



# NJMA NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
Volume 38-2 March - April 2008



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Vice-President – Igor Safonov  
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Treasurer – Bob Peabody

## DUES

Payable on calendar year  
Individual: \$15.00  
Family: \$20.00  
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Deadline for submissions:  
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Send ONLY newsletter submissions to the editor. All other correspondence should be sent to the secretary:

Terri Layton  
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## NJMA EVENTS HOTLINE

908-362-7109 for information on NJMA events or cancellations due to bad weather.

**IF  
YOU  
SEE RED  
YOU WON'T SEE  
THIS NEWSLETTER  
EVER AGAIN.**

Are you still with us?  
Keep mushrooms in your sights...  
**Pay your NJMA dues today!**

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sunday, March 2**  
2:00 pm

**MEETING AND LECTURE**  
Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Morristown

Speaker: **Dr. Scott A. Redhead**, curator of the National Mycological Herbarium of Canada and research scientist of the Canadian Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food. His talk will be entitled "*Where is the scientific study of mushrooms going?*"

**Saturday, March 29**

**CULINARY GROUP HUNGARIAN DINNER**  
at the Unitarian Society in East Brunswick

Our Culinary Group Dinners resume in a new location, with a Hungarian theme. *Registration required. See page 5.*

**Saturday, April 5**  
9:00 am – 12:30 pm

**FREE BEGINNER CLASS I**  
Great Swamp Bookstore and Gift Shop

Instructor: **Dorothy Smullen**. *Please register for this class even though it is free. Registration form and more great classes shown inside on pages 3 and 4!*

**Saturday, April 5**  
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

**GILLED MUSHROOM FIELD I.D. CLASS**  
Great Swamp Bookstore and Gift Shop

Instructor: **Bob Peabody**. \$15.00 fee. *Registration is required. See description and form on pages 3 and 4.*

**Sunday, April 6**  
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**FREE BEGINNER CLASS II**  
Unitarian Society, Tices Lane, East Brunswick

Instructor: **Bob Hosh**. *Please register for this class even though it is free. Use the form on page 4.*

**Sunday, April 6**  
2:00 pm

**MEETING AND LECTURE**  
Unitarian Society, Tices Lane, East Brunswick

(NOTE: THIS MEETING IS NOT AT OUR REGULAR APRIL LOCATION!)  
Speaker: **Elinoar Shavit**

### Directions to the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Morristown

**Traveling from the South:** I-287 Northbound to Exit 36A (Morris Ave.). Proceed East approx. 1/2 mile in the center lane, past Washington Headquarters (on left). Take left fork onto Whippany Road. Turn left at 2nd traffic light onto East Hanover Avenue. Proceed for about 1/4 mile. Entrance is on left, opposite the Morris County Library.

**Traveling from the North:** I-287 Southbound to Exit 36, following signs for Ridgedale Avenue (bear right in exit ramp). Proceed to traffic light, then turn right onto Ridgedale Avenue. At 2nd traffic light, turn right onto East Hanover Avenue. Proceed for about 1/4 mile. The Arboretum entrance is on the right just past the traffic light at the Morris County Library.

**Traveling on New Route 24:** New 24 West to Exit 1A, (also labeled as Rt. 511 South, Morristown) onto Whippany Road. Stay in right lane. Turn right at 1st traffic light onto East Hanover Avenue. Proceed for about 1/4 mile. Entrance is on left, opposite the Morris County Library.

### Directions to the Unitarian Society, Tices Lane, East Brunswick

**From New Brunswick via Route 18:** Take U.S. Highway 1 south, exit at Ryders Lane to East Brunswick, continue to the second light, and turn left onto Tices Lane. The Unitarian Society is the 2nd drive on the right before you go under the NJ Turnpike.

**From the south via the Garden State Parkway:** Take Route 18 north toward New Brunswick to Tices Lane exit (take jughandle from right lane of 18 across to Tices Lane). Follow Tices Lane until you pass under the Turnpike. The entrance is in the woods on the left just after you leave the underpass.

