



# S O M M A

VOLUME 24 : 8

APRIL 2012



## SPEAKER OF THE MONTH

**Jenny Talbot**

April 19th at 7pm

## **Dishing the dirt on decomposition: how soil fungi shape the ecosystem carbon cycle**

Fungi regulate critical processes that control the cycling of carbon (C) and nutrients through ecosystems. As a NOAA Climate and Global Change Postdoctoral Fellow, Jenny studies the fine-scale chemical mechanisms that soil fungi use to drive these large-scale processes. One of the most important, but poorly understood processes that fungi control is the decomposition of dead plant and microbial biomass (i.e. litter). To gain insight into this complex process, she uses tools and concepts from her background in chemistry to identify species of decomposer fungi that are key players in decomposition and nutrient cycling world-wide, as well as in our own backyards.

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## CALENDAR

April 4th	Board Meeting
April 19th	Speaker at Farm Bureau at 7pm <i>Jenny Talbot</i>
April 21st	Foray at Salt Point State Park
May 2nd	Board Meeting
May 17th	Speaker at Farm Bureau at 7pm <i>Mia Maltz</i>

## LIMERICKS BY CHARMOON

I once heard a blewit exclaim  
Just why is that my name?  
I'm actually purplish  
Becoming maple syruplicious  
Blue ain't my claim to fame

I once heard a bolete shout out  
There's some hungry deer about  
Hide if you can  
Or try to look bland  
Or you'll get eaten without a doubt

## EMERGENCY MUSHROOM POISONING ID



After seeking medical attention, contact Darvin DeShazer for identification at (707) 829-0596. Photos should be emailed to: [muscaria@pacbell.net](mailto:muscaria@pacbell.net) and need to show all sides of the mushroom. Please **do not** send photos taken with cell phones – the resolution is simply too poor to allow accurate identification. NOTE: Always be 100% sure of the identification of any and all mushrooms before you eat them!

This is a free service for hospitals, veterinarians, and other concerned citizens of Sonoma County.

## FROM THE FRONT DESK

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# President's Letter

## DISPATCH FROM THE DUFF

### March Foray

With the rain in the middle of March we were excited about our foray on the 24th and possible mushroom finds at Salt Point State Park. About 35 people attended and had another fine and almost dry day in the woods. Most everyone found a few hedgehogs to taste and some blacks were discovered as well. We left the park under threatening skies and made it back home with minutes to spare before another soppy storm came through the West County.

### Science Fair

Over 75 students brought their projects to the Life Sciences section of the Healdsburg Science Fair held at the Villa Chanticleer, in Healdsburg. All projects were well done and worthy of note. Rachel Zierdt and I shared the difficult task to select 5 projects for recognition and special awards. The recipients received a monetary award and a nice certificate from SOMA acknowledging their outstanding work. This was the last science fair we had the opportunity to participate in for 2012 and we are looking forward to next year's events.

### General Meeting Speaker

Daniel Winkler, a geographer and ecologist, as well as a longtime supporter of SOMA and a frequent SOMA Camp participant, gave a talk on "Mushrooming" to a group of about 40 folks at the Farm Bureau on March 22nd. Daniel, from Munich, Germany, but now a resident of Seattle, Washington, discussed wild mushroom finds in Southern Bavaria, Central America, and Tibet. His photos and descriptions of the landscapes and wild mushrooms of each area gave everyone a clear idea of the foraging opportunities that await there. The economic impact of mushroom collection in areas of Tibet was an interesting part of his talk. To quote Daniel's website, "the trade and use of *Cordyceps sinensis* or the Caterpillar fungus, as it is known to Tibetans, has a long-standing history in Tibetan Medicine and culture. Although ancient local traditions warn that digging of Yartsa would provoke local spirits, its collection dates back centuries. It has been - and is now more than ever - one of the most important sources of income for rural Tibetans, especially nomadic communities, who often derive over 50% of their annual cash income from its collection in spring and early summer". Daniel is putting together another trip to Tibet this June. If you are interested please see his website, <http://www.danielwinkler.com>

### SOMA Camp 2013

Our camp committee of four, continue to follow the set of tasks they created and the timeline recommended to ensure SOMA Camp 2013 will be as successful as possible. Today, our path seems straight forward and not many significant problems have been encountered or unresolved. Perhaps the real challenge will begin in the next phase of the planning and scheduling process. We would like to invite anyone interested in helping to join this important effort. The group meets once a month at reasonable hours and enjoys a jovial couple of hours laying out their thoughts on the best strategy and activities for SOMA Camp 2013.

