



# SPORE PRINT

The Alberta Mycological Society Newsletter

Spring 2013



## THE REISHI'S BIG SISTER: GANODERMA APPLANATUM

Photo by Ken Dies

**R**eishi (*Ganoderma lucidum*) and Artist's Conk (*G. applanatum*) are related and, you could say, fungi cousins. *Ganoderma* is Latin for shiny skin, *lucidum* suggests shiny or brilliant, and *applanatum* means flattened.

Reishi is arguably the most well-researched medicinal mushroom in the world, with hundreds of compounds and hundreds of *in vitro*, *in vivo* and human clinical trials conducted world-wide. Today, it is widely cultivated in over twenty countries, with a rich history going back millennia in China, Japan and Korea. Many other societies lived with them as well.

In Alberta, our local Artist's Conk grows mainly on balsam poplar, while in British Columbia it is most often associated with Douglas Fir. This species tends to be less shiny, and more flattened than its famous cousin. Artist's Conk derives its name from the use of its flat, white undersurface for sketching, leaving a permanent brown mark when the spore surface is slightly bruised.

The Reishi and the Artist's Conk share much in common. Although not as thoroughly researched, our local species contains a number of similar compounds to the Reishi. (Continued on Page 3)



# President's Message



As a new spring approaches, I can't help but look back over the past season with satisfaction. We have made outstanding progress at the AMS, and there are so many people to thank.

I am sure most of you are aware that our old website was...well...OLD! Ryan Armishaw has spent countless hours putting something new and improved together. He has to be one of the most patient men that I know. Visit our new website at [www.wildmushrooms.ws](http://www.wildmushrooms.ws) to see the magic Ryan has worked.

We have had two wonderful regional directors, Asif Chaudhry in Calgary and Ken Dies in the Peace Country. Asif did an outstanding job of coordinating forays in the Calgary area. We would also like welcome our new Medicine Hat regional rep Warren Sookocheff, as well as Russ Green and Barb Shworak who have agreed to be the Calgary regional reps this season.

Ken Dies is organizing everything up in the Peace River area. He has rounded up local members, organized forays in the vicinity as well as volunteered to enter the mountains of data that the AMS has collected over the past five years. Thank you Ken! Other members deserving recognition are John Samoil for getting a casino together; Fran Sandul for setting up inventory control and sales; Bill Richards for continuing the important task of foray coordinator; Liz Reid for stepping into the newly created position of Volunteer Coordinator; Chad & Thea Moss for their culinary expertise at our events; Robert Rogers for his involvement in our new Poisonous Mushroom poster; and Martin Osis for his tireless dedication to the AMS. Martin has been the Secretary role when we are without, creator of the newsletter when necessity strikes, program developer, speaker-educator when called upon, and just a fun, knowledgeable guy to go on forays with.

...And with gratitude I "Thank YOU" to our AMS members, for as you attend and participate at our events and forays, you contribute greatly to our success.

**Rose O'Bertos**

## Message from the Editor:

Welcome to the spring edition of our newsletter. I am looking forward to my new role as the society's newsletter editor, and I am looking forward to hearing from you! Please send me your submissions at [newslettersubmission@wildmushrooms.ws](mailto:newslettersubmission@wildmushrooms.ws). Comments and feedback welcome.

—Paul Sinclair



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(continued from Page 1) Reishi has been well studied in a number of human clinical trials. A recent meta-analysis of various studies for cancer treatment was just published.

The study evaluated the clinical effects of *G. lucidum* on long-term survival, tumor response, immune functions and quality of life in cancer patients. The authors of the study found that used as an alternative adjunct to conventional treatment, Reishi enhanced tumor response and stimulated host immunity. That is, the mushroom helps keep the immune system optimal through chemotherapy and radiation.

Another recent human clinical trial suggests Reishi may have mild anti-diabetic effects and improve blood cholesterol and hypertension. Various human trials have shown significant progress in treating liver disease, including hepatitis. In one study on patients with hepatitis, a herbal combination including the fruiting body of Reishi, showed positive results in 92.4% of patients.

Numerous studies suggest Reishi fights cardiovascular disease, diabetes, liver and kidney health, respiratory conditions, auto-immune disease, as well as various endocrine and hormonal disturbances.