**From the NJ Turnpike:** take Exit 9 to Route 18. Take Rt 18 South to East Brunswick. On 18, turn right onto Tices Lane at the third traffic light. Follow Tices Lane until you pass under the Turnpike. The entrance is in the woods on the left just after you leave the underpass.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have just spent the afternoon chopping up vegetables and mushrooms at Bob Hosh's house with Claudia Pierce, Rob Robinson, Carol Raines, Margaret Papai, Patrick Bernardo, Jim Barg and, of course, Bob Hosh. Tomorrow we will have mycophagy. Jim Richards and Bob Hosh have been working very hard creating recipes and collecting ingredients. Tomorrow, Bob Peabody will be the auctioneer entertaining us in his droll manner. There will be more members who will set up, serve, and clean up. It is wonderful to be in a club where so many people are eager to pitch in.

Two weeks ago we had a board meeting. Our foray schedule was finalized, as well as our educational courses. We have tried to spread out our forays throughout the state, with the southern forays taking place later in the year when the heat and bugs are not as bad. Our educational courses should appeal to people of all interests. Please sign up quickly since many of the courses have a size limit.

We have two more guest speakers. Our first, Scott Redhead, a Canadian, has spent a lifetime categorizing and putting names to mushrooms. Our last speaker is Elinor Shavit, a great cook and world traveler from Concord, MA. I have heard her speak and she is very entertaining.

– Nina Burghardt



## EDITOR'S NOTES

This issue of *NJMA News* is much smaller than originally planned. The newsletter is usually printed by a friend of NJMA who charges us a much, much lower rate than most printers charge. Unfortunately, our friend is not able to print this issue because he is recovering from surgery. To have the issue we had planned to publish would have cost NJMA more than five times as much.

In order to save a considerable sum of money, it has been decided to put much of the issue "on hold" and to just print the items that require immediate action or advance registration.

My apologies to those people who have submitted articles for this issue. Your contributions will be included in the next issue (May-June, #38-3). For those who are expecting them, the recipes from *Mycophagy* will be posted on our website, [www.njmyco.org](http://www.njmyco.org).

Watch for a gigantic issue in two months' time, with Terri Layton's report on the SOMA Foray, a review of *Mycophagy* with comments and suggestions from members (plus the rest of the recipes), the report on the January Executive Committee meeting, the 2008 Membership Roster, a tribute to Sam Ristich, the Foray Schedule for 2008, and a whole lot more.

– Jim Richards

### In memoriam

## Dr. Sam Ristich

### Long-time friend of NJMA

Sam Ristich's day on Monday, February 11, proceeded as usual, with his aerobic exercise routine, feeding the birds, helping Ruth, his wife of 63 years, and corresponding with several of the many hundreds of people the 92-year-old regularly kept in touch with. He then shoveled the new fallen snow and went in to eat. At 6 pm, seated for the evening meal with Ruth and his daughter Jodee, he took his last breath.

The founder of the Maine Mycological Association, Sam was known as the Mushroom Guru of Sligo Road. The Northeast Mycological Federation (NEMF), a collection of 18 clubs from 8 states and Quebec, has named their annual foray in his honor since 1976. The Northern New England Poison Control Center relied on him for the identification of potentially deadly fungi and plants. Many nights his sleep was interrupted by doctors bearing specimens ingested by a young child or worried adult. He was beloved as a naturalist and teacher, giving talks, leading walks, and lecturing nationally and in Serbia and Scotland. He organized a group of aspiring naturalists who have met weekly since 1984 in and around North Yarmouth.

The son of Serbian immigrants, Sam came to his love of nature at a young age. A grade school science teacher's enthusiasm led to early morning bird walks, and he spent many mornings tramping in the woods of Temple Hollow. He became a voracious reader once he discovered the greater world contained in the books at the B. F. Jones Memorial Library. He then

worked in the steel mills of Aliquippa, PA, to put himself through Slippery Rock State Teacher's College. Sam was trained in biology, botany, and ecology, and earned a Ph.D. in entomology from Cornell University.

He worked as a research scientist at E. R. Squibb & Sons and the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research in Yonkers and Ithaca, NY. For 15 years he taught classes at the New York Botanical Gardens. Sam had a passionate curiosity about how everything in nature worked together, and he became a walking encyclopedia of the natural world. His passion for sharing what he had learned was even greater. It was the excitement of discovery and the give and take of teaching that he most enjoyed.

