



Inside This Issue

Article: "A Few Xylaria".....	1
President" Corner.....	2
WPMC News.....	2
Registration Form.....	7

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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A Few Xylaria

Article and Photos by John Plischke III



Dead Man's Fingers: they start out white but turn black with age.

Dead Man's Fingers (*Xylaria polymorpha*,
Xylospora polymorpha)

Family: Xylariaceae

Description: It gets its name because it often looks like dead fingers sticking out of the ground. They start off white, which is the asexual stage, and become grayish then black, which is the sexual stage, with age. The outer mature surface is typically pimply, dry, and hard. When mature it is 1 to 4 inches tall and 3/8 to 1 1/8 inches wide. They are often fused together at the base. **Flesh:** It is white and thick and very hard. It can be zoned. Not only can they be finger shaped but often they can look like toes or thumbs and be wider than they are thick. **Spore Print:** Very dark brown to black. **Odor:** mild. **Taste:** Unknown

Range: North America.

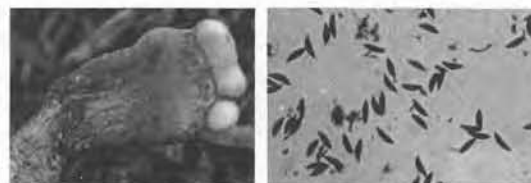
Where To Look: It typically grows on old

dead wood, most commonly on the bases of stumps but also on fallen logs or even mulch. Maple, Oak and Beech can be favorite places.

How Often They're Found: It is common.

How They're Grouped: It is often found in groups clumps and clusters but can on occasion be found growing singly.

Social Plants: Usually none but grass can be present.



Left: "Dead Man's Foot", actually an unusual looking Dead Man's Fingers. Right: Xylaria spores under a microscope

Continued on page 4, see "Xylaria"

President's Corner

By Dick Dougall

I have a new project for myself (and hopefully some other club members) called a MycoBlitz. It was suggested by Gary Lincoff at last year's Mid-Atlantic Foray. To really understand the fruiting of mushrooms, Gary suggested that you observe a specific area over a concentrated period of time. Gary picked Central Park in New York City as his spot. He checked it daily for mushrooms over several months last year. He, of course, found a large variety of mushrooms, but he was surprised by when and how they fruited. He suggested that others might want to try this with their own spots and have the club send him comments.

What I plan to do is keep track of the mushrooms I find in two spots. One spot is my yard and some neighbor's yards. I know most of the mushrooms that come up here. The other spot for my MycoBlitz is a small park not far from my home where I have led club walks. There are more mushrooms available here, and I'm sure I will learn a lot documenting these too.

If you want to participate, pick a spot that you visit regularly. It could be a park, your dog walking area, a hiking trail, etc. Don't make it too large. A place like North Park, a 3000 acre county park, is too big! Pick a section of the park typical of the walks we have at the Lincoff Foray. You should be able to cover it in 45 minutes to an hour. It should be a place you will visit from six to twelve times in a month. The more often you go there the better. Keep track of the mushrooms you find and the weather (rain and temperature) over the preceding week. Stay with this area over a month or more. Mushrooms fruit irregularly. Share the information you learn with the club. This project requires accurate records.

Some club members might worry that they will find too many mushrooms they cannot identify. This will make them reluctant to participate. The club can help with identification. If you are in the Pittsburgh area, we have walks most weekends. You can bring your mushrooms to the monthly meetings or club walks. Club mycologists and identifiers can help identify your mushrooms. If you are not in our area, you can gather information about your unknown mushrooms, i.e. habitat, spore color, and detailed description. You can take digital photos of them. Talk with your mushrooming friends to obtain their ideas on identity. If you still have difficulties, send the information to me and I will share it with club mycologists and identifiers. When doing this, try to make your best guess of what mushroom you have. You will be surprised how often your guess will be confirmed. If all your efforts fail to identify it, give it your own name! Call it *little yellow mushroom* or *stump mushroom #3*. Some mushrooms you will see many times. You won't know its scientific name at first, but you will know it is the mushroom with your unique name which you use in your records. After a time, by many different ways, you will learn the scientific name of these unknown mushrooms.

You do not have to tell us the exact location of your spot. Just describe it in general terms like "a mostly wooded park with some evergreens." Have some fun with this project, and let me know how it goes for you.

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 everything else. Also find award winning photos in the 'Photo' section, and articles, lists, and other files in the 'Files' section. For more information,

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpamushroomclub/>

WPMC Website

Yet another great resource to club members is our professionally designed website. There you will find information and links pertaining to our club, including our famed walk/foray species lists and Java data miner. Don't forget to read Joe Luzanski's Blog "*On The Stump*" while you're there. Please see www.wpamushroomclub.org for more information.