Reishi and Artist's Conk, like many other medicinal mushrooms, are immune-modulators with anti-inflammatory properties. This

means that auto-immune conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, respond favorably to these fungal pharmaceuticals. When the immune system is overly active and inflammatory, the immune system is modified. When the immune system is depressed, the mushrooms revive and optimize.

It is my hope that Artist's Conk, considered the poor cousin of Reishi, will receive, in the future, more attention from the scientific community.

There are millions of tons of fresh fruiting bodies in the boreal forest waiting to be picked and processed into extracts. One good human trial would create a whole new agro-forestry initiative, making the harvest of medicinal mushrooms more valuable than the mature timber on which they grow. Being a thrifty, bio-regional herbalist, I make my fresh fruiting body tinctures every summer.



You could as well!

— Robert Rogers

Robert Rogers is an Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Alberta, and teaches Western Herbalism at MacEwan University. He is chair of the Medicinal Mushroom Committee of NAMA (North American Mycological Association) and serves on the editorial board of the International Journal of Medicinal Mushrooms. He recently published *The Fungal Pharmacy: The Complete Guide to Medicinal Mushrooms of North America*. The book is available through the Alberta Mycological Society.



# The AMS Has a New Website!

We were proud to announce the official launch of our new website on March 15, 2013. A new website has long been a topic of discussion so we're happy to say that we have finally managed to pull it off.

The new website has been redesigned to provide a user-friendly experience with improved navigation and functionality throughout, allowing members to truly become part of the community. Some new features are:

## Layout

We've completely redesigned the style and layout of the homepage to make navigation easy. Whether you are looking for news, upcoming events, board members, or mushrooms in our Alberta Mushroom database, everything is visible and easy to access.

## Events Calendar

We've made big improvements to our events section. You can view a complete list of all upcoming events, break them down by category (expos, weekend forays, or monthly meetings), and even RSVP on the spot.

## Regional Groups

Our goal has always been to build small regional groups across Alberta. To facilitate this, we've setup an area of the website dedicated to regional groups. If you live in one of these areas, please join the group. The Regional Coor-

inator for the area will host discussions, set up local events, and more. At the moment, we have groups in Calgary, Medicine Hat, and Peace River. Perhaps you want to start one in your area!

## Forum

If anyone remembers the horrors of our previous forum, the new one will appear to be a gift from the heavens. Asking questions and having discussions is now a simple procedure. Your "avatar" (image) will be attached to every post you make, so people will always know with whom they are speaking.

## Online Registration

One of the most exciting improvements in the website is the option for online registrations and payments. Members are now able to renew their memberships and sign up for events such as the Great Alberta Mushroom Foray right on our website. You just fill in the form, pay via Paypal, and you are done. There is no longer a need to fill in forms by hand and mail in payments—unless, of course, you prefer it that way.

These are just some of the new improvements on the website. Please visit our website, have a look around, and see all that is new and exciting. While you are there, consider registering as a website member—it is free.

—Ryan Armishaw





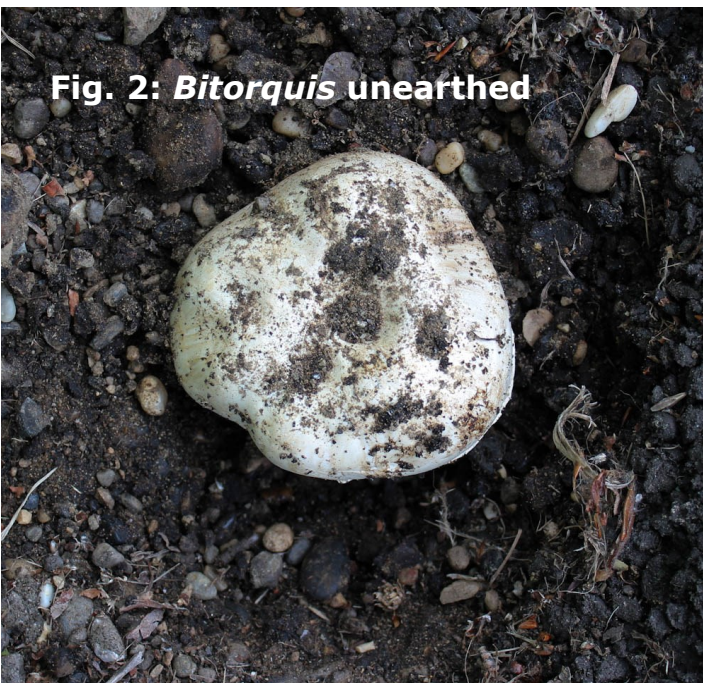
# A Hidden Gem: *Agaricus bitorquis*

Common names for *Agaricus bitorquis* include the "banded agaric", "spring agaric", "urban" or "sidewalk mushroom" and "pavement



