



Symbiosis[©]

The newsletter of the Prairie States Mushroom Club

Volume 25:1

April/May 2008

<http://www.geocities.com/iowamushroom>



Lentinus strigosus early, middle, late growth states. Photos: Glen Schwartz

The Magic Stump

by Glen Schwartz

In January 2006, I was skiing with my friend Roger Heidt when he asked if I might be interested in joining a mushroom club. I have always been the outdoor type, so I was definitely interested. In September 2005, I had been visiting my relatives in Minnesota and had found 40 to 50 different mushrooms in the woods. We had several mushroom books, but we could only identify a few of the specimens we found. I thought about all those unidentified mushrooms when Roger invited me join his club, the Prairie States Mushroom Club for which he serves as treasurer.

A few months later, I went on an early spring foray with the club. Even though there were not very many mushrooms to be found, I liked the people I met that day and decided to join the club. Later that spring, after several club outings, I had a much better idea of how to identify mushrooms by looking online. The other club members had better books than I did, but I wanted to learn more before I bought more books.

About this time, I noticed a beautiful, fuzzy, purple mushroom growing on the stump in my backyard. The Norway maple tree had busted apart during a thunderstorm a few years before, and I had cut it off at ground level to make it easier to mow the lawn. The fuzzy mushroom proved difficult to identify, so I picked a few and took them with me on the next club foray. I expected the club “experts” to take one look and tell me the name of this thing. I was surprised when they told me they had never seen anything like it.

It took a few weeks, but finally Roger, Dean Abel, and Damian Pieper identified the beautiful, fuzzy, purple mushroom as *Panus rudis*. Roger dried a few samples and sent them to Rosanne Healy and Dr. Lois Tiffany, of Iowa State University, for positive identification. Rosanne confirmed the identification, but informed us that the name is now *Lentinus strigosus*.

I kept watching the *Lentinus strigosus* for the next few months and they were fascinating. If we had several sunny days in a row, they would turn brown and become brittle. A few cloudy, rainy days later, the purple color would return and they would start to grow again. In late June, they suddenly turned yellow and dissolved in just a day or two. I thought all the fun was gone, but it was just getting started.

I had already observed other mushrooms around the stump. There was a patch of *Coprinus*

(cont. on pg. 5)

In this issue:

The Magic Stump	Cover
Presidents Message	Pg. 2
Pot Hunter’s Corner	Pg. 3
Early Spring Mushroom Photos	Pg. 4
Book Review	Pg. 4
Receipe Corner	Pg. 6
Club Information	Pg. 7
Spring Foray Schedule	Pg. 8

President's Message

Everyone I've talked to this winter has agreed on one thing: All are ready for Spring. Hopefully we'll be enjoying the first signs of Spring as you read this newsletter. Actually, I've been thinking about spring all winter long. Mushrooms have been in the forefront of my thoughts during this winter more than past ones because of all the PSMC activities I've been working on with the Board. Discussing the 2008 foray schedule and seeing Jim Frinks' beautiful photos of early spring mushrooms made me more excited than ever about Spring's approach. Today after ice skating on the Mississippi back waters, my friends and I sat outside in the sun at a bar overlooking the Mississippi in Princeton, Iowa. Ducks and eagles were starting their courting rituals. Canadian geese were coming up from the south honking gregariously and the first flock of pelicans soared in on the thermal currents made by the warm sun. I wondered if those pelicans were surprised to find so much ice where they wanted to go with eagles still hanging around. They didn't know about our winter.

It's been a long cold winter filled with struggles that never should have occurred, but they did. The result is that PSMC is emerging stronger, more vibrant and responsive to members' wishes than it has been in years. It's my sincerest hope that cold hard feelings can thaw even as the cold hard winter is finally thawing.

I'm especially proud of the work that my fellow board members have done to ensure that PSMC makes a positive step forward. Feel free to contact us and let us know what you think of this newsletter, what you'd like to see in it, and how you'd like PSMC to serve you in the future.

Here's our contact info.:

Myself: davelayton@q.com

Glen Schwartz, Vice President: gaschwar@rockwellcollins.com

Dean Abel, Secretary: dean-abel@uiowa.edu

Roger Heidt, Treasurer: psmc@fmtcs.com

Rosanne Healy, At-large Board member: rosanne.healy@gmail.com

Finally, I invite you to look at the new PSMC website at <http://www.geocities.com/iowamushroom/>. Though we still have lots of content to add, you'll see that we are making it much more interesting and responsive to your needs. Please give us input on what you'd like to see on the website also.

I hope to see you all in the woods soon.

