



Volume 8, Issue 5
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The newsletter of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is published and distributed 5 times per year: April/May, June/July, Aug/Sept, Oct/Nov, and Dec. Articles, photos, news items, and other submissions should be sent to the editor at least 6-8 weeks prior to targeted distribution for the best chance of inclusion. The editor cannot guarantee that submissions will be included in the next newsletter. However, all submissions will be included in future newsletters as long as it relates in some way to fungi. The editor reserves the right to make spelling or grammatical corrections and may suggest content changes to the author. Material published in our newsletters may be used in other non-profit publications only with expressed permission and with appropriate acknowledgements.

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Can You Identify the Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*)?

Article and Photos by John Plischke III

Take the Quiz!

1. Can *Pleurotus ostreatus* be found in the summer and early fall?
2. Can it be white or cream colored?
3. Does it often grow on Aspen trees along with other types of hardwood trees?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions then you are not picking the Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*)



One of the mushrooms that have been called the Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus pulmonarius*)

Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*, *P. columbrinus*, *P. salingnus*)

Other Common Names: Oyster Shelf, Shellfish Mushroom

Family: Tricholomataceae

Description: Oyster Mushrooms were once considered a complex of species that grew all year. Now season and color can help differentiate them. Many grocery stores, such as Giant Eagle, sell them. **Flesh:** White. **Mushroom:** Shaped like an oyster shell or fan. Little beetle-like bugs tend to make their home between the gills, especially during the hot summer months. Sometimes the insects will fall out with a gentle tap, if they don't, discard the buggy Oysters. Don't put them in with the rest of the un-infested ones or the whole bunch will become buggy and you

Continued on page 3, see "Oyster Mushrooms"

President's Corner

By Dick Dougall

Thanks for a great year!

Now that my term as president is nearly over, I would like to thank all the many club members who have helped me and the other officers to keep the club going in all our activities over the last year. I would particularly like to thank everyone involved with this year's Lincoff Foray, especially Glenn Carr, John Plischke, and John Plischke III for all the work done to make this another great all-day event.

There are too many other contributions to this year's activities to mention all the names, but know that I appreciate what you have done from the biggest efforts to the seemingly trivial tasks and ideas. They all help to share the work and promote cooperation.

I encourage everyone to support John Stuart, our new club president and Jim Wilson, our new vice-president. They and the returning officers, Glenn Carr, Shirley Caseman, and Jean Petrisek, need your help to keep the club running smoothly. If they contact you about chairing or being part of a committee or project, please say "yes".

I am amazed by the range of abilities, talents, resourcefulness, cooperation, and friendliness of our club members. You add true meaning to our motto: FUNGI, FUN, & FRIENDS. Please keep talking about our club to your friends, neighbors, and others you meet. You are the best recruiting tool we have for adding new members to the club.

One of the main objectives of the club is to educate the general public about the wonderful world of mushrooms. Our club meetings, newsletter, club walks, Morel Madness in the spring, and Lincoff Foray in the fall go a long way toward doing this. Please try to promote these activities among people you meet so that our educational mission can reach a greater audience.

Many organizations welcome the idea of having someone speak to them about mushrooms. We have a number of people in the club who give these talks each year. Over the last few years, I have given talks to school children, garden clubs, a wine society, nature groups, volunteer naturalists, and adult education classes. Others in the club have given similar talks to sportsmen's groups and the Women in the Outdoors Program. If you know of an organization looking for a speaker, have them contact the club via the officers or speaker bureau chairperson.

If a group to which you belong wants a speaker, consider giving a mushroom talk yourself. You will be surprised by how much information about mushroom you can share with people. Many of us in the club will help you prepare a talk. We can loan you slides and discuss ideas and topics. Let's all keep showing our friends and neighbors how interesting and exciting mushrooming can be.

Holiday Gift Idea

What to gift the person who already has everything? Consider getting him or her a WPMC membership (please see the application form in this newsletter). We offer monthly meetings from March through November, 5 informative newsletters, mushroom walks every weekend during the mushroom season, and our Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom among many other things. A great gift idea!

WPMC News Items

WPMC Mushroom Items For Sale

A number of mushroom-related items are sold at our meetings: caps and t-shirts, mushroom cookbooks, loupes, waxpaper bags, and Field Guides to Mushrooms (both Lincoff's and Russell's). See Mary Ellen Dougall at the sales table at our meetings.