**Fig. 1: A "mushroom hump"**

mushroom". It was first described by Lucien Quelet in 1883 who named it *Psalliota bitorquis*, but was subsequently moved to its present genus by Italian mycologist Peir An-



**Fig. 2: *Bitorquis* unearthed**

drea Saccardo in 1887. The specific epithet "*bitorquis*" is Latin for "having two collars" which refers to the rings or annuli which are

formed on the stalk by the detachment of the partial veil.

*Agaricus bitorquis* are mainly found scattered to gregarious in disturbed and hard-packed habitats such as roadsides, paths and vacant lots in the spring. It is not uncommon to see these mushrooms push up through asphalt or hard cement-like ground. The buttons start forming below ground so the mushrooms are typically covered with dirt when they emerge. They are usually short, compact, smooth white, and just breaking through the soil surface which makes them hard to find. When trying to locate them you have to look for pushed up ground, or what I call mushroom



**Fig. 3:  
The "double-collared *Agaricus*"**

humps (Fig.1). The cap is dry, smooth, and white (but staining yellowish in age), and measures 4 to 15 cm in diameter, convex to flat, often with dirt on the cap ( Fig. 2, 3). This mushroom's substantial size, firm texture, and good flavor make it one of the better *Agaricus* species for the table. Unfortunately urban mushrooms like *A. bitorquis* can accumulate chemicals, toxins, and heavy metals from the surrounding soil. One should not eat any found along paved trails or areas which are routinely sprayed with herbicides. If you are going on a "Foray in your Neighborhood" or just for an evening walk, make sure and look for that hump in the ground early in the spring!

—Ken Dies



# What's Been Happening at the AMS?

## Annual General Meeting

On March 23 the AMS held our Annual General Meeting at NAIT in Edmonton. As usual, we had a fabulous speaker, this year Daniel Winkler from Seattle, Washington. Daniel's topic was "Tibet—Mushroom Paradise". He shared his experiences travelling around this beautiful area in southwest China.

And, of course, we also held elections. See Page 2 of this issue of the "Spore Print" to see new and returning 2013 Executives. We are delighted to have a full slate of directors this year. THANKS SO MUCH for those directors who have served us in the past, those who continue to do so, and WELCOME to those who have taken the plunge. There is plenty to occupy us this year.

## President's Award

During the President's Dinner, our President, Rosemarie O'Bertos, presented the President's Award. This Award is given each year to an AMS member or couple who is not on the Board, and who has exemplified the highest level of volunteerism over the years. We were all very pleased, and not a bit surprised, to see Hans and Inge Weissenborn receive the prize.

The Weissenborns have made a great contribution to our society, and we look forward to their continued participation this year.

Congratulations!



## Photo Contest 2012

Our Photo Contest 2012 winners were announced at the AGM. This year was typical in that the quality of the submissions were excellent. It was difficult to decide on three winners.

### **Best Overall Photo Ken Dies**

Sorrentino's Gift Certificate Dinner for 8

### **Documentary Series John Thompson**

Subscription to Fungi Magazine

### **Best Polypore Photo Tim Kirby**

Great Alberta Mushroom Foray 2013 Registration

Congratulations to all winners! Please find Ken Dies' winning photo on the back cover of this issue. Thank you to Stewart Cranston, Chair of Photo Contest, and to our judges — great job!



**By Tim Kirby**



**By John Thompson**

# What's Been Happening at the AMS?

## President's Dinner 2013

Many of you also attended the President's Dinner following the AGM. The student chefs of the Culinary Program served us at Ernest's (NAIT), and as usual prepared a truly gourmet mushroom-focused feast! Those of you who were unable to attend may want to reconsider next year. Our speaker, Daniel Winkler from Seattle regaled us with his presentation: "Flavourful, Fancy & Foul Fungi around the World", with photos and fascinating commentary about his extensive travels searching for fungi. We held our Silent Auction during the dinner as well. Thank you to those of you who participated in this fundraising event. Whether you donated, arranged for donations, or bid on items, we very much appreciate your helping out the AMS in this way. Kudos to Deberah Kearns and helpers who organized and arranged this year's Silent Auction!