Sincerely,

Dave Layton
Prairie States Mushroom Club President

Symbiosis Editor & Foray Chair Positions Available

Prairie States Mushroom Club has two leadership positions available Newsletter Editor and Foray Committee Chairman. These are great opportunities for dynamic individuals who want to be involved in shaping PSMC's exciting future. Holders of these positions also serve on the PSMC Board. To learn more, contact Dave Layton 563-242-0880, Email: davelayton@q.com

Contributions to PSMC & Symbiosis Requested

We are accepting submissions of articles, mushroom photos, recipes, and humor. To learn more or submit to "Symbiosis," contact Dave Layton 563-242-0880, Email: davelayton@q.com



The Earliest Mushrooms

Okay, I admit it. I can't wait for the morels to arrive, and I don't. I like to celebrate the first green arrivals of Spring by eating some of them. Weeks before morels pop up, I love to have steamed spring greens (baby nettles, fiddle heads etc.) with brown inky caps (*Coprinus micaceus*) and possibly wild Enotake (*Flammulina velutipes*) or velvet stems.

People don't realize how good brown inky caps can be. They grow ubiquitously all season long and for most of the summer they're pretty bland, and decompose quickly. With so many other delicious species available, they are the last mushroom I'd want to eat. But when they first arrive in April they have a delicate fresh flavor that goes just right with wild greens. Plus they're easy to harvest then because there aren't yet older melting caps to mess up the younger caps.

Velvet stems also have a lackluster reputation, with their unappetizing slimy skin that needs to be painstakingly peeled before eating. These mushrooms have little in common with the delicious Asian Enotake - or do they? I've found velvet stems growing even earlier than brown inkys. In fact, I've found velvet stems nearly every month of the year, including winter months if there are a couple weeks of thaw. Sometimes, beneath older slimy frost-bitten caps can be found clumps of tiny yellow mushrooms emerging that are very much like

store bought Enotake but stronger flavored. While other folks may be relaying reports of morel sightings in Arkansas, I'm often pleased to think that I've already eaten other kinds of mushrooms.

Other edible mushrooms that could possibly be found in early spring are oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) and rarely, fawn mushrooms (*Pluteus cervinus*). Usually the first big season of oyster mushrooms begins around the end of morel season, but like velvet stems, oysters can occasionally be found during winter and early spring thaws. Keep your eyes open. You might get an early surprise! *Morchella semilibera* (half free morel) often arrives before other morels. Half free morel is a true morel with a morel flavor.



Verpa bohemica Cap wrinkled more brainlike than pitted when young attached to stalk only at top. Stalk more brittle pithy or cottony inside. Flavor indistinct.

Image found at www.treasurekeepers.org.yu/Library/V/Verpa_bo.

There are other inedible and poisonous mushrooms that are early harbingers of spring. *Verpa bohemica* and *Verpa conica* were previously listed as edible but now are reported to contain unwholesome elements. I've eaten them with little more than blah reaction. Other mushrooms such as scarlet cups, Devil's urns and poisonous *Gyromitras* are fun to find and reminders of more fun to come.

There's another benefit for looking for those earlier mushrooms too. If you're out in the woods plenty early, chances are that I'll be one of the first ones to bring home a few little gray Morels. Though they won't likely make much of a meal. The bragging rights for being a first Morel spotter make it all worth it. 🍄



Photo by Jim Frink

Morchella semilibera cap pitted, half attached to stalk. Stalk hollow more flexible flavor of morel

Early Spring Mushroom Photos

by Jim Frink



Corpinus micaceus



Flammulina velutipes



Gyromitra fastigiata (Brunnea)



Morchella semilibera



Pleurotus ostreatus



Sarcoscypha dudleyi

Book Review

Mushrooms and Other Fungi of the Midcontinental United States,
Second Edition (Huffman, Tiffany, Knaphus, Healy)

by Tom Keho

I enjoyed more pictures and better keys. What more could one person ask for? Having no idea what Iowa truffles would look like or might look like, I was pleased to see all the time and work Rosanne has done with the truffles. Dave received the book from the publisher just before the last meeting in Ames. He placed the book in the "Silent Auction" and mine was the last bid.

We, Tom and Erma Keho, thank the Authors D.M. Huffman, L.M. Tiffany, G. Knaphaus and R.A. Healy for revising *Mushrooms and Other Fungi of the Midcontinental United States*.

It is sad that George Knaphaus couldn't have seen the reprint.

From Dave:

I looked through the book which arrived the day before our

January PSMC meeting. I was intrigued at the variety of truffles and other lesser known forms of fungi that inhabit our area. There was also new and interesting information about familiar mushrooms. I had intended to keep the 2nd edition and auction off my well worn 1st edition until Rosanne informed me that none of the authors had seen the final product of the 2nd edition. So I had to buck it up and overcome my selfishness. I'm glad I did because all three remaining authors were on hand to sign the book which went to the Kehoes, PSMC long time members. It's where it belongs.



