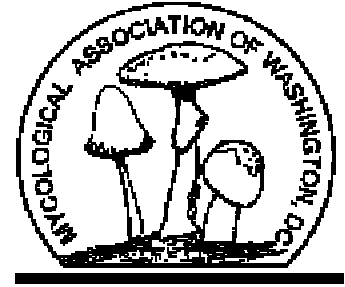


# Potomac Sporophore



March 2004

Volume No. 19

Issue No. 1

The Potomac Sporophore is a quarterly publication of the Mycological Association of Washington, Inc. (MAW).

Website: <http://mawdc.org>

Voicemail: (301) 907-3053

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Kirk Smith**, President  
202-543-5454  
[president@mawdc.org](mailto:president@mawdc.org)

**Don Evans**, Vice President  
202-797-2344  
[vicepresident@mawdc.org](mailto:vicepresident@mawdc.org)

**Derya Slivka**, Secretary  
703-273-8912  
[secretary@mawdc.org](mailto:secretary@mawdc.org)

**Gordon Callahan**, Programs  
202-547-0153  
[programs@mawdc.org](mailto:programs@mawdc.org)

**Jon Ellifritz**, Forays  
301-422-7517  
[forays@mawdc.org](mailto:forays@mawdc.org)

**Iona Conolly**, Culinary  
703-243-0445  
[culinary@mawdc.org](mailto:culinary@mawdc.org)

**Sharon Cooperman**, Membership  
301-587-2737  
[memberships@mawdc.org](mailto:memberships@mawdc.org)

**Paul Goland**, NAMA Liaison  
304-358-2921  
[hardscrabble@mountain.net](mailto:hardscrabble@mountain.net)

**Nathan Ballard**, Editor  
301-625-8208  
[newsletter@mawdc.org](mailto:newsletter@mawdc.org)

## **2004 Moray**

-Jon Ellifritz

Our annual weekend-long morel foray will be held once more at the Firmstone Manor Bed & Breakfast a few miles east of Clifton Forge, Virginia, from Friday evening April 23 to Sunday April 25. Accommodations and breakfast are \$45 per person per night, double occupancy, and owner Barbara Jarocka can also provide a Saturday picnic lunch for \$7. She is also planning a Sunday evening four-course dinner, including a dish made with mushrooms she brought back from Poland, for those who would like to stay an extra night or return home Sunday evening. The price for that will be \$12-\$15.

Reservations should be made directly with Barbara at 1-800-474-9882 (and you can find more information about the B & B on her website [www.firmstonemanor.com](http://www.firmstonemanor.com)). Be sure to tell her that you are a MAW member and whether you are interested in the picnic lunch, the Sunday dinner, or both. You can also ask her to make reservations for you for the Friday or Saturday evening meal at one of the local restaurants.

If anyone is willing to organize a Saturday evening wine/cheese/whatever buffet-type get-together (potluck or otherwise), please let me know at or before the April meeting.

## **Meeting Speakers**

-Gordon Callahan

The current schedule for speakers is:

April – Mike Shiota, president of Maitake Products, Inc. of Parnassas, NJ who has been involved in the sale of medicinal mushrooms (including maitake) for over ten years, will speak about medicinal mushrooms.

May – Tasting.

June – Tina Ellor, from Phillips Mushrooms, will speak about commercial mushroom cultivation, including an inoculation demonstration.

July – Tim Geho and Judy Roberts, past President and honorary member, will speak about mushrooming in South Carolina.

*\*(In March) – Dr. Cathie Aime, from the USDA Systematic Botany and Mycology Laboratory, talked about the mushrooms of Guyana.*

# In Search of the Giant Morels

-John Plischke III

To find the Giant Morels, elm trees are essential. Sure occasionally a few can be found growing under apple, tulip poplar or ash trees but to find that special tree that has 150 to 200 of the largest morels that you can imagine growing under it you must look under large dying elms. These magical trees can have morels under them that get over a foot tall and 6 inches wide.

When searching for the giants I skip over the small elm trees that typically only have a few morels under them but instead make a bee line to the elms that have trunks 3 feet or more in diameter. Bigger elms produce much larger quantities of morels.

There is a definite disadvantage of hunting for morels in this manner since the morels in these mystical spots often grow less than a foot apart and sometimes up to over 30 feet out in all directions from the tree trunk. It becomes almost impossible not to step on some, and the sight of a morel that was larger than your shoe that you just trampled can really cause your heart to ache. Then there is the back pain that is caused from kneeling over for over 30 minutes of non-stop picking, not to mention the weight of the heavy basketfuls of morels that one must carry back to your vehicle. There is the never-ending guilt of not bringing enough baskets to put all of the morels that you found into and having to leave a lot of morels behind. Finally, once home there is the problem of not having enough food dehydrators, freezer space and time to process your enormous haul.