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.

June 19th: "Medicinal Mushrooms: Myth and Fact" Frank Lotrich, M.D., Ph.D., WPMC member, is currently working at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic in the area of "psychopharmacogenomics." That is, he does research examining how genes influence the effect of medications on the brain. Mushrooms are amazing chemical generating machines. We all know that there are mushrooms that are deadly poisonous and others that are hallucinogenic. Scientists are now finding that some of the chemicals in mushrooms have medicinal properties. Frank will sort out the many myths about the properties of mushrooms and try to replace these myths with scientific facts.

July 17th: "Craft Workshop" Members of the Workshop Committee are brainstorming about which project to present for this meeting. Artists can use mushrooms to make a number of interesting craft projects. Based on past projects, we should have more fun at this meeting.

August 21st: "All About Truffles" by Gavin Farkas, Club member and truffle enthusiast. Have you ever found a truffle while hunting mushrooms in PA. Gavin Farkas has. He will discuss the life cycle of truffles and their variety. How do you go about finding them? What do you do with them when you find them. Come to this meeting and obtain some answers to this and other questions about truffles.

September 18th: "Cooking with Mushrooms" Cooking with wild mushroom is a topic of interest to many people. The variety of mushrooms possible and the number of recipes are both large. Come to this meeting and get some answers to your mushroom cooking questions.

October 16th: Election of Officers & Open Forum Officers for next year will be elected. Club members will be encouraged to share mushroom stories, experiences and slides. Results of the club's photography contest will also be presented.

Walks & Forays

Walks and forays are held almost every weekend from April through October. They are led by a walk leader and an identifier. Each walk will be at a designated location where participants will forage for wild mushrooms of all species. After the walk the identifier will discuss the mushrooms that were found and answer any questions. Walks usually last 2 or 3 hours and participants are welcome to stay longer if they want. It's a great way to learn about wild mushrooms. Please see our website www.wpamushroomclub.org and our yahoo groups message board for updated information.

We request that no one hunts a walk or foray location for at least two weeks prior to a walk or foray. It is only through your cooperation that we can have successful walks and forays. All walks and forays will be held rain or shine. All walks start on time.

May 19th 10:00am-12:00pm, Return to **Mingo Creek**, Washington County with *John Plischke* and *John Plischke III*. I-70 to Exit 9 Eighty Four/Glyde. Take Rt. 519 N for 2 miles. At a red light turn right onto Rt. 136. Go 4.4 miles and turn left at a sign to Mingo Creek Park. Follow signs to the park. Turn right then cross a covered bridge that's just before the Park Office. Meet at Shelter 4.

May 26th 10:00-12:00 **Moraine State Park**, Butler County with *Jim & Charlotte Tunney*. From Butler take US 422 west 8.7 miles to PA 528 N and turn right, then an immediately left just before a lawn & garden store with a John Deere sign. Go about .8 miles to the parking lot at the end of the road near the boat launch by the lake. OR take I-79 N to 422 E for about 4-½ miles and turn left on PA 528 N, follow the directions above. We will drive to a secret location.

June 2nd 10:00-12:00 **Roaring Run**, Apollo, Armstrong County. Meet *Don Stone* and *LaMonte Yarroll* at the Roaring Run Bike Trail Parking. From the east end off the Rt 66 bridge at Rt. 56. Go South (up stream) on the Kiskiminetas River Road.

June 8th 6:00-8:30 pm at **Nescopeck State Park**, Luzerne County. Meet *John Plischke* and *John Plischke III* at the Environmental Education Building for a slide show followed by a mushroom walk. Traveling east on I-80: Take Exit 262 (Hazleton, Mountaintop - PA 309.) Follow PA 309 south about 0.75 miles. Turn left onto Honey Hole Road. The park begins along Honey Hole Road a short distance east of the I-80 underpass. Travel about 6 miles along Honey Hole Road to enter the Lake Frances Day Use Area. It will be on your right side just opposite Lake Frances Road.

June 9th 12:00-3:00 at **Schuylkill Environmental Center**, Schuylkill County. Meet *John Plischke* and *John Plischke III* for a mushroom slide show and walk.

June 9th 5:00-8:00 pm at **Locust Lake State Park**, Schuylkill County. Meet *John Plischke* and *John Plischke III* for a slide show and mushroom walk. Located seven miles north of Pottsville, three miles south of Mahanoy City, eight miles west of Tamaqua and six miles west of Tuscarora State Park. The park is two miles southwest of Exit 131A (Hometown) of I-81.