## Photo Exhibit at the Royal Alberta Museum

For the past several years we've had annual Photo Contests which have produced many beautiful photos. We use these photos for posters, educational presentations, and to add to our Alberta Database of Fungi. Now, we have the unique opportunity to showcase the best to visitors at the Royal Alberta Museum.



um. This year we're being honoured by the Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton. We will have our very own Mushroom Photo Exhibit from May 4 to September 15, 2013. The Museum has graciously helped us prepare the photos professionally to increase their visual impact.

In the future, we are hoping that this display will travel around to other museums in Alberta, bringing increased recognition of our Society. Please plan on visiting the Museum—perhaps one of your own photos will be there! We look forward to your comments on the Forum on our website once you've had a chance to take a look. Lesson of the day: Take lots of photos this summer—who knows where they will end up!

## Photo Contest 2013

Start snapping photos of your favourite fungal subjects, and you could be the winner of our Photo Contest 2013! Each year we have a specific mushroom or genus that we target, as we are looking for images to enhance our image library. This year our focus mushroom category is "Urban Mushrooms", along with our usual categories of "Identification" and "Best Overall". With these images we may create posters, presentations, and maybe someday even a book. Of course we will continue to add to our Database of Alberta Mushrooms. The prizes are very nice indeed! The Photo Contest details are on our website.



# Great Alberta Mushroom Foray 2012



Our **Great Alberta Foray 2012** at Elk Island National Park was a huge success.

A partnership between Elk Island National Park and the AMS, the foray collected over 800 specimens and made a major step toward documenting biodiversity at the park. Along with many photos, the Society provided key scientific support in the creation of an fungi "inventory" of Elk Island National Park.



Melanie Fjoser arranged for the Canadian Forces, 1 Service Battalion, Edmonton Garrison to supply (and set up) huge military tents that served as a "mess" tent, sleeping quarters, mushroom identification lab, and display arena. A huge THANK YOU to LCol. Brodie!"

The foray started out on Thursday night with a potluck reception. On Friday we had morning and afternoon forays as well as our Beginners' Mushroom Identification course. On Saturday the forays continued; both Friday and Saturday saw afternoon workshops and evening lectures. The late evenings were left for socializing, mushroom identification, and some wine. On Sunday morning after a final lecture, participants walked around the specimen tables getting any final questions answered by the mycologists.

In the photo at the bottom of Page 8 you can

## Foray Mycologists

Dr. Sean Abbott: fungal taxonomy expert specializing in cup fungi

Paul Kroeger: Faculty Associate, UBC Herbarium

Dr. Christine Roberts: *Russula* expert, illustrator, artist

Michael Schulz: Instructor, Portage College

Dr. Roland Treu: Professor of Mycology, Athabasca University.





# Great Alberta Mushroom Foray 2012

see Dr. Roland Treu sorting through a few of the many thousands of photos taken.

In other years, this fungal biodiversity study has taken place at Hinton, Kananaskis, Grouard, Tsuu T'ina First Nations Reserve, Lac La Biche, and Foothills Model Forest. Attend our next annual "Great Alberta Mushroom Foray", where we bring in expertise from around the world to help identify the fungi collected. Become a "Citizen Scientist" for the Alberta Fungal Database project – we all collect and photograph mushrooms, our expert mycologists identify our specimens, and then we enter them into our expanding database of fungi growing in Alberta. Join us as we make natural history!

See all the details about the next Great Alberta Mushroom Foray in the box below.



## **August 30 - September 2, 2013** **Castle Mountain in Westcastle** **Valley, SW Alberta**

Mark your calendars! The Great Alberta Mushroom Foray 2013 will be held at Westcastle area in Southern Alberta over Labour Day weekend. Registration information will be upcoming and posted on our website as soon as it's available. We will explore the Castle Mountain area in

SW Alberta. This is a complete fungi immersion weekend, offering mushroom identification courses, lectures by eminent mycologists, yummy wild mushroom tastings, and opportunities to enjoy the natural world.

Pick mushrooms and learn about Alberta fungi. Which ones are edible, poisonous, or medicinal? Learn from the experts. Immerse yourself in the fascinating Kingdom of Fungi!