Sam and Ruth met on the island of Bermuda while both were officers during WWII. They were active in the civil rights movement from 1955 to 1975 with the NAACP and the Unitarian Social Action Committee, and also worked as peace activists through Veterans for Peace. Sam's volunteer work with the North Yarmouth Conservation Commission continued up to his last days.

Sam gained mycological immortality in 1983 by finding a new species in the family *Amanita*, aptly named *Amanita ristichii*.

In addition to Ruth, Sam is survived by his 5 children, 6 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to either: The Maine Mycological Association, Attn: Sam Ristich Scholarship Fund, c/o Gary Marshall (Treasurer), 59 Libby Avenue #5, Gorham, ME 04038, or to the North Yarmouth Conservation Commission, Attn: Sam Ristich Memorial Fund, c/o Town of North Yarmouth, 10 Village Square Rd., North Yarmouth, ME 04097.

# **NJMA EDUCATION CLASSES for Spring/Summer 2008**

NJMA will be offering classes in mushroom identification and other topics in 2008. The classes will be offered on weekends at various times and places – see list below. For all-day sessions, please plan to bring your own lunch. Coffee and tea will be provided. ***Pre-registration is required.*** Fees are listed with the courses. ***Classes are limited to 25 people unless otherwise noted.*** Directions to the Great Swamp NWR Friends Bookstore and Rutgers University are on the next page.

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## **Saturday, April 5**

### **9:00am to 12:30pm – FREE BEGINNER CLASS I (for NJMA members only)**

#### **Great Swamp Bookstore and Gift Shop**

Dorothy Smullen will introduce fungi groups, terms used in mycology, and use of identification keys.

Handouts will include information about foray gear and procedures.

***Please register for this class even though it is free.***

### **1:00pm to 4:00pm – GILLED MUSHROOM FIELD IDENTIFICATION**

Bob Peabody will present an intermediate course based on the Largent book for macroscopic features. Excellent handouts are included. \$10.00 fee

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## **Sunday, April 6**

### **1:00pm to 2:00pm – FREE BEGINNER CLASS II (for NJMA members only)**

**at the Unitarian Society, Tices Lane, East Brunswick (just before our regularly-scheduled monthly meeting)**

Bob Hosh will talk on the preserving and cooking of mushrooms. ***Please register for this class even though it is free.***

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## **Saturday, May 17**

### **1:00pm to 4:00pm – COOKING WITH FUNGI (New class!)**

**at the home of Bob Hosh in Somerset** (directions will be sent or emailed to registrants)

Bob Hosh will conduct a hands-on cooking workshop using different mushrooms. Participants will enjoy eating their results. ***This class is limited to 10 people.*** Be sure to register early. \$20.00 fee

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## **Saturday, May 31**

### **10:00am to 12:00 noon – CULTIVATION WORKSHOP**

**at the home of Gene Varney, Somerset, NJ** (directions will be sent or emailed to registrants)

Gene Varney will discuss and provide materials for oyster mushroom cultivation. Enoki and shiitake cultivation will be discussed. Shiitake logs may be available for purchase from Alex Adams. ***This class is limited to 15 people.*** \$15.00 fee

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## **Saturday, June 14**

### **10:00am to 3:00pm – WORKING WITH DIGITAL PHOTOS (New class!)**

**at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum**

Do you know the difference between JPEG and TIFF? Do you understand the relationship between resolution and print quality? Want to learn how to clean up your digital photos? Jim Barg will help and take your questions.

A “must” for anyone wishing to enter our annual photo contest! ***This class is limited to 12 people.*** \$10.00 fee

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## **Sunday, June 22**

### **1:00pm to 4:00pm – FUNGI CRAFT WORKSHOP (New class!)**

**at the Great Swamp NWR Bookstore and Gift Shop**

Join Susan Hopkins and Dorothy Smullen in this hands-on workshop to create felted bowls made from wool fleece (some mushroom dyed) and hand-crafted paper beads made from polypore fungi.