## A PERFECT TREE



### ELM TREES

American Elm trees (*Ulmus americana*) produce greater numbers of morels per tree than any other type of tree. Under this dead elm, I found 165 giant yellow morels in about 5 minutes. The only problem was that the elm was surrounded by multiflora rose. I had to crawl on my belly to pick them. Only look under dying and recently dead elms. Healthy elms are not productive. Dead elms will continue to produce morels for up to several years after the tree has died. Once all the bark has fallen off a dead elm its chances of having morels under it are minimal.

## FIELD OF MORELS



The Giant Morels under this elm were 6 to 12 inches apart from each other and went out about 35 feet in all directions from the elm trunk.

### ELM LEAVES



The leaves are toothed and feel rough.

### ELM BARK



The bark is often falling off the dying trees.

## We are Going to Find Morels

-Jim Sherry

We're going to find morels.  
We're out to find morels.  
Ohio and Michigan,  
It's there you'll find morels.

We're looking for the ash,  
The poplar will do too.  
Old orchards have been known in lore  
To give us bucketsful.

The lilacs are in bloom,  
The apple (May) is high,  
It's springtime and the ground is soft  
That elm's about to die.

Let's find some sandy soil  
That runs along a brook  
And hope we have a nice long rain  
The night before we look.

At first we'll see a cup,  
It'll have a scarlet hue,  
And next we'll see the false morel  
The half will then be due.

And now we'll see the full morel  
The black will have its turn  
And now and now the yellow one  
All this we'll have to learn.

That's where we'll find morels;  
That's when we'll find morels.  
Let's slip away without a word,  
We're going to find morels.

## Tentative Spring 2004 Foray Schedule

-Jon Ellifritz

Remember that dates, times, and foray sites are all tentative. Meeting time is usually 10 a.m., except possibly in Front Royal and of course for the Moray. Please do not visit a foray site within the five days prior to a scheduled foray, and regardless of when or where you hunt morels, do not rake away leaves to find them. You'll expose the mycelium and subject it to a slow and painful death, and you'll never ever find another morel for the rest of your life!

The season schedule should be on the MAW voice-mail system (301-907-3053, box 53) by mid-March. In order to check on the status of the next foray and get directions, call the voice-mail system (box 55) two or three days before the tentative date. You can also call me at 301-422-7517 or e-mail at [ellijon@earthlink.net](mailto:ellijon@earthlink.net), and we'll also try to have all necessary information on the MAW website, [www.mawdc.org](http://www.mawdc.org). And if you would like to be on a telephone or e-mail foray notification list, please let me know. I'll try to develop the "technical" capability before the spring foray season begins!

\*\* Sunday, Apr. 11 or Saturday, Apr. 17, depending on temperatures -- first (and/or second) foray(s) -- Roundtree Park, VA and/or Great Falls/C & O Canal Park in MD

\*\* Sunday, Apr. 18 -- possibly another, place TBD

\*\* Friday, Apr. 23 - Sunday, Apr. 25 -- Moray at Firmstone Manor B & B at Clifton Forge, VA

\*\* Saturday, May 1 -- 4-H Center, Front Royal, VA. Bring bag lunches (or go to a Front Royal fast or slow food restaurant) if you also want to spend the afternoon

\*\* Sunday, May 2? -- Another? Suggestions for a site?

