

# WESTERN PA MUSHROOM CLUB

Volume 1 , Issue 1

Temp. Editor, John & Becky Plischke

April-May 2000

President: Mary Woehrel V. President: John Plischke Secretary: Valerie Baker Treasurer: Jack Baker

## POISONOUS PUFFBALL

Not all puffballs are edible. The pigskin puffball (*scleroderma citrina*) is poisonous. It may be as small as an eraser or as large as three inches or more. The flesh when young may be white. The flesh when older is blue-black to black or a rotting brown color when aging. It gets it's name from the fact that the skin is leathery like pigskin. The pigskin poison puffball should be avoided at all costs.

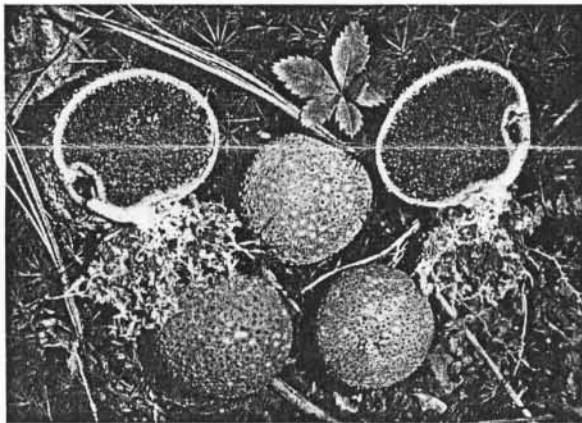


Photo by John Plischke III

## MEETING SET

Except for January and February, meetings will be held the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Beechwood Nature Reserve, which is the home of the Audubon Society of Western PA. Call Mary Woehrel at 412-828-3266 for information.

## DUES ARE DUE

The WPMC member dues schedule has been set at follows: family—\$15, individual—\$10, full time student — \$5. Member dues will be collected annually. Please forward dues to : Jack Baker, 1413 Parkmont Road, Allison Park, PA 15101. (412) 367-7696

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Mary Woehrel

The purpose of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is to promote the enjoyment, study, and exchange of information about wild mushrooms. Everyone who has an interest in wild mushrooms is welcome to become a member.

The WPMC goals are to:

- Provide organized Forays and Walks
- Teach scientific methods of wild mushroom identification
- Explore various art forms including photography
- Share wild mushroom recipes
- Educate the general public about the many aspects of wild mushrooms

As a WPMC member you will be entitled to:

- The WPMC newsletter
- Ten monthly WPMC meetings, weather permitting
- Free participation in all WPMC Mushroom Walks
- Fee discount for WPMC Forays
- Fee discount on WPMC sponsored merchandise

## CHICKEN BREASTS & MORELS

By Becky Plischke

Flour 4 chicken breasts.

Sauté in 2T butter & 2T oil.

Remove and keep warm in oven.

Add 3T butter & 2 dozen morels, cook till dry

Add 1/4 c beef broth and 1/4 c cream and cook to a sauce.

Add 2T lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Thicken if necessary.

Serve Chicken smothered in Morel Sauce.

# **NEEDED: Leaders for Mushroom Forays and Walks**

No mushroom identification skills are necessary. Take us to a place you like to walk and we'll help identify the mushrooms.

**MUSHROOM WALK** - an informal schedule\* - Your responsibilities are:

1. Choose a date, time, and location with available parking.
2. Be familiar with the area.
3. Obtain prior permission, preferably in writing, from the landowner or proper authorities for our club to pick mushrooms at specified locations.
4. Have each attendee sign: 1. a waiver form and 2. a sign-in sheet for names, addresses, and phone numbers. Afterwards, please give these to the Mushroom Foray / Walk Chairperson.
5. Decide on the length of time - 2 hours to all day.
6. Be sure that all attendees understand the agreed upon schedule for the walk.
7. Make sure that all attendees are accounted for at the end of the walk.
8. Keep a list of names and phone numbers of people who notify you that they plan to attend.
9. If you must cancel the Mushroom Walk, it is your responsibility to notify those who have given you their names and phone numbers of the walk's cancellation.

\*Attendees are to provide their own lunch, if needed.

Mushroom Walks are open to one and all.

There is no fee.