***This class is limited to 12 people.*** \$20.00 fee

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## **Saturday, June 28**

### **9:30am to 12:00pm – ASCOMYCETES**

**Rutgers University, Foran Hall (Cook College campus)**

Gene Varney will present the basics of this fascinating group that includes morels, truffles, cup fungi, earth tongues, carbon fungi, and others by illustrated lecture and use of microscopes. ***Limited to 15 participants.*** \$10.00 fee

### **12:30pm to 3:00pm – KEYING WITH MICROSCOPY (New class!)**

Glenn Boyd will lead us through a Power Point presentation using keys and micro-photos to teach us how to identify genera, sections, and species. Provisional notes on Amanitas, Russulas, LBMs and other mushrooms will be provided. ***Limited to 15 participants.*** \$10.00 fee

## DIRECTIONS to the FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NWR Bookstore and Gift Shop

Take exit 30 A from Rt. 287. Follow through Basking Ridge on N. and S. Maple Ave. Make a left onto Lord Stirling Rd. Continue on dirt road over small bridge. Road is now called White Bridge Rd. Turn left on Pleasant Plains Rd. Continue past the turn for the refuge headquarters (closed on weekends). Watch for sign on the right for the Friends Bookstore. (Note: Do not try to get there from Madisonville Rd. The bridge is closed.)

## DIRECTIONS to RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, FORAN HALL

**From NJ Turnpike:** Take Exit 9, bear right to Rte 18 N, New Brunswick. Follow 18 to Rte 1 S. \*Follow Route 1 south past Sears and Ryders Lane exit to next exit @ Squibb Dr./College Farm Road. At end of ramp turn right onto College Farm Road. \*\*Go past NJ Museum of Agriculture and barns to 4-way stop. Turn right at stop sign, go past Food Science building on left to adjacent parking lot #90. Follow path to Foran Hall, a large new building behind parking lot.

**From Rte 1 or 130 from the South:** At intersection of 1 and 130 go north on Rt.1. Pass DeVry Institute on right and take next exit onto Squibb Dr./College Farm Road. Follow U-turn under Rte 1 to stop sign. Turn left onto College Farm Road and continue from \*\* in the directions above.

**From Rte 287:** Take Rte 287 to exit 9, River Road. From exit ramp keep right onto River Road. Follow River Road to lights where you turn right on Rte 18 over the Raritan River. Continue on Rte. 18 to exit for Rte 1 S. Follow from \* above.

**Alternate route from Rte 287:** From 287 take Exit 10 to Easton Ave, Rte 527. Follow Easton to end at the RR station in New Brunswick. Turn left on Albany St. and then right at light onto George Street. Follow George through the city and at about the 9th light turn right onto Nichol Ave. and then left at the bookstore onto 1-way Lipman Drive. Continue straight at the curve in the road to 4-way-stop, then turn left and park in lot #90 on left next to Food Science building. On the weekend, you can park on Lipman Drive and ignore the parking meters.

## DIRECTIONS TO UNITARIAN & FRELINGHUYSEN ARBORETUM – See front page of this newsletter

### REGISTRATION FORM for NJMA EDUCATION CLASSES 2008

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your check, along with this completed form, at least 7 days before the **first** class for which you're registering. Remember, classes are limited in size.

Send check, made out to "NJMA", to: **Igor Safonov, 2215 Arch St. #501, Philadelphia, PA 19103**

APRIL 5	FREE BEGINNER CLASS I	FREE	x	_____	persons = total	_____
APRIL 5	GILLED MUSHROOM FIELD I.D.	\$10.00	x	_____	persons = total	_____
APRIL 6	FREE BEGINNER CLASS II	FREE	x	_____	persons = total	_____
MAY 17	COOKING WITH FUNGI	\$20.00	x	_____	persons = total	_____
MAY 31	CULTIVATION WORKSHOP	\$15.00	x	_____	persons = total	_____
JUNE 14	WORKING WITH DIGITAL PHOTOS	\$10.00	x	_____	persons = total	_____
JUNE 22	FUNGI CRAFT WORKSHOP	\$20.00	x	_____	persons = total	_____
JUNE 28	ASCOMYCETES	\$10.00	x	_____	persons = total	_____
JUNE 28	KEYING WITH MICROSCOPY	\$10.00	x	_____	persons = total	_____

Questions? Call Igor Safonov at 215-313-1764  
or Dorothy Smullen at 908-647-5740

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: You may wish to copy the other side of this page before clipping and mailing this application.