\*\* Saturday, May 8? -- 4-H Center again if season likely to be still going

## Major MAW and Other Mushroom Events in 2004

-Jon Ellifritz

- \* Tuesday, May 4 -- Wild Foods Tasting meeting -- Chevy Chase Library in MD
- \* Saturday, June 5? -- Department of Agriculture Field Day at USDA in Beltsville, MD (Ray and Jon cook mushrooms for the ravenous hordes assembled; Waldemar may bring a log or two)
- \* Wednesday, July 14 (Allons, enfants de la patrie!) - Sunday, July 18 -- NAMA national foray at UNC-A in Asheville, NC, in conjunction with the overlapping annual conference of the Mycological Society of America (professionals) 7/17 - 21. Highlight is a joint foray on Saturday, July 17
- \* Friday, July 23 - Sunday, July 25 -- East Penn Mushroom Club's Mont Alto weekend in southern PA
- \* Friday, Aug. 6 - Sunday, Aug. 8 -- MAW's West Virginia weekend at Lost City
- \* Saturday, Aug. 14 -- multiple MAW forays to collect for Sunday's Fair
- \* Sunday, Aug. 15 (has been changed from October 3) -- MAW Mushroom Fair at Brookside Gardens Visitors' Center, Wheaton, MD
- \* Thursday, Aug. 19 - Sunday, Aug. 22 -- COMA Annual Foray (Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association) -- Cave Hill Resort, Moodus, CT
- \* Weekend of Aug. 27? -- Telluride (out West)
- \* Thursday, Sep. 9 - Sunday, Sep. 12 -- Northeast Mushroom Foray (NEMF) at Lake Winnepesaukee, NH (Geneva Point Conference Center in Center Harbor) Contact Foray Chair Rick Van De Poll (603-284-6851; [rvdp@worldpath.net](mailto:rvdp@worldpath.net))
- \* Saturday, Sep. 18 -- Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club's annual Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Mania extravaganza in Pittsburgh
- \* Friday, Sep. 24 - Sunday, Sep. 26? -- probable dates of MAW's annual Sequanota weekend in Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania
- \* Thursday, Sep. 30 - Sunday, Oct. 3 -- Wildacres Foray near Asheville, NC. Limit of 40 NAMA members at \$175/person. Contact: Allein Stanley, [allstanley@earthlink.net](mailto:allstanley@earthlink.net)
- \* Friday, Oct. 1 -- Beginning of Albert Casciero's Italy trip
- \* Tuesday, Oct. 5 -- MAW's annual Mushroom Tasting meeting



## The Pleurotus Ostreatus (Oyster Mushroom)

-Jim Sherry

When I found the oyster mushroom on Nov. 15, 2003 at the base of a rotting tree in a nearby park I thought that I had probably found my last edible mushroom for the season-but I was wrong. Since then I have found the pleurotus on 22 trees and in 5 locations in the neighborhood. In each instance it was growing on a tree that was next to or near a stream of running water. The water was always part of the system of streams that feed into the Patuxent river west of Ellicott City, Md.

Most of the time the pleurotus was growing on a tulip poplar: it was also growing on a sawed-up beech and on a number of trees that I could not identify. It was always on logs or snags [dead upright trees] and I am not sure that it grows on living trees but it does grow on dead parts of living trees. I have found it on all sides of trees, on trees with and without bark, though never on that part of the tree which has deteriorated to a reddish-brown humus. I have found it GROWING after a snow storm and after freezing weather. If it is found on one tree, it will usually be found on a nearby tree. When it is found in colder weather it does not have the red-headed beetle and it is said to be tastier than the spring variety [Volk]. It is said to grow in all seasons but I have never found it in the summer. I have found it growing on the same tree in both the spring and the fall. I read a story on the Internet which told of a man who found 10 pounds of pleurotus on a tree and two weeks later found, on the same tree, another 20 pounds.

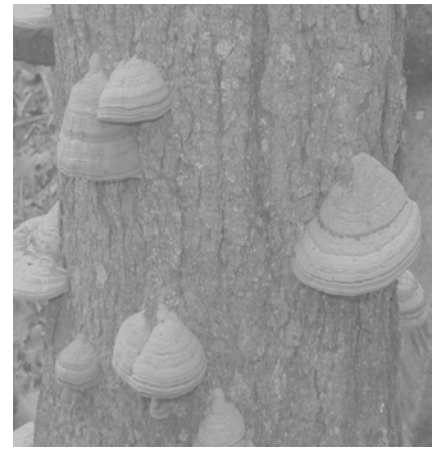
I sometimes found pleurotus on a tree that stretched out over a stream and had to knock it into the water below and then retrieve it quickly before it floated away. This was not always easy when the stream had a bank to negotiate. On Nov. 29, '03 I spotted a cluster of pleurotus 20 to 25 feet up on a snag. It looked like a large pinecone. I tried to knock it down with three tree branches taped together, but they were too heavy to lift from one end. So I went to Home

Depot and bought two twenty foot pieces of quarter-round moulding and taped them together, but just as I raised them the one on the farther end snapped. I then reinforced the pieces with bamboo rods, but when I raised them to the tree I found that they were too wiggly and I could not touch the pleurotus. Then I found two pieces of stiff moulding and brought a ladder to the tree, but when I raised the moulding I found that I was so close to the tree that I could not look up and see the pleurotus. Then I left the pleurotus alone, and a week later, after a cold snap, I found it frozen to the ground. I made the effort to get this pleurotus partly because "it was there" but also because I wanted to find out how long a pleurotus will remain edible after it is first seen growing on a tree. This pleurotus was up on the tree for over three weeks. I never found out whether it was edible.