As an aside, a recent article in the local paper noted that the Ocean Conservancy reported that nearly 9,000,000 pounds of trash was picked up on the International Coastal Cleanup on September 17, 2011. More than 600,000 volunteers walked along 20,000 miles of coastline to restore the coast to a cleaner condition. We are certainly proud to have contributed 75 pounds of debris our group collected along Highway One at SPSP on that date.

Best regards — Jim Wheeler

## WHAT'S STIRRING IN THE DYE POT?

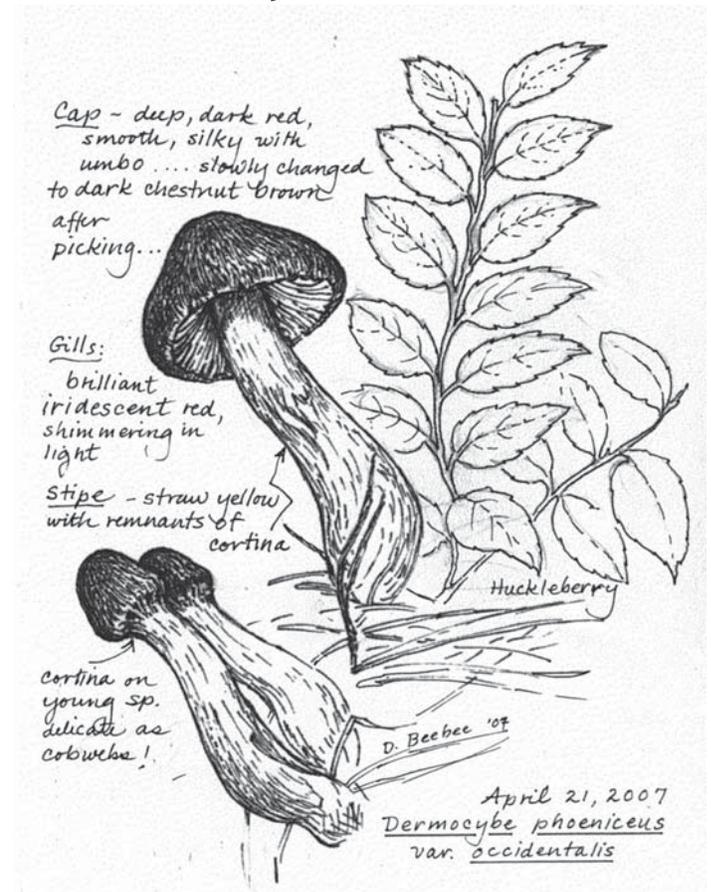
# End of another Mushroom Dye Season...

Dorothy Beebee ©2002

(This was originally written 10 years ago, but is still relevant today in 2012, with one exception... my daughter Myra has now become interested [obsessed] in learning about mushroom dyes, so the season may last a little bit longer, especially since the *Dermocybes* are apparently still showing their dark red-brown capped red-gilled little selves out at Salt Point and a friend from up in Redding gifted me with a bag of dried *Omphalotus olivascens*... so tune in next month to see what transpired! DBB, April 2012)

I finally realized that once again, the Sonoma County mushroom-dye season is subsiding. This time I'm not saving any of the leftover dyes, because I've noticed that many lose their color and rapidly deteriorate after a few months in solution – of course I haven't tried freezing the dye baths because there just isn't the room in my fridge... The only one I'm holding on to is a large glass jar of *Pisolithus tinctorius*, but the *Phaeolus schweinitzii* is so common around here, there's no point in saving the leftover dye. Better to dry the mushrooms or freeze them while fresh and make new dye liquors as needed. Thanks to my fervent SOMA foray collectors, I've had a nice choice of dried fungi to take to demonstrations and classes this year, and they travel well (in the cargo hold)... *Dermocybes* spp, *Omphalotus olivascens*, *Pholiota spectabilis*, *Sarcodon fusco-indicus* and many of the Hydnaceae have produced tried and true (and in some cases even more intense color) in dye pots out of state when nothing fresh is available for a demonstration... Thank you again, friends!

I think that the *Dermocybes* still emit the most vivid hues when used fresh, but this year I tried drying *Omphalotus olivascens* for the first time, and was amazed at the intense purples (with alum mordant) and deep forest greens (with iron) they produced when reconstituted in the dye pot months later. Another discovery: I've applied and extended Miriam Rice's technique of pouring boiling water over the *Dermocybes* to check the color, to actually letting the fibers (wool, silk, and mohair) steep in the dye for 24 - 48 hours on the back of the wood stove – no cooking – to produce some



truly amazing color. I'm now doing this with many of my dyes, and the resulting color has a clarity and brilliance not matched by the cooking method! Patience is the lesson, and it is richly rewarded!!! (Bye, bye PG&E...) And this works with the dried mushrooms as well as the fresh. I tried this many years ago with natural dyes from plants, making a "sun-tea" with the dyes for wonderfully clear colors. It would be an interesting experiment to do some tests for comparative light fastness using the 2 methods... How important is the element of heat for light and color-fastness of mushroom dyes??? Any experimenters out there?