# NJMA CULINARY GROUP CONTINUES ITS LONG TRADITION

by Bob Hosh

The NJMA Culinary Group continues its 25-plus-year history. Jim Richards and I guided it for over 15 years in the past, and will now do so again. Over the years, we've had some wonderful dinners inspired by cultures and cuisines from around the world. We hope to add Japanese to our list in the near future. We also plan to have mushroom dishes at each dinner.

For newcomers to NJMA, the Culinary Group was formed to bring NJMA members together to socialize and enjoy a gourmet dinner. The dinners are not pot-luck: the dinner menus are, in large part, planned by Jim and myself, and the recipes for the dishes are assigned to those individuals attending the dinner. They, in turn, keep and submit their recipe cost receipts, to which is added the cost of rental of the dinner location. The total then is divided by the number attending to determine the individual cost. Payment or reimbursement is settled at the end of the meal.

Our next Culinary Group Dinner will be held on March 29, 2008 at the Unitarian Society in East Brunswick. The theme will be Hungarian, which we have not done in many years.

So, if you like to cook, would like to meet other members of the NJMA, and enjoy a gourmet meal with mushrooms and talk about mushrooms, contact Jim Richards at [jimrich35@verizon.net](mailto:jimrich35@verizon.net) or 908-852-1674, or myself at [rhosh@patmedia.net](mailto:rhosh@patmedia.net) or 732-873-1406 for reservations or more information.

Remember: there is a limit to the number attending a dinner, so get your reservations in soon.



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## A SPECIAL THANK YOU!

by Bob Hosh

The 2008 NJMA Mycophagy meeting was a success. This was largely due to the wonderful, enthusiastic help Jim and I received from club members. Since the plan was to prepare fewer dishes and serve larger portions than in the past, it meant that a lot of before-the-event preparation and assistance was needed. Somewhere in the vicinity of 50 pounds of fresh mushrooms and vegetables had to be sliced and diced beforehand. Luckily, a crew of dedicated volunteers came to my house the day before the mycophagy event to do the slicing, categorizing, packaging and labeling of the mushrooms and vegetables. Jim and I, as well as the club, owe a generous thanks to Margaret Papai, Rob and Claudia Robinson, Patrick Bernardo, Nina Burghardt, Jim Barg and Carole Reines for their generous help on Saturday. Sunday, at the meeting, Jim and I were ably

assisted in the kitchen by Margaret Papai, Steve Zahorbenski, Patrick Bernardo, and Bob Carvello. In the auditorium, Pat Bogue came to our rescue in helping find Table Captains for each table and getting the flow of serving the completed dishes organized. Jim Barg, Mike Mudrak, Mike Rubin, and others were helpful gofers when needed. Mycophagy would not have happened without all of these dedicated and wonderful people and their help.

Jim and I can't thank you all enough.

*Note from Jim Richards:*

A very special thanks to Bob and the crew who prepped on Saturday. And to Nina, who went to Phillips Mushroom Farms on Friday to get the mushrooms that we used. I was unable to attend to make Saturday's work-a-thon because I had to work. All of their effort made Sunday's session that much easier.



ASK A QUESTION OR SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

**NJMA YAHOO GROUP**  
[tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/NJMYCO](http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/NJMYCO)

A free forum on the Internet for NJMA members to share mushrooming experiences and to freely exchange any kind of mycological information.

For full details on joining this group, see the July/August 2007 issue of this newsletter.

**Join now, and start communicating!**

## NJMA ART EXHIBITION AT FRELINGHUYSEN ARBORETUM SEPTEMBER 2008

For the first time in many, many years (the last one was at the first Fungus Fest in 1979), NJMA members will have an opportunity to display and sell their art as an introduction to Fungus Fest. The gallery space at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum is designated and available for our use for the month of September.

Original works of art (paintings, photographs, graphics, etc.) by NJMA members will be showcased from Sunday, August 31 until the end of September.

All work must be framed and ready to hang when received by the Exhibit Committee.

Frelinghuysen Arboretum will receive a 20% commission on all sales.

More information will be available in the next newsletter and on our website, [www.njmyco.org](http://www.njmyco.org).

If you are interested in working on the Exhibit Committee or in submitting works for display, please contact Jim Richards at [jimrich35@verizon.net](mailto:jimrich35@verizon.net) or at 908-852-1674.