# The Reishi in China Over the Millennia

**The Reishi mushroom** evokes plenty of Oriental lore. The mushroom has two exotic names, "Reishi" in Japanese, and "lingzhi" in its Mandarin Chinese form. Written [靈芝] in traditional Chinese characters, "Reishi" can be literally translated to something along the lines of "divine grass". The Chinese have valued the mushroom for 2000 years, we are told.

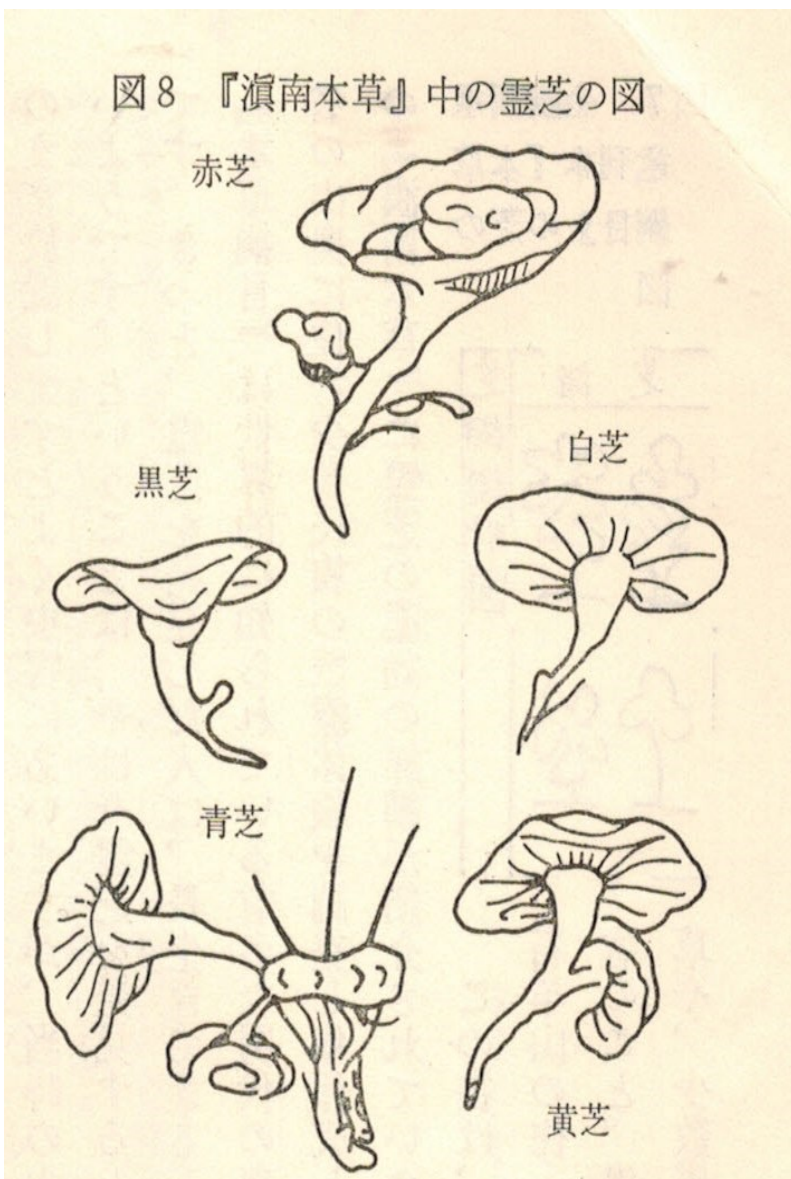
The story of how the Reishi features in Chinese literature is interesting in itself. Reference to the Reishi indeed goes back 2000 years, but the Reishi has not played a consistently prominent role in the Chinese medicine. "Zhi" are mentioned in China's first treatise on medicine, the "Shennong bencao jing", a compilation of oral traditions thought to originate from 300 BC and 200 AD and attributed to China's mythical God of agriculture. After reference in this Shennong classic, the importance of the Reishi waxes and wanes over the centuries. The important Tang Dynasty (618-907) medicinal texts like "Qian Jin Fang" do not mention the Reishi. While the Reishi is featured as a "neutraceutical" in China's most important compendium the Ben-

cao Gangmu (1593), the mushroom is largely absent in Chinese medicine of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1912) eras.