## ATTENTION ALL ARTISTS!

The SOMA Board of Directors is looking for talented artists to submit original artwork for our 2013 SOMA camp official t-shirt. This year, Dorothy Beebee produced an exceptional graphic using mushrooms with the "hidden" letters of SOMA integrated in the picture. We encourage those of you who took the drawing class at camp with David Gardella – as well as those who didn't – to come forward and share your artwork. The winning artist will be given a free t-shirt, recognition and gratitude. All artwork will be returned to the artists. All entries must be submitted by June 1st, 2012. It's winter now, so use your extra evening hours indoors to refine and finish up what you started, or begin again with a new inspiration.

Please bring entries to regular meetings at the Farm Bureau or contact Rachel Zierdt at [rzierdt@gmail.com](mailto:rzierdt@gmail.com).

# HEALDSBURG SCIENCE FAIR

Rachel Zierdt

The arrival of rain could not dampen Jim Wheeler and my enthusiasm to travel through our puddle-filled potholed roads and along swollen edges of the Santa Rosa Laguna to Healdsburg for our second year of judging at the Healdsburg Science Fair. Helping to fulfill SOMA's vision statement, the Board again agreed to allow our scholarships to be presented to students of all grades. We were hoping that by presenting awards SOMA would encourage the study of science by capable students.

Villa Chanticleer was the setting again for Healdsburg's Science Fair held on March 13–15th. We judged on Tuesday March 13th and Michael Miller handed out our awards on March 15th. Life Science Projects spanning grades 1-12 were laid out neatly around the room. It was a huge task to survey and pare down and ultimately choose winners. Many projects were similar in nature... *How long does it take for a carnation to take up color?...* *What do we use on an apple to prevent it from turning brown?* Of the over 120 projects, we did find many with interesting questions and fortunately for us there were a few that had mycological content so we immediately started to focus on those. In the lower grades we presented an honorable mention and \$25 to Adam Perez a third grader at St. John's for his Mold on Cheese experiment. Joey Seghesio, a 6th grader also of St. John's, manipulated temperatures for his Monster Mushroom exhibit. He also received \$25. Jacqueline Sandoval at 6th grader at Healdsburg Jr. High won \$25 for discovering that molds grew faster in sunlight

in her Fruit Molds project.

Our top winners were two 8th graders from Healdsburg Junior High. Joe Tomerlin in his Vinegar in the Vineyard project asked *what agent works most effectively against powdery mildew?* He used vinegar, baking soda, soap and a combination of two of these at a time. He discovered how persistent mold can be and found that although vinegar and baking soda were effective against the white powder, nothing was helpful against black spot except the industry standard lime-sulfur. He is planning on rechecking his results after bud-break to see if any of those substances would work better than since lime-sulfur is not usually used after bud-break since it harms the new growth. He received \$100 for his project along with his teacher Mr. Blumert.

Our final winner was Sam Nautokas who presented a very unique and thought provoking question. He asked *can simple life forms survive on Europa?* (a moon of Jupiter) Europa has an ocean made up of water, ammonia, and sulfuric acid. He tested yeast (monocellular fungi) to see if it could withstand highly saline water. He found that the organism did survive in water with twice the salinity as found in earth's oceans as well as surviving in high concentrations of ammonia. We wonder if Sam will be expecting to find simple life forms when as an astronaut, he might make a trip into space.? He also received \$100 along with his teacher Mr. Blumert.

Both Jim and I enjoyed our evening and left a bit more enlightened than when we arrived. We proved, once again, you are never too old to learn...