## RECIPE FILE

### *Mushrooms Forestiere*

by Bob Hosh

(This dish was demonstrated and cooked in quantity at the February 2008 NJMA Mycophagy meeting.)

- 16 ounces Cremini mushrooms, wiped clean and quartered**
- 1 ounce dried *Boletus edulis*, reconstituted in boiling water, drained, and minced**
- 2 ounces double-smoked bacon, cut into small dice**
- 2 lbs. red skinned potatoes, boiled in their jackets, peeled and diced**
- 1/3 cup bell pepper, diced**
- 1/4 cup minced onion**
- 1/4 cup canola oil**
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme**
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram**
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, minced**
- 1 chicken breast, poached and diced**
- Salt and pepper to taste**

1. In a large, heavy skillet cook the double-smoked bacon in 1 tablespoon canola oil until just crisp; remove bacon with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain.
2. Add the additional 2 tablespoons of oil to the skillet and the quartered mushrooms as well as the minced *Boletus edulis*. Sauté for 3 to 4 minutes.
3. Add the onion and bell pepper. Sauté for another minute.
4. Add the diced chicken breast and the boiled, diced potatoes and cook, stirring frequently, over medium heat until the ingredients start to brown slightly.
5. Add the herbs, salt, and pepper.

Serves 4-6

## SOOTY SCORIAS SPONGIOSA

by Nina Burghardt

I find it quite invigorating to walk through the woods on these crisp winter days. No bugs, no heat, but still quite a few fungi. Sometimes, with a little luck, a batch of oysters (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) can be found festooning a log, such as the one my husband and son found the other day. The oysters had apparently fruited during a brief warm spell and froze right away. They were chipped off the host log and stayed frozen right into the pan.

One fungus you will be sure to find this winter is *Scorias spongiosa*. You will see this black, spongy mass on beech branches. In the early fall, it was cream colored, but later it turned black as it reached maturity.

*Scorias spongiosa*, an ascomycete, belongs to a group of fungi bunched together as “sooty fungi.” (Type ‘*Scorias spongiosa*’ into your search engine and you’ll find nothing, but if you type ‘sooty fungi,’ you’ll get tons of hits.)

*Scorias spongiosa* lives off of the honey dew (excrement) of the Beech Aphid (*Grylloprociphilus imbricator*). This curious insect lives on beech trees, in large colonies resembling snow. When the colony is threatened, each insect picks up its rear end and wiggles. Hundreds of insects wiggling their posteriors resemble a dance, giving them the nickname ‘Boogie Woogie Aphid.’ The Beech Aphid thrives in hot dry weather, such as we had last summer.

The honey dew these insects produce is a mixture of sugars, amino acids, proteins, minerals, and vitamins. The mixture supports the fungus, which grows below the aphids. The mycelium of the fungus absorbs moisture from the air, which glues the fungus to a branch. It does a very good job. I have tried to pull the fungus off a branch and it is impossible.

In 2005, a high school student, Ailish Bateman, extracted a chemical, scoriosin, which showed promise as an antibiotic effective against three kinds of Gram-positive bacteria.

You can find out more about this interesting fungus at Tom Volk’s web site, [www.tomvolkfungi.net](http://www.tomvolkfungi.net), as the September 2007 Fungus of the Month, and in the Mycological Association of Washington DC’s newsletter *Potomac Sporophore* (December 2005). This fungus is becoming more common in New Jersey as the summers get hotter and drier. Look for it the next time you walk in the woods.



*Scorias spongiosa* growing below a colony of Beech Aphids, *Grylloprociphilus imbricator*

# WHO'S IN A NAME?

## Two Early Southern Collectors

by John Dawson (part 7 of a series)

It might seem a dubious distinction to have a stinkhorn named after you — much less two stinkhorns! But that is the case for Henry William Ravenel (1814-1887), who is commemorated both by *Mutinus ravenelii* (Berk. & M.A. Curtis) E. Fisch and *Phallus ravenelii* Berk. & M.A. Curtis. In addition, *Index Fungorum* lists 112 other botanical names with the epithet *ravenelii*, and 305 species in the fungal genus *Ravenelia*.