And we soon find we are not dealing with binomial nomenclature. The Reishi in the "Shennong bencao jing" are divided into green, red, yellow, white, black and purple "zhi". The AD 317 "Baopuzi" talks about "stone zhi", "wood zhi", "plant zhi", "flesh zhi", and "mushroom zhi". Things tended to stay messy over the centuries.

Meanwhile, the Reishi has always been shrouded in mystery. The Reishi has been closely allied with Taoism; indeed, the "Baopuzi" was written by Taoist scholar Ge Hong. As its name implies, the Reishi has been associated with immortality, divinity, wizardry, and spirituality. Over the years, western medicine has slowly begun to concur, recognizing, for exam-

ple, the Reishi's anti-tumor and immunotherapeutic qualities. Japanese scientists trained in Western medicine were among the first to begin looking at the Reishi through the lenses of western medicine.





## Weald Foray Report

Sept 14-16, 2012

On this perfect fall weekend about 25 members gathered with their tents, trailers and RV's. They were joined on the Saturday by a few more members along with one person's extended family, bringing our numbers up to around 35. It was delightful to hear the shouts of joy from the younger ones as they discovered some treasure or other in the forest.

On Saturday morning we walked from the campsite in small groupings into the beautiful moss-carpeted mixed forest that surrounds the group camp site at Weald Provincial Park. The normally damp forest had 6-10 inches of moss throughout. However, our feet stayed dry as the land had not had much moisture for some time.

We found a good number of hedgehogs (*Hydnum repandum*), honeys (*Armillariella mellea*) along with samples of many other species. One experienced couple returned with a wonderful bunch of "Yellow Leg Chanterelles" (*Cantharellus tubaeformis*, well-named "2X4s" in Newfoundland).

There was great excitement as each group returned to the well-equipped camp site and laid out their finds on the tables in the sun. Finds were sorted and categorized with the help of the experienced members. The ID session left everyone present with a better understanding of what was edible and what was not.

After lunch we carpoled to a couple of near-by sites where we once again spread out into the spruce/poplar forest. Initially disappointed, with perseverance we all found many interesting mushrooms.

Back at the camp, some members cleaned and cut the sorted mushrooms, while others found camp stoves and fry pans and proceeded to cook. The late afternoon sun shone warmly in our faces as we feasted on all the mushrooms we had collected.

—Liz Reid



Yet another sister: *Ganoderma tsugae*



Finally, the prominence of the Reishi in Chinese medicine may just have been a miracle of history. In the 1950s Mao Zedong recognized Chinese medicine as a powerful counterpart to Western medicine. In 1956, the predecessor of the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine got set up, and scientists began to approach the Reishi with scientific method. Then in 1959 a Chinese medicine research centre was set up in Yunnan Province which led to the re-publication of the "Diannan bencao" or "Medicinal Plants of Southern Yunnan". The "Diannan bencao" breathed life back into the Reishi lore. (See illustration.) Communism and the divine fungus: who would have made the link?  
—Paul Sinclair



# The Peace Report

Ken Dies



in eye-popping numbers of the cup fungi *Geopyxis carbonaria* along with the gorgeous orchid, *Calypso*.

## Hot Dry July 2012

Peace River Region members of the AMS held a foray on Saturday July 14, 2012 in an old growth white spruce and a mature aspen forest. Unlike the Edmonton region which enjoyed more than ample rainfall, the north Peace Region had been extremely dry with no measur-

able rain for 38 days, from July 4 to August 10. Despite the lack of rain, 13 species of mushrooms were collected. Only three members were able to attend this foray but all had a wonderful time traipsing through the woods in search of mushrooms.

A "Poisonous Mushrooms of Alberta" poster was hand-delivered to the North Peace Animal Hospital, the local veterinary clinic in Fairview, and the Grande Prairie Regional College – Fairview campus, Animal Health Technology Program. Both institutions were delighted to receive this beautiful and informative poster.

