



SPORE PRINT

The Alberta Mycological Society Newsletter

Summer 2014



The Hottest of All Days: A Foray in Devon River Valley



Photo: *Agaricus pattersonae*

Photos and article
by Martin Osis

It was one of those Wednesdays. The end of a long and hot day and I was hurrying out to Devon to a mushroom foray. Generally, I am used to being late and have built an increased tolerance to lateness after years of exposure. Similar, I ponder, to how one exposes themselves to different pathogens to build a heightened immune response or as in cognitive therapy, where exposure should be **planned, prolonged, and repeated!** Oh well, there probably won't be any mushrooms on this hottest day of the year. Other than the downpour last Saturday, it has been dry. In fact, I seriously doubt that anyone will make the long drive to Devon when they should be sitting in a pool or dipping in a lake. But I am their Foray leader tonight and it's 7:00 pm and I am finally arriving.

Two parking lots to choose from, both full.

But no one is standing around in either one with mushroom basket in hand. Excellent! I'll park in the middle of the biggest one, pull out my mushroom basket and think about how long I have to hang out in the heat before I can head home myself. Before I get a good stretch on the legs and a look at all the folks cooling their heels in the river, I see a familiar face drive up. Darn, I guess we are going out for a walk in this sauna.

"A mushroom basket, that's a good sign" she says, "Kevin is in the other parking lot and going to head out into the trails there". "Great" I smile, "I'll hang out here for 5 minutes and pick up any late comers and then join you".

"So, Kevin is out on the trails already, not much point signing you in". I grab my camera instead of my basket. "Let's go and find Kevin."

(Continued on page 3)



President's Message

Rosemarie O'Bertos

Isn't summer wonderful? I hope that everyone is enjoying the beautiful weather and taking the time to explore their wild side!

I find that forays create opportunities to kindle new friendships (and old) in the natural beauty of the outdoors. Our Summer Solstice event was, once again, a lot of fun. I overdressed in rain gear for the foray and almost melted into my rubber boots. As we met to discuss what we found, Bill showed us a natural, native breath freshener he collected. We all got to try it...very cool! Amazing what you can learn at a foray. And it goes without saying that the potluck was marvelous.

Fellow enthusiasts bring their own excitement to each event...and the Nordegg event was VERY exciting! Some of us arrived late and had to go off on our own as we could not locate the others. We had such a good time. There were a couple of young members (I imagine them to be in their 20s) that would scout out every area that we would stop at. They would leap out of the vehicle, scramble through the ditch and in a few seconds we would hear a shout: "Yes, they are here, we found some!" That would be the cue for those of us who have celebrated quite a few more birthdays to hop out of the vehicle and try to keep up with those young'uns. Between us, we must have picked about 15 pounds of morels...very yummy! Besides the morels, the area is teaming with wildlife. Kim and I were fortunate enough to have a herd of wild horses run across the road right in front of us in all their glorious splendor. What a magnificent sight! Our Great Alberta Foray is in Nordegg this year and I can't wait to see what other adventures are in store for us there.

2012 Great Alberta Foray at Elk Island National Park



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Foray in Your Neighbourhood - Devon River Valley

Martin Osis

(Continued from page 1)

So off we go bellowing and shouting for Kevin. I note the fresh mulch on the trail thinking that this will be a great spot for all sorts of LBMs next year. Overgrown poplar woods surround us, typical of under-populated deer and moose habitat; lots of big hanging saskatoons. We are joined by another out-of-breath picker who asks if we are the mushroom group. They just arrived and saw us heading off into the woods. We were soon joined by a family of five, four bipeds and one quadraped, just as I discover an old poplar log with a variety of fungi on it. The best ones in my mind are the medicinal *Schizophyllum commune* or "split gills". I know others might vote for the psilocybin laden *Gymnopilus sapaneus*. Two slime moulds and what looked like a *Clavucorona pyxidata* rounded out the mushrooms growing on that log. On further investigation, the delicate little fairy crowns turned out not to have crowns at all but little blunt points, so it was rechristened a *Clavulina species*.

Further down the trail a few of the poisonous fiber-heads, *Inocybe fastigiata*, some LBMs and a beautiful agaricus which I will call *Agaricus patersonae* until someone corrects me. The caps have some scaling, a double ring on the stalk and reddish bruising. As I explained, with the bruising in *Agaricus*, you have three choices; none, yellow or red. So we call the shade of brown this one is bruising to closest to red.