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**MUSHROOM FORAY** - a structured schedule\* - Your responsibilities are:

1. Choose a date, time and location with available parking.
2. Be familiar with the area.
3. Obtain prior permission, preferably in writing, from the land owner or proper authorities for our club to pick mushrooms at specified locations.
4. Reserve a covered pavilion or building. It needs to be of adequate size for displaying mushrooms on tables, to have space for additional mushroom activities and have adequate seating.
5. Inquire as to the availability of drinking water and electricity.
6. It is very unusual for a Mushroom Foray to be cancelled. \*There are usually no formal lunch or dinner arrangements.

Other considerations at a Mushroom Foray include: a Registration / Waiver Form Table, a Time Schedule for the Day, Refreshments, Mushroom Classes, Mushroom Books / Items Salesperson, an Evening Program, and so on. These responsibilities are delegated to other club members.

There may be a fee for attendees to help defray Mushroom Foray costs.

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PLEASE CONTACT GAIL BLAKELEY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SHE WILL NEED TO DISCUSS WITH YOU THE DETAILS AND HOPEFULLY ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS. IF POSSIBLE, HAVE TWO OR THREE DATES ALREADY PRIORITIZED SO THAT SCHEDULING CONFLICTS MAY BE AVOIDED.

**Foray/Walk Chairperson Gail Blakeley** at P 0 Box 222, Wampum, PA 16157  
724-535-4662 or gail2@bellatlantic.net

# WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA MUSHROOM CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

The purpose of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is to promote the enjoyment, study, and exchange of information about wild mushrooms. Everyone who has an interest in wild mushrooms is welcome to become a WPMC member. Members are entitled to:

- The WPMC newsletter
- Ten monthly WPMC meetings - weather permitting
- Free participation in all WPMC Mushroom Walks
- Fee discount for WPMC Weekend Forays
- Fee discount on WPMC sponsored merchandise

Dues are as follows: (Please circle one)

Individual \$10

Family \$15

Full time student \$5

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

## RELEASE

I (We) realize that when engaged in wild mushroom activities, that serious physical injury and personal property damage may accidentally occur. I (We) further realize that there is always the possibility of having an allergic reaction to or being poisoned by the eating of wild mushrooms and that these adverse reactions to eating wild mushrooms range from mild indigestion to fatal illness.

**Knowing the risks, I (we) agree to assume the risks, and agree to release, hold harmless, and to indemnify the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, and any officer or member thereof, from any and all legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred by myself or my family during or as a result of any mushroom identification, field trip, excursion, meeting or dining, sponsored by the club.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return form and money to:  
Treasurer WPMC  
Jack Baker  
1413 Parkmont Rd  
Allison Park, PA 15101

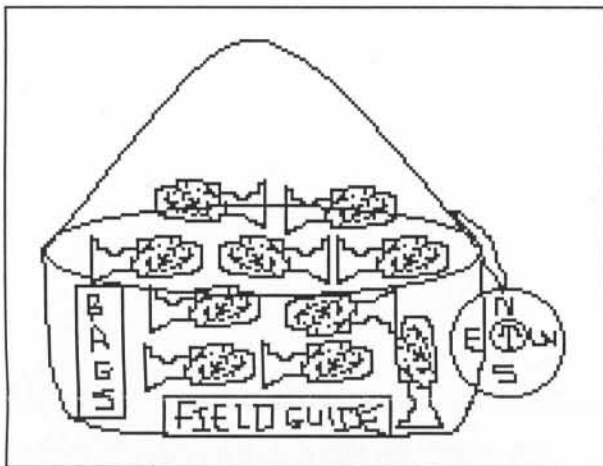
# MOREL MUSHROOMS

by  
John Plischke III

## EQUIPMENT

### Basket

Morels are somewhat fragile and should be collected in a basket. The first thing I look for when choosing a basket is the direction of the handle. It should go from the front to the back of the basket when it is held at your side. The handle should be connected to the widest ends of the basket. After the right basket is purchased it can be stained a quiet color and varnished to protect it. There are many things besides mushrooms that can be put in your basket. I often keep a field guide, bags, mace and a camera in it. I also like to attach a compass and a whistle to my basket with a piece of string just in case I become lost.



### Bags

I prefer to keep my mushrooms in wax paper bags. Cutright makes them but they can be difficult to find. Plastic bags should not be used because they make the mushrooms rot quickly. I also like to use brown paper lunch bags and a camouflage netted bag when I am hunting in a location where I need to conceal them.