WPMC Yahoo Groups

Yahoo Groups is a great resource for our club members and other mushroom enthusiasts from across the country. There are always interesting discussions in the 'Message' section on all kinds of subjects involving wild mushrooms. Find out what mushrooms are up, where people are finding them, recipes, weather, latest announcements, and other things. Also find award winning photos in the 'Photo' section, and articles, lists, and other files in the 'Files' section. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpamushroomclub/>

WPMC Website

Reference our professionally designed website for information and links pertaining to our club: walks, meetings, species lists and Java data miner among other things. www.wpamushroomclub.org

WPMC Wild Mushroom Cookbook, Volume 3

We are working on compiling WPMC Cookbook, Volume 3, but we need more recipes. We are waiting for your addition to Vol. 3. Volumes 1 and 2 have been great successes and are both available for sale. We cannot use copyrighted material or anything you have not tested and enjoyed. Send your recipes to Becky Plischke at morelbp@aol.com or mail to 129 Grant St, Greensburg, PA 15601

Monthly Meetings

Our meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month from March until November. They begin at 7:00pm at Beechwood Nature Reserve in Dorseyville. Please see their website (www.awsp.org) for directions and other information.

Holiday Mushrooms & Chestnuts

1 lb chestnuts
2 cups wild mushrooms; coarsely chopped
2 Tbs. flour
1- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup half & half
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Grand Marnier
Salt and pepper, to taste
Grated nutmeg, to taste
Parsley, chopped, for garnish (optional)
Butter, for sautéing

Boil chestnuts for about 10 minutes. Remove shell and inner brown skin. Chop chestnuts into coarse pieces, set aside. Sauté mushrooms in butter until they begin to release their liquid. Add flour, toss to coat. Slowly stir in the combined half & half and Grand Marnier. Add nuts. Season with salt and pepper and a tiny bit of nutmeg (a little goes a long way). Serve garnished with parsley.

will get bugs all through your house once your mushrooms arrive home with you. They seem to get darker in color as the leaves fall off the trees, yet lighter ones can still be found. **Cap:** Usually 2 to 6- $\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide and about an inch thick but the largest one that I found was 9 x 8- $\frac{7}{8}$ inches; smooth and moist; color is tan to gray, gray to brown, or brown; not white-to-cream becoming yellow; narrower where it is connected to the tree; edges are in-rolled when very young and can become wavy and lobed with age; somewhat rounded at the outer edge that is away from the tree; can be somewhat flat or sunken in the center. **Gills:** White-to-cream colored, sometimes yellowing with age; can tend towards gray in the winter; edges are not serrated or saw toothed; descending a little down the stalk if present. **Spore Print:** White to off-white or buff. **Stalk:** Usually does not have a stalk, but if there is one then it is small and off to the side closest to the wood - only on very rare occasions is it central; color is white to off-white; solid. **Odor:** Mild to mushroomy, can smell sweet. **Taste:** Mild and not distinctive.

Range: North America.

Where To Look: On deciduous hardwood trees, usually ones that are dead. Look on stumps, branches, fallen trunks, fallen logs and standing tree trunks. Also look in places where they have cut up trees and branches that have fallen on back roads and have thrown the wood a little ways off the road. However, oysters usually don't fruit on freshly cut wood. We have found them rarely on underground stumps and roots. They often come back on the tree twice in the same year and come back for several years. They especially like trees by streams. It is often helpful to bring a telescoping pole and tie your knife on the end of it to cut them down if they are too high up in the tree to reach. I have picked them on maple, beech, birch, willow, oak, tulip poplar, and elm. Only once have I found them on hemlock.

How Often They're Found: It is common.

How They're Grouped: They usually grow in shelf like overlapping groups and clusters. They often can be found in great quantity. Occasionally entire fallen logs and trunks can be covered.

Social Plants: Usually none. Only once did I find them on a log covered in moss through which they were growing.

When To Look: Late fall and winter. My dad always says that he finds the first and last mushrooms of the year because he goes out December 31st and then on January 1st to collect them. If you are going to pick them in the winter, I recommend going out when there is a thaw and the temperature has been above 32 degrees. Then they should have started to fruit.

Edibility: Edible and Choice

Cooking Suggestions: Oyster mushrooms can be fried in butter, breaded, or grilled. They are good in soups, oriental dishes, scrambled eggs or omelets, salads, or they go well with seafood such as crab. This mushroom can be used in recipes for the store bought mushroom. Oysters can be frozen or dried although I prefer to freeze them. They are excellent cooked in white wine sauce.

Microscopic Features: Its spores are inamyloid and 7-12 x 3-5um.

Macrochemical Reactions: Slightly yellowed by KOH and Sodium Hydroxide, especially on the gills. Melzer's Reagent yellow oranges it.

Sulfuric acid can make the cap slightly pink. Ammonia and Ammonium Hydroxide, Ferrous sulfate, and Formaldehyde had no reactions.

Black Light: Very light purple colored patches on the cap.

PH: mushroom is 5.75

Soil Temperature: 72 degrees.