The Magic Stump

(cont. from cover)

micaceus (inky caps) in the lawn near the stump that would appear the day after every rain. A fairy ring of *Marasmius oreades* returned from the previous year. There was a polypore mushroom in a low-growing rosette nearby. To this day it is still unidentified. On some of the roots radiating from the stump, there was this very odd white ball growing mostly underground. And then, most surprising to me, the *Lentinus strigosus* came back! This time I was able to observe them throughout their full life-cycle. When they are just a small sprout, the color is very dark purple to nearly black. Also, this time, there were 2 or 3 of these mushrooms growing from the exact center of the stump.

This is when things got really interesting. One of Dean's interests is myxomycota, AKA slime moulds. I had been on enough forays with him to know what to look for, so I was excited to see the grass near the stump covered with a slime mould. By this time I had purchased George Barron's book *Mushrooms of Northeast North America*. This book has a section on slime moulds, but the ones near my stump were slightly different from any in his book. A few weeks later, I noticed a slightly different slime mould in the same area near the stump. I am still not sure if it was a different myxo, or the same one that looked different because of slightly different conditions. One Saturday evening, I found a large white ring around a significant portion of the stump. Another slime mould! The next morning, the white ring had moved and turned

"toothpaste" maroon color. I called Roger to come see and bring his camera. I had taken many pictures of the goodies around the stump, but Roger has better camera gear. By the time he got there a half hour later, most of the maroon color had turned black. This was probably the myxomycota *Brefeldia maxima*.

As Roger was taking pictures, I stepped back and marveled at the sight in my yard. Here I am, in suburban Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with a typical yard of mostly grass and a few trees, and yet the fungi and myxomycota are everywhere. In one square meter, I can see 5 different mushrooms and 2 slime moulds at the same time. During the course of the year, I counted 18 different mushrooms on my little city lot.

The *Lentinus strigosus* continued to thrive all summer and well into fall. The ones at the center of the stump grew so big they nearly covered the 16 inch diameter of the stump, and looked like a big purple flower. In early October, I saw the yellow stuff covering these mushrooms. Once again, in just 2 days, the *Lentinus strigosus* was consumed by what I assume was another spore producing substance, this yellow mold.

By the spring of 2007, all these mushrooms had done their job too well. The stump was no more, just a hole in the ground. I filled it with dirt and planted grass over the spot. But the magic stump had one last surprise for me. The strange white balls I had seen at ground level were revealed to be *Ganoderma*

applanatum, the artist's conk! With no stump to grow on, they had grown a ball on top of the roots. The next year they added a funnel shape on top of the ball, with clearly a spore producing surface on the outside of the funnel. 2007 proved to be a disappointing year for mushrooms in my yard with less than 10 identified species. I miss my magic stump. 

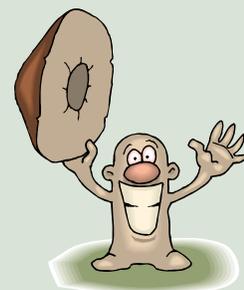
Foxfire Funnies

A doctor, an engineer, and a fungal taxonomist arrived at The Pearly Gates. The doctor said how he'd healed the sick but he was a sinner and was sent to Hell. The engineer told how he'd built homes for the homeless, etc.; but he messed up the environment, so he was sent to Hell. The taxonomist was frightened by all this, but as soon as he mentioned his occupation, God said "You've already been thru Hell: Welcome to Heaven."

Q. What did the zoospore say as it was leaving the zoosporangium?

A. "After you, I encyst!"

Note: If you don't want to be subjected to jokes like this in the future, please submit better ones.



Recipe Corner

Baked Stuffed Morels

Stuffing:

Combine in a mixing bowl: 1 cup cooked chicken ¼ cup dried bread crumbs
 1 egg ¼ cup milk
 ¼ tsp marjoram dash of nutmeg

Cut clean morels in half lengthwise (the bigger the better, but you already knew that). Place bottom half of each morel in a buttered baking pan almost touching. Add stuffing mixture, then cover with top half of same mushroom.

Pour a little chicken broth and brandy over the top and bake at 375 for 15 to 20 minutes or until the mushrooms are cooked and you can't get Salmonella poisoning from the eggs.

This is a great basic recipe. You're welcome to experiment with some other things in the stuffing like a little shallots or early green wild onions, wild greens, cooked wild rice, celery and/or brown inky caps (*Coprinus micaceus*). You get the idea. Just don't put too much of anything in that will compete with the morel deliciousness, like carrots – yuck.