Ravenel was one of the earliest botanical collectors in the American South, following in the footsteps of Lewis David Schweinitz. Born in St. Johns, South Carolina, on his father's plantation "Pooshee" (today inundated by the waters of Lake Moultrie), he lived in that state his entire life. Of Huguenot ancestry, he was educated at the private Pinefield Academy and afterward at South Carolina College (later the University of South Carolina), from which he graduated in 1832. He aimed initially to become a physician, like his father before him, but the latter dissuaded him from doing so, because he believed that his son's constitution was too frail for that calling. Instead, his father gave him land and slaves for his own plantation, and Henry William went on to prosper as a planter.

Thus freed from the toil of earning a living (until the Civil War caused the collapse of the plantation economy), Ravenel was inspired by a visiting naturalist, Charles Hyde Olmstead, to take up botany as an avocation. He began avidly collecting plants, and around 1846 turned his attention to fungi. At first he knew little about taxonomy, so he sent his finds to others for identification. He worked especially with Moses Ashley Curtis of Hillsboro, North Carolina, who was in contact with Miles Joseph Berkeley in England. For some years Curtis kept Ravenel from corresponding directly with Berkeley, but eventually Ravenel's diligence and renown as a collector led Berkeley and many other famous mycologists to seek him out. Over the years his correspondents included such luminaries as Asa Gray, William Gilson Farlow, Mordecai Cubitt Cooke and Charles Horton Peck.

Between 1853 and 1860, Ravenel published the first series ever compiled of named specimens of American fungi, a five-volume set entitled *Fungi Caroliniani Exsiccati*. Later, in the wake of the Civil War, he was forced to sell



specimens he collected as a source of income (though his own plantation was not sacked by marauding Union troops, as many were). Accordingly, during the years 1878–82 he published a second 8-volume set of exsiccati.

At one time, Ravenel was offered professorships in Botany at the University of California and at Washington College in Lexington, VA, but he turned down those opportunities because of his increasing deafness. He also gave up microscopical work later in life, due to the eyestrain and fatigue it induced, and for many years he suffered prolonged bouts of dyspepsia, which caused him to be rejected for Confederate military service and ultimately led him to leave his plantation and move to Aiken, South Carolina (ostensibly a healthier locale).

In 1835 Ravenel married Elizabeth Snowden, and three years after her death in 1855 he married Mary Dawson (no relation to the present author). She survived him, together with four children from his first marriage and five from the second. She later sold most of the cryptogamic specimens from his large herbarium to the British Museum. The phanerogamic specimens were purchased by a distant relative, who donated them to Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Ravenel's papers, on the other hand, are preserved in the University of South Carolina library.

Ravenel is the subject of a full-length biography by Tamara Miner Haygood (*Henry William Ravenel, 1814–1887: South Carolina Scientist in the Civil War Era*), in which mention is also made of his contemporary Thomas Minott Peters (1810–1888). Peters was another southern collector, for whom *Camarops petersii* (Berk. & M.A. Curtis) Nannf. and some 35 other species of fungi are presumably named. But unlike the slave-holding Ravenel, Peters was a Union sympathizer who opposed both slavery and secession and championed the rights of women. A graduate of the University of Alabama, he was a lawyer who served in the Alabama legislature, first as a representative and then as senator. In 1869 he was appointed to the Alabama Supreme Court, where he served as an associate justice for six years and as chief justice during 1873–74. Peters was a collector not only of fungi but of ferns, lichens, and sedges, and his mycological herbarium and mounted specimens of *Carex* species were bequeathed to the University of Alabama.



PHOTO BY JIM BARG

*Phallus ravenelii*



## **NJMA NEWS**

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### **FIRST CLASS MAIL**

*NJMA is a non-profit organization whose aims are to provide a means for sharing ideas, experiences, knowledge, and common interests regarding fungi, and to furnish mycological information and educational materials to those who wish to increase their knowledge about mushrooms.*

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## ***Gyromitra korfii***



Commonly called "false morels", *Gyromitra* species are easily differentiated from true morels by their internal chambering. While a true morel has a single internal chamber, *Gyromitras* have multiple chambers and often have a much more gnarled surface appearance. They contain a small amount of monomethyl hydrazine, which is the toxic fuel used on the Space Shuttle. Mushrooms in this genus have definitely caused poisonings, no matter how much they've been boiled. This is definitely NOT an edible fungus (at least in the US)!