Abalone Mushrooms - Canned

Some grocery stores sell several types of oyster mushrooms. The Abalone Mushroom is *Pleurotus cystidiosus*.



(*Pleurotus absccondens*)
(*Pleurotus lignatalis*)

Description:

Cap: $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches wide. It is whitish; convex and can be sunken in the center; more of a rounded oyster shape. **Gills:** White turning more yellowish with age. **Spore Print:** White. **Stalk:** $\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 inches long; whitish; can become hollow with age and can be stuffed.

Range: Eastern.

Where To Look: In hollowed out trees of maple etc.

How Often They're Found: Uncommon.

How They're Grouped: In small groups.

Social Plants: Usually none.

Edibility: Unknown.

Microscopic Features: Spores 3-5 X 2-3 um.



Pleurotus levis, also called *Lentinus* and *Panus*.

Oyster Look-alikes: (*Crepidotus* sp.) such as the Flat Crep (*Crepidotus appplanatus*) and the Jelly Crep (*Crepidotus mollis*) differ by having spore prints that have brown in them. The edible Leaflike Oyster (*Hohenbuehelia petaloides*) typically has thinner flesh that is not as thick. The edible Elm Oyster (*Hypsizyqus tessulatus*) = (*Pleurotus ulmarius*), has a stalk and usually grows on elm, it has yellowish tones. (*Lentinellus* sp.) such as the Bear Lentinus (*Lentinellus ursinus*) and (*Lentinellus vulpinus*) have saw toothed gills that you need to look at from the side to see the serrated edges. (*Lentinus* sp.) such as (*Lentinus strigosus*) also have saw toothed gills. The edible Late Fall Oyster (*Panellus serotinus*) which has a small stalk and whose cap can be greenish or purplish then fading to brownish but it only grows in the late fall and winter. The inedible Orange Mock Oyster (*Phyllotopsis nidulans*) has an orangish hairy cap and orangish gills and it also stinks worse than feet, if not at first, by the time you get home and take them out of the bag. The possibly poisonous Angels wings (*Pleurocybella porrigens*), is smaller and grow on evergreens such as hemlock. The edible Veiled Oyster (*Pleurotus dryinus*), which can have a ring on its thick stalk. Some people consider the edible (*Pleurotus sapidus*), which has a gray lilacish spore print to be a different species than the oyster even though it looks the same except for the spore color, others consider it to be the same species. (*Pleurotus pulmonarius*) is typically lung shaped when very young, spores 9-13 X 3-5 um but looks very close when mature it is usually white to tan colored but can be grayish brown. Its season is different since it is found in summer to early fall in east and spring time in the west, it typically grows on hardwoods. (*Pleurotus cystidiosus*) spores 11-16.5 X 4-5 um, it is usually smaller and more southern. The Blue Oyster (*Pleurotus columbinus*) often has blue tones and is often cultivated. (*Pleurotus populinus*) grows on cottonwood and aspen spores 9-12.5 X 3-5 um. (*Volvaria* sp.) such as the edible Tree Volvaria (*Volvariella bombycina*), has a pink spore print.

Veiled Oyster (*Pleurotus dryinus*)

Description: *Flesh:* White and thick. *Cap:* 1-½ to 5 inches wide; white, sometimes turning yellow with age; margin is inrolled when young; convex becoming almost flat with age. Occasionally little pieces of the veil will be stuck and hanging on the caps outer edge. It can be faintly hairy. *Gills:* descending part way down the stalk; white to off-white or with yellow tones for older specimens; can be

closely spaced. *Spore Print:* White. *Stalk:* 7/8 to 4 inches tall and 1/2 to 1-1/16 inches wide; can have a white to off-white colored ring that can be faint or absent; white; may be central or off center; solid. *Odor:* Mild. *Taste:* Mild and not distinctive.



Veiled Oyster Mushrooms

Range: North America.

Where To Look: On deciduous trees such as oak, alder and maple, usually ones that are dead. Look on stumps, branches, fallen trunks, and fallen logs

How Often They're Found: Occasional.

How They're Grouped: Single to small groups or clusters.

Social Plants: Usually none.

When To Look: July - October.

Edibility: Edible.

Microscopic Features: Spores are inamyloid and 9-14.5 x 3.5-5 um.



Pleurotus populinus grows on cottonwood and aspen trees, it typically grows on trees and grows in shelf like overlapping groups and clusters like the oyster mushroom.