The pleurotus is one of the more popular edible mushrooms, both wild and cultivated. There are thirty species world-wide according to Kimbrough, but the number of species, and what to name them, is under continuous discussion among mycologists. It is a white-rot fungus, which means that it eats the brown lignin, and not the white cellulose. It almost always grows on hardwood trees and is an important decomposer (saprophyte). It is easily identified, and it is prolific. It seems, in the wild, to be slow to deteriorate, and it is a great pleasure to find it strung out on a log.

## The Tinder Fungus

-William Needham



**Common Name:** Tinder Fungus, Amadou, Hoof Fungus, Punk, German Tinder

**Scientific Name:** *Fomes fomentarius*  
(Latin *fomes* meaning tinder or touchwood and *fomentarius* meaning material to feed a fire)

A perennial, hard hoof-shaped polypore that grows in groups on standing stumps or fallen trunks of broad leafed trees, especially birch and maple.

**Potpourri:** As the name Tinder Fungus attests, this polypore was widely used by Neolithic Europeans and Native Americans as a means of starting a fire. The basic method was to take a scrap of tinder fungus and hold it on a flint, which, when struck, would readily ignite the fungus. The 5000 year old Neolithic "Iceman" named Oetzi (for the region of Italy where he lived) who was discovered in the Alps in 1991 had a pouch containing Amadou along with several small sharpened flint stones.

The traditional method to prepare Amadou as tinder is to fill a pot with the fungus and to add enough strong urine to cover it. This concoction is then boiled gently for several days (adding urine as needed) at which time the tinder is drained and dried. Saltpeter (potassium nitrate) can be used as a substitute for urine.

Amadou was also used as a styptic to stop bleeding by dentists and surgeon/barbers, as a form of snuff, and as a type of cloth for caps and chest protectors (after pounding).

## Black Risotto with Shaggy Manes

-Ray LaSala

Black Risotto with Shaggy Manes					
1800	gm	4	lbs		fully ripe, deliquescent shaggy manes, the messier the better
3	gm	1/4	tsp		salt
5	gm	1	tsp		vegetable oil
15	gm	1	Tbs		butter
225	gm	1/2	lb		shaggy mane buttons
25	gm	1	Tbs		shallot or onion, minced
200	gm	1	Cup		medium grain Italian rice [Arborio, Carnaroli, or Vialone Nano variety]
60	gm	1/4	Cup		white wine
30	gm	2	Tbs		parmigiano cheese, grated
2	gm	2	Tbs		minced Italian parsley
15	gm	1	Tbs		butter
		2	grinds		black pepper
80	gm	1/3	Cup		roasted or fried red bell pepper, cut in strips
					Yield: 4 servings

The ripe shaggy manes must be dripping black ink and practically falling apart. Hold each one erect by its stalk underneath a stream of water and rinse off any dirt or grass. Place them in a heavy pot and heat until the black ink is completely rendered from the caps.

Strain the ink through a large sieve into a 1-quart measuring cup, pressing the remaining solids with the back of a spoon to extract as much of the liquid as possible. Put the strained solids back into the pot with as much water as necessary to bring the total volume of ink up to 4½ Cups and strain the additional liquid into the measuring cup. Taste the ink and dilute it if it tastes objectionably strong. Return 4½ Cups of the ink to the pot, bring it up to a very gentle simmer, and add the salt. Discard the remaining solids.

The shaggy mane buttons should be completely unopened with the ring at the base of the cap still intact. If they are smaller than 3" in length, leave them whole; otherwise, chop them into inch-long pieces.

Preheat a heavy eight- or ten-inch saucepan over a medium flame; add the oil and butter and heat until the foam from the butter subsides. Add the shaggy mane buttons and the shallots; sauté them gently until any released liquid from the mushrooms evaporates and the shallots are translucent; remove them from the pan and set them aside.

Add the rice to the pan, toast until lightly colored with a white core. Return the mushrooms and shallots to the pan and add the wine; stir until the liquid is absorbed.

Add 1 Cup of the simmering ink to the rice and continue to stir. Add another Cup of ink every five minutes or so, when the rice is no longer soupy and much of the liquid has been absorbed. A total of four Cups of ink should be used. Add the cheese and half the parsley with the final addition of ink, and simmer a final five minutes. Stir constantly and maintain a gentle bubbling throughout the cooking process, which should take about 20 minutes. The final texture should be creamy.

Remove from heat and stir in the final Tbs of butter and the black pepper. Spoon into soup plates, garnish with the red pepper strips and the remaining parsley, and serve at once.