### Knives

I like to use a penknife with three blades. I use the large blade for cutting edible mushrooms and one of the smaller blades for digging them up with. I prefer to cut the mushrooms off at the base with a knife instead of just pulling them out of the ground. I do this for two reasons, first, so that I do not disturb the mushrooms mycelium, which I feel increases the chance of the morels reappearing the next year and second, to keep the morels clean. When morels are pulled out of the ground and thrown into the basket dirt gets all over them and it even gets into the pits. It can be very time consuming if not impossible to remove dirt from the morels.

### Walking Sticks

A good walking stick is not only useful in helping you maneuver through rugged territory where morels are often found but it is also helpful earlier in the year to scrape away raised leaves which may have morels underneath pushing them up. Late into the season it can be used to push may-apple leaves gently out of the way so you can look underneath them for morels. It also makes me feel a little safer if I come across a poisonous snake or wild dog.



## MORELS

### How To Search

While walking, I find that it is easier for me to look up a hill rather than down. Generally, south and east facing hillsides are the most productive for early morels while west and north slopes are the best to look on for end of season morels. Once you have found a morel stop and look in a ten-foot circle around it because there are often others nearby. Walk slowly, turn often.

### The Effect of Elevation

The mountainous areas usually produce mushrooms a week or so later than the lower elevations but they continue to produce morels for about a week after the lower areas stop fruiting.

### Where To Find Morels

If you know the right types of trees to look under your chances of finding morels dramatically increases. Here in PA, I like to look for morels under tulip poplar trees, in dying apple orchards, and under dead and dying elm. Occasionally I will look under ash.

### When To Look

The earliest I ever found morels was April 4<sup>th</sup> and then just a few. The latest I found them was the end of May but by that time the woods were grown up and it was almost impossible to see the few remaining old morels on the forest floor.

### Types of Morels

There are several basic types of morels. There are black morels (*Morchella conica*), which are the first to be found. There is the Yellow Morel (*Morchella esculenta*), which can be found with the larger Giant Morel (*Morchella crassipes*). There is also the Half Free Morel (*Morchella semilibera*).

### False Morels

There are a number of morels, which should not be eaten. THEY CAN POISON AND POSSIBLY KILL YOU, even the true morels can have side effects. Some mushrooms which you should avoid at all costs include *Verpa conica*, *Verpa bohemica*, *Helvella* and *Gyromitra* species. Read and study your field guide carefully. Err on the side of caution.

**Western PA Mushroom Club**  
1413 Parkmont Road  
Allison Park, PA 15101

**MUSHROOM MANIA**

**MAY 20**

**MEETING—THIRD**

**TUESDAY OF**

**MARCH, APRIL, MAY**

**Mushroom Mania**

Saturday, May 20 10 am—4 pm

What's the difference between a toadstool and a mushroom? What does a puffball look like, and just what is growing out of the side of that tree? There's more to mycology than just what to put on your pepperoni pizza.

Join the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club for an exciting day of fungi exploration. This unique program will begin at Beechwood Farms, home of the Western PA Audubon Society, with a morning presentation by members of the Mushroom Club.

Topics will include general information on fungi, scouting and collecting tips and ethics, as well as some good mushroom hunting locations. Participants may bring mushrooms from home or take advantage of several walks at nearby parks led by Club members.

We will reconvene at Beechwood in the afternoon, where we will attempt to identify some of the species that were seen. Fee: \$6. Bring your own lunch and drink.

\$5 of the \$6 fee can be applied, if you wish, to Mushroom Club membership of \$10 for individual, \$15 for a family. Mushroom Club members and children 12 and under, free. For further information call Mary at (412) 828-3266.

Hope to see you there!

**OFFICERS NAMED**

President: **Mary Woehrel** 412-828-3266  
marigold@sig.net

43 Meadowvale Dr, Cheswick, PA 15024

Vice President: **John Plischke** 724-834-2358  
morelbp@aol.com

129 Grant Street, Greensburg, PA 15601

Secretary: **Valerie Baker**

Treasurer: **Jack Baker** 412-367-7696

1413 Parkmont Road, Allison Park, PA 15101

Electronic Communication: **Chuck Gutilla**

chuckg@telerama.com

Ingomar, PA

Foray/Walk Chairman: **Gail Blakeley** 724-535-4662

gail2@bellatlantic.net

310 Main St, Box 222, Wampum, PA 16157

Membership Chairman: **John Plischke III**

Refreshment Chair: **Kim Plischke** 724-832-0271  
fungi01@aol.com