Continued on Page 7, see "Oyster Mushrooms"

2008 Membership Application

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club

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
- Nine monthly WPMC meetings
- Free participation in WPMC Walks
- Fee discount for WPMC Forays
- Fee discount on WPMC sponsored merchandise

Name (please print) _____

Address _____ County _____

Phone _____ Email _____

- Interests:**
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Mushrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom Walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Committees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating Wild Mushroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Toxicology | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultivating Mushrooms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dyeing With Mushrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom Photography |

How many wild mushrooms do you think you could identify? _____

WE NEED YOUR HELP! Find something you would like to do. Check the appropriate boxes. We can have a lot of Fungi, Fun, and Friends but it takes your participation to make it happen. Please check 3 boxes below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scout for walk locations-lead walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Compile meeting & walk sign in sheets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help organize forays | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach-speak to clubs & organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Print club materials, flyers, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Call or e-mail members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work on newsletter committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Give a program at Club monthly meeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute articles, photos to newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Produce or acquire teaching materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with webpage & e-group moderator | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome and orient new members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Line up speakers for meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Work on hospitality committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Host guest speakers and mycologists | <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in special projects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Record meetings, discussions, events | <input type="checkbox"/> Record mushrooms that are found |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sell club items, tee shirts, cookbooks | <input type="checkbox"/> Door prize committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicize meetings, forays, events | <input type="checkbox"/> Present or assist with a club workshop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Club Historian | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with sign in at walks and meetings |

Dues enclosed: \$ _____ (\$20 Family, \$15 Individual, \$10 Full time student)

Return completed signed and dated form with check payable to WPA Mushroom Club to:
Bonnie Bailey, WPMC Membership Chair, 120 Mt. Blaine Dr., McMurray, PA 15317

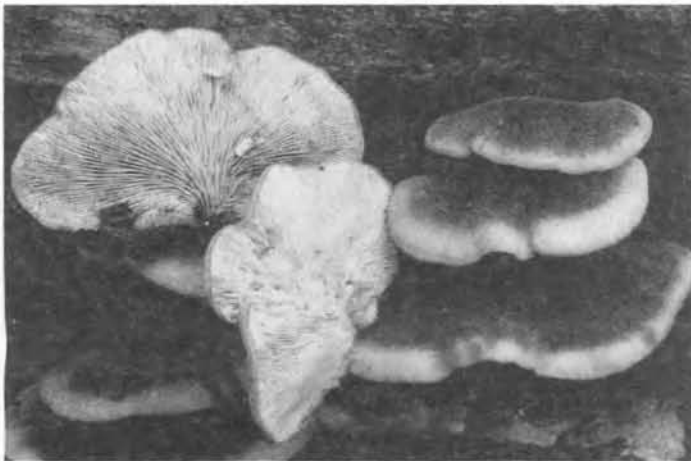
(Over)



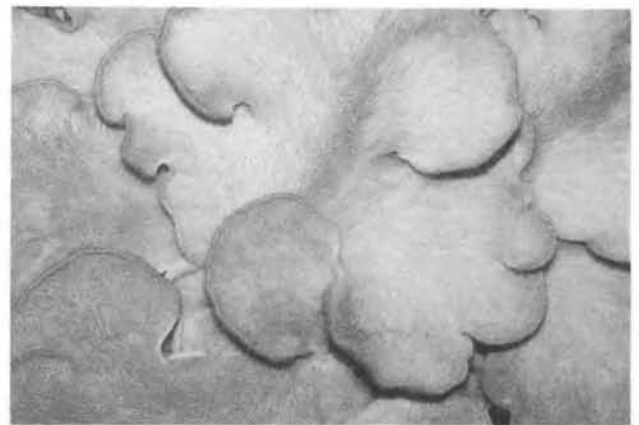
Angels Wings (*Pleurocybella porrigens*) has thin flesh and grows on conifers such as hemlock.



King Oyster (*Pleurotus eryngii*) One the cultivated mushrooms that can be found in some grocery stores.



Bear Lentinus (*Lentinellus ursinus*) has saw toothed gills, a hot taste and a brownish hairy cap.



Pink Oyster (*Pleurotus djamor*) Club also cultivated



Golden Oyster - (*Pleurotus citrinopileatus*) We cultivated this one at last years club meeting

Oyster Mushroom Review

1. A thin fleshed oyster-looking mushroom that is found on conifers such as hemlock?
A. *Pleurocybella porrigens* B. *Pleurotus eryngii*
2. An oyster shaped mushroom that has saw-toothed gills?
A. *Pleurocybella porrigens* B. *Lentinellus ursinus*
3. This oyster grows on Aspen trees?
A. *Pleurotus pulmonarius* B. *Pleurotus populinus*
4. This Oyster Mushroom can be white or cream and found in the summer?
A. *Pleurotus pulmonarius* B. *Pleurotus levis*
5. This Oyster-looking mushroom has a brown spore print?
A. *Crepidotus applanatus* B. *Phyllotopsis nidulans*

Answers 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-A, 5-A

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