## 2012 Burnsite Morels

The Peace River Region arm of the AMS held their first foray on May 26, 2012 near Cadotte Lake. This site was a large burn from May, 2011 which is located approximately 75 km northeast of the town of Peace River. Seven members were present for this one-day foray and all enjoyed their trek through the forest in search of the hiding morels. Just over one hundred morels were harvested: not as many as we had hoped, but enough for a few meals. Edible mushrooms harvested included *Morchella elata*, *M.esulenta*, *Verpa bohemica* and *V. conica*. The burnt forest floor was covered

<i>Crepidotus mollis</i>	<i>Lactarius deliciosus</i>
<i>Cortinarius cin-</i>	<i>Leccinum insigne</i>
<i>namomeus(group)</i>	<i>Phellinus tremulae</i>
<i>Fomes fomentarius</i>	<i>Pleurotus populinus</i>
<i>Fomitopsis pinicola</i>	<i>Pluteus cervinus</i>
<i>Ganoderma applanatum</i>	<i>Polyporus melanopus</i>
<i>Hericium coralloides</i>	
<i>Russula borealis</i>	





# Canada's New Truffle Industry

Mushrooms are about to leave their spore-print on agri-business in Canada.

Grant and Betty Duckett were retired prairie livestock producers who had retired to Vancouver Island after years of farming on the Prairies. The Ducketts had their eyes on the trees which historically host truffle in Europe when they bought a 40-acre property near Parksville. They immediately levelled the previous pasture land and began years of incubating, inoculating and growing truffle-hosting trees. In 2007, Duckett Truffieres became Canada's first proud producers of Black Perigord Truffle (2007).

The BC truffle industry began with some detective work. Truffles can grow on sunny south-facing terrain with good drainage. Since trees form mycorrhizal associations with other trees, land without trees is preferable. And based on observations from France and Italy, *Tuber melanosporum* has the following growth parameters.

## Truffle Growing Parameters

Annual rainfall: 600-1500 mm

Mean daily temperature in summer: 17.5 - 22.5 C

Mean daily temperature in winter: 1-8 C

Annual sunshine hours: 1900-2800

Summer sunshine hours: 1200-1800

Degree days: 900-1900

Slide your finger around the globe, and it turns out BC's southwest including southern Vancouver Island fall within these parameters.

Cultivation of the truffle is not for the impatient: The Duckett truffle plantation is scheduled for its first truffle harvest within five to nine years. The expanding mycelium has yielded increasingly larger harvests over the past three years.

Mushroom picking gets complicated as well, especially since the truffle fruiting body is found underground. It takes a dog to do that.

The Lagotto Romagnola was traditionally a water retriever in the Romagna area of Italy, and may be the original stock for all of the world's water dogs. However, when the dogs' marshy environment was drained in the mid-1800s, the dogs gradually became specialized as truffle hunters. The dogs are bred in Europe, Australia, the United States and Canada. The Ducketts' Lagotto Romagnolo of Canada are among the

very few bred and raised in Canada.

The Lagotto Romagnolo dogs are smart, affectionate, obedient dogs which have proved to be great assistance dogs in the off-season!

Special thanks to Beatrice Duckett for her assistance with this article. Please visit Duckett Truffieres at [www.ducketttruffieres.com](http://www.ducketttruffieres.com).

—Paul Sinclair





# AMS Events 2013

## May

### May 25

Morel, Verpa & Spring  
Agarics

May 4 - Sept. 15  
Royal Alberta Museum:  
AMS Mushroom Photo  
Exhibit

## June

### June 8

Burn Site Morel Foray

### June 21-23

Midsummer's Night  
Foray

### June 27

Foray in *Your*  
Neighborhood

## July

### July 4

Foray in *Your*  
Neighborhood

### July 5-7

Medicine Lake Foray

### July 11

Foray in *Your*  
Neighborhood

### July 18

Foray in *Your*  
Neighborhood

### July 20-21

Kananaskis Parks Day  
Foray and Expo

### July 25

Foray in *Your*  
Neighborhood

## August

### August 2-5

Waskahigan River PRA

### August 8

Foray in *Your*  
Neighborhood

### August 15

Foray in *Your*  
Neighborhood

### August 17

Pre-Exposition Forays -  
Devonian Garden Expo

### August 18

"City of Champignons"  
Mushroom Exposition

### August 22

Foray in *Your*  
Neighborhood

### August 30-Sept. 2

Great Alberta  
Mushroom Foray 2013

### Sept. 6-8

Foothills Foray

For further information,  
see the "Upcoming  
Events" tab at  
[www.wildmushrooms.ws](http://www.wildmushrooms.ws)

