



### ***Pholiota albocrenulata***

This mushroom isn't featured because of its edibility. It's featured partly because it's so pretty, but even more so because it demonstrates the valuable teamwork of several PSMC members.

PSMC member Jo Keck knew she had something special when she found the beautiful specimens pictured at our Cedar Bluffs foray this October, so she carefully collected the entire group along with some of the wood that they were growing on. This made it possible for Bob and Linda Scarth to make the lifelike photo after Jo returned with the mushrooms. Including its wood substrate also made it easy for PSMC founding member Don Huffman to quickly determine its genus as *Pholiota*. I thought that its unique color would also make the species easy to determine. That wasn't the case. No pictures of *Pholiotas* showed that unmistakable maroon wine color. Several PSMC members debated different species for over a week, but none keyed out until Dean Abel found the description for *Pholiota albocrenulata* in Arora's *Mushrooms Demystified*. The term Vinaceous (red wine colored) is used by Arora and others to describe the cap color. Arora says “---this is a striking mushroom by virtue of its reddish-brown to dark brown scaly, viscid cap and white-edged gills.” These mushrooms were certainly striking! Arora also says the stalk is, “brown to reddish-brown (like the cap) below --- with scattered brown scales.” White patches of veil remnants are also described as being on the cap. It had been raining steadily just before our foray which is probably why only a few remnants are seen in the picture. Also the abundance of moisture could account for the rich color of our specimens. Finally, the wood these mushrooms were growing on was definitely not oak or hickory nor was it pine. It was fairly deteriorated but seemed most likely to be a soft maple or elm on which *P. albocrenulata* is known to grow. Unfortunately there were no older specimens to get spores for microscopic confirmation, so we're only fairly certain (an oxymoron I know) of the species.

More great pictures from the Cedar Bluffs foray can be found on the PSMC website, including more of the same mushrooms, a perfect tree ear and the intrepid Jo Keck searching for more strange fungi in one of the deepest darkest places.

Dave