illness. Knowing the risks, I (we) agree to assume the risks, and agree to release, hold harmless and to indemnify the Mid-Hudson Mycological Association, and any officer or member thereof, from any and all legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred by myself or my family during or as a result of any mushroom identification, field trip, excursion, meeting or dining, sponsored by the club.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please send your completed application, signed and dated, with your check to "MHMA" to:
Cynthia Fisher, MHMA Treasurer, 203 Lily Lake Road, Highland, NY 12528

As a member of MHMA you are entitled to Discounted Membership with the North American Mycological Association. If you are interested in joining or renewing NAMA membership through MHMA, please include an additional check for \$32 per person made out to "NAMA" and include it in the envelope with this form and we will forward your NAMA renewal.



Urnula craterium commonly known as Devil's Urn is sometimes so black that it is nearly impossible to see under the overgrown canopy of an ancient abandoned apple orchard in the spring when searching for morels!
Photo by D. Work

Mushroom of the Moment

Urnula craterium – Devil's Urn

Often one of the first fungi found in the spring in our region, Devil's Urn is one of those precursor mushrooms to look for right before the Verpas and Morels begin to pop. It grows from March to June in clusters on decaying wood or buried wood. Shaped initially like an elongated egg, it opens up as it matures from a star-shaped slit at the top. This process usually leaves a scalloped edge on the margin of the cup which deteriorates a bit before the rest of the fruiting body does. The cup itself is quite tough and rubbery and is attached to the wood at the base with a dense mat of black fibers.

Like many members of the Pezizales, it is not known whether Devil's Urn is edible, but it is unlikely with its appearance that you would want to try it! It is perhaps best appreciated as a harbinger of Spring. ❖

**Hey! It's the
MID HUDSON MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MYCO-NEWSLETTER!**

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