Even though there are only a few ingredients in this recipe, I inevitably come up short on something. You can substitute crushed corn flakes for bread crumbs or dry wine for brandy, but **definitely not** canned tuna for chicken nor Jim Beam for brandy.

NOTE: Don't get the morel bottoms and tops mixed up as this will become messy causing the stuffing to boil onto the pan and look unappetizing to your more discerning guests. If this happens and you receive complaints, graciously offer to eat the finicky guests' portions.

Warning: It is possible to overdose on morels. I suffer from this ailment annually, but am not sure how to prevent it. – Dave Layton

To learn more about morel and other mushroom forays, contact Roger Heidt, Prairie States Mushroom Club Treasurer and Membership, (319) 393-5712 or email: iowamushroom@yahoo.com



Photos by Jim Frink



The **Prairie States Mushroom Club** promotes scientific and educational activities related to fungi, and fosters the appreciation of wild and cultivated mushrooms. We advocate the sustainable use of mushrooms as a resource and endorse responsible mushroom collecting that preserves natural areas and their biological diversity.

Our general purpose is the practical and scientific study of fungi and the gathering, dissemination, and perpetuation of facts and knowledge on that subject. Our primary objective is the study of specimens collected by members and others and the exchange of information with other organizations and professional mycologists. All club activities are open to the public.

Dues for 2008 are \$15/year. Please send payment to the PSMC Treasurer: **Roger Heidt**
email: psmc@fmtcs.com **125 Timber Lane**
Robins IA 52328-9632

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

I WANT THE ONLINE VERSION OF *SYMBIOSIS. THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRAIRIE STATES MUSHROOM CLUB* IN COLOR INSTEAD OF A PRINTED COPY.

YES: SAVE THE CLUB MONEY AND SEND IT TO MY EMAIL ADDRESS

NO: SEND ME A PRINTED COPY

CLUB USE ONLY

PAYMENT OF 2008 DUES TO PRAIRIE STATES MUSHROOM CLUB

\$ _____ RECEIVED FROM _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

I WANT THE ONLINE VERSION OF *SYMBIOSIS. THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRAIRIE STATES MUSHROOM CLUB* IN COLOR INSTEAD OF A PRINTED COPY.

YES: SAVE THE CLUB MONEY AND SEND IT TO MY EMAIL ADDRESS

NO: SEND ME A PRINTED COPY

RECEIVED BY _____ DATE _____

PSMC Web Site <http://www.geocities.com/iowamushroom/>

Dave Layton, President
Prairie States Mushroom Club
542 9th Ave. S.
Clinton, IA 52732

PSMC Web Site:
[http://www.geocities.com/
iowamushroom/](http://www.geocities.com/iowamushroom/)



The name “*Symbiosis*” and contents of the newsletter “*Symbiosis*”, The Newsletter of the Prairie States Mushroom Club (PSMC) are the sole property of the PSMC and can not be reproduced without written permission of the PSMC Board of Directors.

Prairie States Mushroom Club Spring Foray Schedule

April 26, 10 a.m.
Palisades-Kepler State Park
Mt. Vernon

May 4, 12 p.m.
Cou Falls (Northwest of Coralville
Reservoir)

May 10, 10 a.m.
Palisades-Dows Preserve
Mt. Vernon

May 18, 11 a.m.
Pinicon Ridge
Central City

June 14, 10 a.m.
Bill and Marlys Brown’s farm Canton

June 22, 10 a.m.
Ledges State Park
Boone

NOTE: Summer and Fall foray
schedule will be announced in the
June issue of *Symbiosis*.

Save the Date:

July 12, 9:00 a.m. Joint PSMC - Iowa
City Bird Club foray at Kent Park
(Tiffin). Meet at the Conservation
Education Center.

October 4-5th – 2 days of forays at
Browns and Walnut woods near Des
Moines

For more information about Prairie
States Mushroom Club forays, contact
Dean Abel PSMC Secretary, 319-354-
3510, email dean-abel@uiowa.edu

In the past, Prairie States Mushroom
Club has had some short notice
unscheduled forays with a notice sent
out by e-mail. The majority of our
members have e-mail but there are a
few that do not. For those that would
like to be informed of any unscheduled
forays not published in the newsletter
please let me know and I will try to
leave a phone message for you.

Roger Heidt (319) 393-5712
PSMC Treasurer and Membership

If you have a favorite mushroom
hunting place where you’d like to have
a foray, please let me know.

Dave Layton (563) 242-0880
PSMC President davelayton@q.com