Finally we reach the coolness of the river trail and find an amazing array of mushrooms for this "hottest" of all days. Hundreds of little "bird's nest" fungi *Cyathus striatus* in various stages of growth. The hairy exterior and the striated nest lining give those away. Also a selection of yellow *Russula species* which defy identification; hot peppery taste, a beige to yellow spore print and no bruising—all critical features to *Russula* identification—which nonetheless produced no definitive species name. Several *Pluteus pellitus* were growing singly out of logs. The pale nearly all-white cap, the free gills and pink spores allowed us to put a name on those. A single *Tricholoma terreum group* mushroom provided a nice example of a white-spored mushroom with notched gills. And of course many specimens of the lovely *Coprinopsis plicatus*, a delicate little mushroom with a sun parasol-like cap that was almost translucent. Getting back to the parking lot, we finally found Kevin.

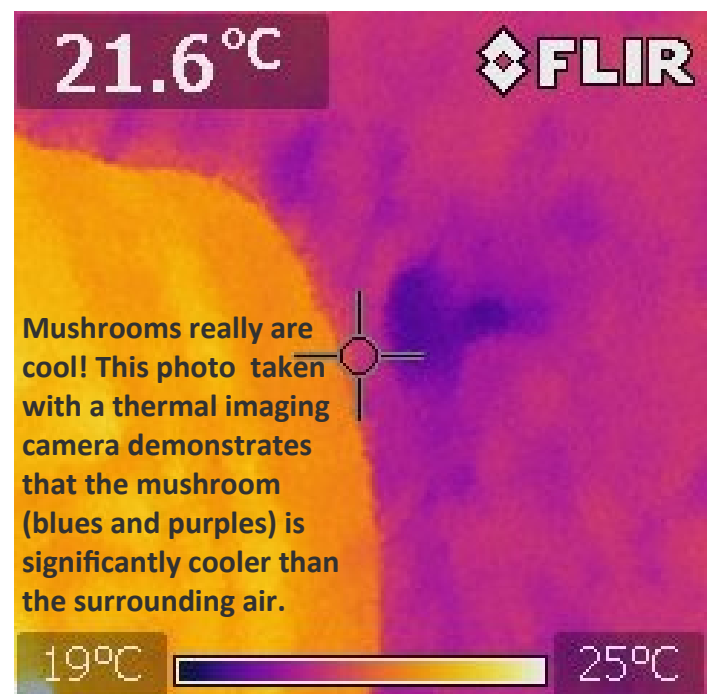
He had found a button and a full-grown poisonous *Paxillus involutus* displaying anastomizing (look that up) gills which easily separate from the cap, features which always give this mushroom away. Kevin also had our only deadly mushroom of the day, the spotted *Lepiota helveola*, with a distinct ring, free white gills and white spore print. Other mushrooms he found included *Agaricus bitorquis*, *Melanoleuca melaleuca*, and what I considered the find of the day or perhaps of the year, the blue-capped *Pluteus salicinus*. This is the first time I have ever seen this mushroom growing in Alberta. Blue-capped mushrooms are ones you tend to notice, and after some thirty years of regular picking, this is one of those rare ones. The blue colouring, it is postulated, comes from hallucinogenic compounds found in these mushrooms. There are a few other blue-capped mushrooms such as the *Russula parazura* or the *Mycena pura* but you don't see those very often either. Good job Kevin!

So as usual, mushrooms tend to surprise especially on this the hottest of all days.

Martin Osis

Alberta Mycological Society

www.wildmushrooms.ws



Foray 101

John Samoil, AMS Foray Coordinator

Can't tell a Morel from a Matsutake? Think that Porcinis only grow in Italy? Want to know what edibles live in the river valley?

The Alberta Mycological Society(AMS) can help.

Mushroom season is in full swing and forays are happening regularly (check the website <http://www.wildmushrooms.ws/> for event details). There



A typical foray table...

are plenty of opportunities to join with other AMS members from across the Province to search for your favorite fungus. We have regional forays in various locations around the province and the Great Alberta Foray at the end of August is an excellent way to get to know your mushrooms. For those who live in Edmonton, we have weekly forays around the city and Calgary is having more and more events.

An AMS foray is a great place to learn.

Foray Dos

Sign a waiver if you are a guest. Better yet, become a member to support our activities!