## Hemlock Polypore

-William Needham



Common Name: **Hemlock Polypore, Tsuga Reishi, Sung-shan-ling-chih**  
 Scientific Name: ***Ganoderma tsugae***  
 (From Hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis*)

A large bracket polypore fungus that ranges in size from 10 to 100 centimeters across in a fan shape with a shiny (appearing varnished) cap surface. Found almost exclusively on dead and dying hemlocks, it gets less shiny and darker red with age.

**Potpourri:** The hemlock polypore is a medicinal fungus. It has been found to be therapeutic in the treatment of tumors (anti-cancer), immune deficiencies, and high blood pressure. It contains triterpenoids, which are steroid-like compounds that inhibit cholesterol synthesis and the production of histamines that cause allergic response.

Recent research indicates that *Ganoderma* may be effective in the treatment of Alzheimer's Disease due to its anti-inflammatory activity. It has been praised as early as 500 CE in China for its effect of increasing memory and reducing forgetfulness.

The closely related *Ganoderma lucidum* (right) is widely used in Chinese folk medicine and is available in Asian markets under the name Reishi or Ling Chi. It reportedly has the highest sales volume of any medicinal in the health food market of Taiwan. It grows on hardwood trees in lieu of hemlocks. A health tonic can be prepared from the hardened fruit bodies by grinding them into a powder and brewing them like tea.

## NAMA's 2004 National Foray

-Paul Goland

NAMA's National Foray will be held in Asheville NC this year, July 14-17. This is the closest this wonderful event has been to Washington DC in over a decade, and several MAW members are already planning to attend. The Blue Ridge region in commuting distance of Asheville is a great place to hunt mushrooms. It includes Wildacres, where NAMA has held an annual regional foray for several recent years, and the Asheville Mushroom Club is very active--they even have put on mushroom fairs to educate the public for several years.

To register for the NAMA National Foray you must be a member of NAMA. Annual dues for club members to join NAMA are \$32. Contact Paul Goland, NAMA representative.

## West Virginia Foray Weekend

-Jon Ellifritz

This year our West Virginia summer weekend will be a little closer to Washington, at the Lost River Retreat Center at Lost City, from Friday evening, August 6, to Sunday, August 8. We expect Bill Roody and Donna Mitchell to be our guest mycologists. The cost should be approximately \$95 per person for two nights' lodgings and five meals. We would need to have at least 35 participants to guarantee exclusive use of the facility and that may be unlikely, but the sooner we know the number who are interested in attending, the better we can plan, and give the center a better estimate of the number. Please leave me a message at 301-422-7517 or e-mail me at [ellijon@earthlink.net](mailto:ellijon@earthlink.net), with an indication of the number likely to attend and an estimation of your degree of certainty (e.g., will be there unless a tree falls on our house; pretty certain; may attend; unless something better comes up), along with your preference for when to start the five meals - Friday evening or Saturday breakfast. Also note that participants should bring their own bedding and towels, although they do have pillows and blankets available on request. We should have more details on payment, etc., in the June newsletter.

## Did You Know?

-from the Aug/Sep. '99 Kansas Mycolog,  
submitted by Hilda DeSouza

Lyme disease can now be diagnosed much more quickly. According to a June 1999 Readers' Digest article, "A new blood test for Lyme disease that can give results within an hour has been approved by the FDA. Traditionally, blood work has to be sent to a laboratory, but because the new test can be used in a physician's office, "the doctors will be able to make a preliminary diagnosis quicker", says the FDS, "and start antibiotic treatment immediately." The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still recommends a two-stage testing for Lyme disease, with a lab test used to confirm an initial positive result.

## Meeting Food Donations

-Karin Adams

It is great when members bring food to share at meetings. We all have obtained much pleasure of this practice. Could you please call me in advance if you know you will be bringing food? If I know this in advance, I will adjust the amount of food I buy (as hospitality chair) for the meeting so as to spread out the food budget and avoid a feast or famine situation. Thank you. My home phone number is **202-244-3140**.

**It is time to renew memberships!**

If you have not already renewed, you may use this form and mail it along with your payment to:

**MAW Membership Chair  
PO Box 76533  
Washington, DC 20002**

**MAW Membership Application Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone:

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues enclosed\*  \$20.00 Individual

\$30.00 Household

\*Payable to 'The Mycological Association of Washington, Inc.'

I understand that the Mycological Association of Washington, Inc. (MAW) is not responsible for any harmful effects that I can suffer as a result of the collection and consumption of fungi, even though they can occur while participating in activities sponsored and organized by MAW.

Interests:

Mycology

Photography

Forays

Culinary

Microscopy

Identification

Books

Toxicology

Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_