## EVENTS OF INTEREST

### **30th Annual Morel Mushroom Festival**

May 19–20 2012

Muscoda, WI

<http://www.muscoda.com/event-morels-2012.html>

### **Mushroom Mardi Gras**

May 26–27 2012

Downtown, Morgan Hill, CA

<http://www.mhmmg.org/>

### **NAMA Southwest Regional Foray**

August 31 – September 1 2012

Portal, AZ

<http://namyco.org/events/>

### **27th Annual Mushroom Festival**

September 8–9 2012

Kennett Square, PA

<http://www.mushroomfestival.org/>

### **NAMA 52nd Annual Foray**

December 13-16 2012

Scott's Valley, CA

<http://www.namyco.org/events/NAMA2012/index2012.html>



Photo credit: Christine and David Schmitt / Flickr

# SALT POINT STATE PARK REPORT

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Michael Miller

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Since there was pounding rain elsewhere in the county, people were a bit discouraged about going to the coast, so the turn-out for the March foray at Salt Point was slimmer than usual. Still, 35 people arrived at Woodside Campground and experienced only the slightest of sprinkles. Our Fearless Leader Jim Wheeler rounded up a few volunteers and set up our awning in case of downpours, and several people set up stoves and pots before heading out into the woods.

We had hoped that the recent rains would have brought back loads of our favorite edibles, but pickings were a bit sparse on Saturday in many places. However, many people found chanterelles, hedgehogs

and candy caps, and there were still a good variety, with over 47 species brought to the ID tables. Our favorite barefoot mycologist George Riner provided identification.

After our foray we were greeted but tons of cold dishes, desserts and wine. The cooks had 4 stoves going at the same time. Tom Campbell brought potato-leek-curry soup, George Riner brought turkey sausage stew, Dick Perrone made Pasta Fazool and Finola Diaz brought a huge cauldron of Feijoada; a fantastic Brazilian stew.

Those who stayed at home had to be content with drenching rain and dreary skies. Those who headed to the coast stayed dry and warm, found some mushrooms and enjoyed the company of our friends at SOMA. Join us next month!

## FORAY SPECIES LIST

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George Riner

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*Amanita franchetii*  
*Amanita pantherina*  
*Annulohyphoxylon thouorasianum*  
*Boletus zelleri*  
*Cantharellus cibarius* var. *roseocanus*  
*Clavulina cinerea*  
*Cortinarius phoeniceus* v. *occidentalis*  
*Craterellus cornucopoides*  
*Craterellus tubaeformis*  
*Dacrymyces palmatus*  
*Entoloma* sp (3-4 species)  
*Hebeloma crustuliniforme*  
*Helvella* sp  
*Hydnum repandum*  
*Hydnum umbilicatum*  
*Hygrocybe coccinea*  
*Hygrocybe psittacina*  
*Hygrophorus sordidus*  
*Inocybe geophylla*  
*Inocybe* sp (3-4 species)  
*Phellinus gilvus*

*Lactarius rubidus*  
*Lactarius xanthogalactus*  
*Lenzites betulina*  
*Lyophyllum* sp  
*Mycena pura*  
*Omphalotus olivascens*  
*Panellus stipticus*  
*Pleurotus ostreatus*  
*Polyporus melanopus*  
*Psathyrella spadicea*  
*Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*  
*Ramaria* sp (3-4 species)  
*Rhizopogon ochraceorubens*  
*Rhodocollybia maculata* v. *scorzonerea*  
*Russula* sp (4-5 species)  
*Sterem complicatum/hirsutum*  
*Suillus caeruleus*  
*Suillus* sp  
*Tremella foliacea*  
*Tricholoma* sp  
*Trichaptum abietinum*  
*Turbinellus floccosus*

### JOIN SOMA!

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Membership in the Sonoma County Mycological Association (SOMA) is a great way to meet and interact with other mushroom enthusiasts, learn more about identifying fungi, and share interests such as cooking and cultivating mushrooms. Sure, most of what SOMA does is open to the public, but wouldn't you rather join SOMA and get all the goodies?

Check out our membership page on the web...

<http://somamushrooms.org/membership/membership.html>

# SOMA

PO Box 7147  
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

## Issue 24:8 APRIL 2012

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**SOMA usually meets on the third Thursday of the month throughout the year (September through May), at 7 PM, at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, 970 Piner Road, Santa Rosa, California. Fungi are displayed at 7 PM, and speakers begin at 7:45 PM. Bring in your baffling fungi to be identified!**

### Directions to the Sonoma County Farm Bureau

From the south:

- Go north on Hwy 101
- Pass the Steel Lane exit then take the Bicentennial Way exit
- Go over Hwy 101 (heading west) and then right on Range Ave
- Turn left on Piner Rd and go about 1/4 mile
- Turn left into Farm Bureau parking lot at 970 Piner Rd

From the north:

- Go south on Hwy 101
- Take the first Santa Rosa exit for Hopper Ave/Mendocino Ave
- Stay left on the frontage road (it becomes Cleveland Ave)
- Turn right on Piner Rd and go about 1/4 mile
- Turn left into Farm Bureau parking lot at 970 Piner Rd