Come prepared. Some mushrooms grow on your lawn, but to find the really cool ones or the edibles, you may have to go off the beaten track a little. You might get wet, you might get dirty, so be prepared.

Sign in and sign out on the foray leaders attendance sheet.

Be back at the meeting point by the agreed time.

You will soon know many of the mushrooms that grow in your neighborhood and have the confidence to go out foraging on your own. Sometimes we have an expert who will readily identify what we pick. Other times, we will meet after picking and go through the field guides as a group to identify what we found. All members in a region will receive an e-mail telling them the location and start time of upcoming forays.

The AMS forays have a dual educational and scientific purpose. We want you to get to know your mushrooms and to add to our growing list of fungi found in Alberta.

If collecting for identification, take a photo of the "substrate," what the mushroom was growing on. Alternatively, bring along a notebook; also make a note of what trees are nearby. Consider using a common object such as a loonie in photos to show the size of your mushroom. Take a photo of the stalk which clearly shows the base, as well as the place where the stalk attaches to the cap. Take a shot of the gills, and ensure your photos include a clear shot of the cap. You might also consider slicing the mushroom lengthwise. See if the mushroom changes color where it has been cut. Is the stem hollow? Are the gills attached to the stalk? Try to collect the whole mushroom.

Know a good spot for mushrooms? Want to lead a foray? Know a great speaker?

Send us an e-mail.

contactus@wildmushrooms.ws

Foray Don'ts

Don't wear shorts to a foray. The best mushrooms may be off the beaten path. And there are always mosquitos.

Don't wander off alone. Stay with a buddy or two. There is safety in numbers.

Don't pick from someone else's patch unless invited to do so.

Don't eat mushrooms you have not identified with complete confidence.

Don't eat raw mushrooms.

"City of Champignons" Mushroom Exposition

Melanie Fjoser



Mushrooms, mushrooms everywhere – and *some* are good to eat!

"City of Champignons" Mushroom Exposition is coming again this year to the Devonian Botanic Garden's Pine Pavilion on Sunday, August 17 (11am – 4pm).

Come one, come all, to *The Greatest Show from Earth!*

This is **Alberta Mycological Society's** showcase for the public. As mycological ambassadors, we will show off, and amaze you with **hundreds** of edible and incredible displays of **fresh, wild mushrooms** picked only the day before. This is a great learning experience for members and visitors alike, as most of the fungi displayed will have names put to them.

Bring your own mushrooms that you've found – talk to an expert and get a name on your treasure.

See our specialized displays with Edible, Poisonous, and Medicinal mushrooms. Browse through our sample field guides and coffee table books. Purchase cool mushroom stuff like posters, books, t-shirts and more. Sign up for memberships or upcoming activities. There will be gorgeous slide presentations, a lecture and a scheduled **"Walk in the Garden"** among other events.

Our Wild Mushroom Café will tantalize your taste buds with tasty tidbits. The scenic Devonian Botanic Garden is located in Parkland County, 5 kms north of Devon on Highway 60, within 30 minutes of downtown Edmonton. Regular admission fees apply to enter the Garden.

You, as a member, will be contacted by email to volunteer your time and mushrooms to help make this event as successful as it has been in the past – we appreciate all of you who come forward to help!

The Great Alberta Mushroom Foray 2014

August 29 – Sept 1, 2014

Goldeye Centre, Nordegg Alberta

Pick and learn about Alberta *wild* mushrooms. Which ones are edible, poisonous, or medicinal? Talk to and learn from the experts. Immerse yourself in the Kingdom of Fungi!

The **Great Alberta Mushroom Foray** offers loads of learning opportunities: Take a Beginner's Mushroom Identification Course, enhance your photography skills, taste some different mushrooms, identify mushrooms on forays to 12 or more diverse mushroom habitats, or just absorb information in a fun atmosphere during our evening programs.

You will also be participating in the **Alberta Fungal Database** project where we all collect, identify, and photograph mushrooms, take DNA samples and then enter our specimens into our database of Alberta fungi. In 2012, the Society provided scientific support for an inventory of fungi in Elk Island National Park in cooperation with Parks Canada. In other years, this fungal biodiversity study has taken place at Hinton, Kananaskis, Grouard, Tsuu T'ina First Nations Reserve, Lac La Biche, Foothills Model Forest, and the Castle Mountain area of southern Alberta.

This year we will explore the Nordegg area in the east slope of the Rockies. This area has a diversity of habitats and moisture profiles and is an interesting transition zone between montane and boreal habitats with fungi present from both western and eastern North America. Our mycologists this year include:

- **Dr. Jim Ginns**, former Curator of the Mycological Herbarium in Ottawa. Jim is known as one of the world's leading polypore experts.
- **Larry Evans**, of "Know your Mushrooms", the cult mushroom movie. Larry has been teaching mycology to amateurs for many years. He has been leading mycological tours of South America for years and has been a featured participant of the Telluride Mushroom Festival in Colorado for over a decade. He is from Montana.
- **Paul Kroeger** of Vancouver, one of the finest taxonomists in western North America. Paul comes from an amateur background so can easily relate to the rest of us amateurs especially with his special sense of humour.
- **Nathan Wilson**, taxonomy expert and founder of MushroomObserver.com. Nathan is Director of the Center for Library and Informatics at the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) and Director of the Biodiversity Informatics Component of the Encyclopedia of Life (EOL).

LONG WEEKEND ACTIVITIES:

Daily forays in varied habitats.

Evening lectures from local, national, and international experts.

Mushroom workshops focusing on recognizing and sorting out some different genera.

Hands-on identification sessions.

Beginner's "Introduction to Mushrooms" course.

OPEN HOUSE to the community Noon to 1:00 on Monday, Sept. 1.

Pre-registration *is* required. Please visit our website for registration:

<http://www.wildmushrooms.ws/index.php/news-and-events-category/item/218-great-alberta-mushroom-foray-2014>



"Psst! Have you heard
about Nature Canada's
photo contest?"



Check it out at
www.naturecanada.ca/photocontest

And follow Nature Canada on Face-
book and Twitter (@NatureCanada)!

#NaturePhotoContest

The weather is great, gardens are blooming, and the hiking paths are dry. Hopefully you have some exciting outdoor adventures planned for the next few months. Whatever you envision doing, make sure you take along your sunscreen, hat, and camera to capture the moment!

Since they can't explore the great outdoors with you, Nature Canada would love to view your pictures! When you come inside for a break and a quick snack, why not share your best nature photos with them! To celebrate their upcoming 75th anniversary in September 2014, they are launching a nature photography contest designed to get more Canadians outdoors connecting with nature across the summer months. It's a simple way for you, your family or your friends to explore nature whether nearby in your NatureHood, at your cottage or during your summer vacation. It is Nature Canada's hope that by spending time in nature you will explore and adore our natural heritage and all that our environment has to offer us.

They have some pretty prestigious nature-loving judges who will make the final decision when it comes time to choose the winners. Among them are

-Micheal Tayler, Canadian Olympian in canoe and kayak slalom

-Roberta Bondar, Canadian astronaut and author/photographer

-Les Stroud, better known as "Survivorman"

Yes, that's right. Survivorman and Roberta Bondar will give their opinions on the best photos entered into the contest!

In addition to these amazing judges, the constantly growing list of prizes is pretty outstanding as well. These include a Park Pass for unlimited access to our national parks, a Nikon camera, and a 3 day parkhorse expedition trip for two generously donated by Copper Cayuse Outfitters. Check out all the details and more at www.naturecanada.ca/photocontest.

Get outside, get active, and take some pictures while you're at it!

For more information or answers to any questions, please contact Jodi at jjoy@naturecanada.ca or at 800-267-4088 x239.

Parks Day at Bow Valley

Article and photos by Christine Costello

This year's annual Parks Day event at Bow Valley Provincial Park on Sunday, July 20 brought many visitors to enjoy the displays, activities and free hot dogs and other goodies provided by the Parks Staff. The Alberta Mycological Society featured a display booth as well. A big thank-you to Martin, Melanie, Barb and Russ for all their efforts in making this display a success.

AMS members were able to foray for display mushrooms on Saturday. It didn't look promising at first as the Kananaskis area was very dry and few mushrooms could be found. However, it was then decided to try the Water Valley area. Conditions there were much wetter and members were able to find a respectable number of varieties of mushrooms to ensure a good display on Sunday. The mushrooms found included *Amanita*, *Clitocybe*, *Collybia*, *Coprinus*, *Crepidotus*, *Gymnopilus*, *Herici-um*, *Leccinum*, *Lentinellus*, *Pleurotus*, *Russula* and various polypores including Artist's Conk.

Visitors were very interested in the diverse variety of mushrooms on display. Many questions were asked, especially as to the edibility of the local finds. As well, Martin gave a very informative and entertaining talk about these mushrooms which drew a good crowd. One of the amusing things we learned from Martin was the correct way to grill oyster mushrooms. Always place them gill side down on the grill or pan. That way you won't see the critters coming out of the mushrooms and spoiling your appetite.

Fungal Factoid

Want to learn how to better identify mushrooms? Get to know your trees. Most trees cannot live without mycorrhizal partners. Consider, for example, a few of the many mushrooms found near Aspen, Poplar, and Willow in Alberta.

Amanita muscaria var. *Formosa*; *Armillaria* species; *Hericium ramosum*; *Leccinum* species; *Morchella* species; *Pholiota destruens*, *P. squarrosa*; *Pleurotus ostreatus*; *Plyporous badius*; *Russula aeruginea*; *Tricholoma flavovirens*.



The Peace Report

Ken Dies, Peace Foray Coordinator

Peace Region Foray Report

Last summer produced lots of rain and mushrooms but no forest fires in the central Peace Region. With no burn this spring to hold a morel foray I set out to find good *Verpa* habitat so that a successful spring mushroom foray could happen again this year.

We had plenty of snow this winter, and with a relatively slow melt, there was adequate moisture for mushroom growth. However, I was still surprised to find three fantastic areas just packed full of *Verpa*. This was the best *Verpa* mushroom producing spring I have ever seen. Hopefully it will be the same next year for the Peace Region members as I guide them to some new-found locations.

A foray was held on July 12, 2014 at the South Bear Creek Park, Grande Prairie with 10 enthusiastic mushroom seekers. Unfortunately few mushrooms were found. This is the hottest and driest summer that I can remember in recent years.

While we were disappointed in the number of mushrooms we found, we have to also see the big picture: The Peace River region is close to severe drought conditions and some crops are already failing; if it does not rain soon there will be economic hardships in the agriculture sector.



© Ken Dies

Tamarack Jack (*Suillus grevillei*)



© Ken Dies

Tamarack Jack is by far the most colorful and tastiest of all the Alberta *Suillus*. In most cases it is difficult to make most *Suillus* taste good, but the excellent flavor of *S. grevillei* shows there are exceptions.

This beautiful mushroom is associated (mycorrhizal) with larch (tamarack) and you may find it scattered or in small clusters under tamarack from mid-August into September. Tamarack Jack is easily recognized by its deep red to reddish brown cap which usually has a distinct yellow margin, although forms of the mushroom with a more yellow brown cap also occur. The pores/tubes under the cap are angular, yellow, somewhat radially arranged, and occasionally turn brown when handled. The stalk is bright yellow above the ring and streaked with red and brown below. The flesh is yellow and usually turns slowly brown when cut. The stalk does not contain any glandular dots like many other species in this genus. In wet weather the cap is covered with a gelatinous slimy layer that is best removed before cooking.

Suillus cavipes, a similar mushroom also associated with larch, can be rapidly identified by having a hollow stalk. *Cavipes* is Latin for "hollow foot". Next time you are walking through some larch forest make sure and look for Tamarack Jack.

AMS Events for Late Summer/Fall 2014

August

01-03

Prairie Creek - Mid-summer Weekend Campout
Prairie Creek PRA

16

Pre-Exposition Forays
All groups from all habitats

17

"City of Champignons" Wild Mushroom EXPO
Devonian Botanic Garden (Edmonton)

29-31

The Great Alberta Mushroom Foray Weekend
Nordegg

September

05-07

Foothills Weekend Foray
Weald Provincial Recreation Area

12-15

Foray Newfoundland and Labrador
Gros Morne National Park, Newfoundland

14

Fall Afternoon Foray
TBA via email

17 (7-9 pm)

Indoor Meeting
Whitemud Library
Film: "Know Your Mushrooms"

12-15 (7-9 pm)

Indoor Meeting
Whitemud Library
Topic: TBA

October

09-12

NAMA Foray
Camp Arnold near Eatonville, Washington

*Paid-up members receive detailed info on AMS activities by email .

"Foray in Your Neighbourhood"—weekly evening forays—will be held every Wednesday evening in Edmonton until September 23 and in Calgary every Thursday evening. Members, watch your email for locations.

A rare find: a *Pluteus salicinus* found in the Devon River Valley.

Some believe the unique blue coloring of the cap could indicate the presence of psilocybin.