June 9th 10:00-12:00 at **Hartwood Acres**, Allegheny County, with *Glenn Carr* and *LaMonte Yarroll*. Meet at the parking lot in front of the Mansion (on the opposite side of the park from the Performance Center). We will hunt mushrooms and help you identify them. Directions below.

June 16th 10:00-12:00, **Mingo Creek**, Washington County, with *Kevin Stevens*. Take I 70 to Exit 25 Eighty Four/Glyde. Take Rt. 519 N for 2 miles. At a red light turn right onto Rt. 136. Go 4.4 miles and turn left at a sign to Mingo Creek Park. Follow signs to the park. Turn right then cross a covered bridge that's just before the Park Office. Meet in the parking lot at Shelter 4.

June 23rd 10:00-2:00 at **Moraine State Park**, Butler County, with *Jim Tunney*. From Butler take US 422 west 8.7 miles to PA 528 N and turn right, then an immediately left just before a lawn & garden store, with a John Deere sign, for about .8 mile to the parking lot at the end of the road. **OR** take I-79 N to 422 E for about 4-½ miles and turn left onto PA 528 N, then follow the directions above. We will drive to a secret location and hunt in groups.

June 30th 10:00-2:00, **The Dorothy Fornof Memorial Walk** at **Deer Lakes Park**, Allegheny County, Russelton with *Jim Wilson* and *Dick Dougall*. From the PA Turnpike get off at the Allegheny Valley Exit 5. Turn toward New Kensington. Turn left onto Route 28. Follow to Pearl Avenue and turn left. Continue on Pearl Ave, it becomes Russelton Road. In

Continued on page 6, see "WPMC News Items"

When To Look: June through November.

Edibility: Unknown but too hard to be eaten.

Microscopic Features: the spores react with iodine.



(Xylaria cornu-damae)

Family: Xylariaceae

Description: It can be white, black or gray colored *Flesh:* it is hard.

Range: Eastern and central.

Where To Look: On dead wood such as fallen logs and branches. The wood is usually partially rotted.

How Often They're Found: Occasional.

How They're Grouped: Usually in groups.

Social Plants: Usually none.

When To Look: June-November.

Edibility: Unknown, but too hard to be eaten.



Left: *Xylaria moelleroclavus*, Right: "Mouse Feces" (*Xylaria apiculata*) Both species are from Hawaii. Mouse Feces head is about the right size for the name.



(Xylaria filiformis)

Family: Xylariaceae

Description: The outer surface is black and does not become branched. It is typically pimply. *Flesh:* it is hard.

Range: North East US.

Where To Look: On dead wood such as fallen logs and branches. The wood is usually partially rotted.

How They're Grouped: usually in groups.

Social Plants: usually none.

Edibility: Unknown but too hard to be eaten.



Carbon Antlers (*Xylaria hypoxylon*)

Other Common Names: Candle Snuff Fungus, Stag's Horn, White Thread Dead Man's Fingers

Family: Xylariaceae

Description: It is 1 to 3 inches tall. It gets its common name because it resembles antlers. *Flesh:* Its flesh is white. *Mushroom:* it is usually has branches. It is whitish to grayish and becomes black with age starting from the base up. Sometimes it is all white other times all black

and often it has a black base and white branches. *Spore Print*: Blackish or whitish.

Range: North America.

Where To Look: On dead wood such as fallen logs and branches. The wood is usually partially rotted.

How Often They're Found: Occasional.

How They're Grouped: Singly or in groups or clusters.

Social Plants: Usually none but moss can be present.

When To Look: June to August but sometimes all year at various states of decay.

Edibility: Unknown but too hard to be eaten.

Microscopic Features: The spores react with iodine.



Magnolia Cone Fingers (*Xylaria magnoliae*)

Family: Xylariaceae

Description: There are usually a number of them on a cone. They are very thin and become black colored. They are hard. *Flesh*: it is hard. *Spore Print*: blackish. *Odor*: mild.

Range: Typically more southern.

Where To Look: On dead and fallen magnolia cones that typically have become blackened with age.

How Often They're Found: Uncommon

How They're Grouped: A single cone to a number of cones can have several of them growing on a single cone.

Social Plants: Usually none.

When To Look: Fall.

Edibility: Unknown.



Fairy Sparklers (*Xylaria tentaculata*)

Family: Xylariaceae

Description: *Flesh*: white. *Mushroom*: $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 $\frac{5}{16}$ inches tall. It has lots of little squiggle's on the top of the stalk that are grayish. They can go up and out then go downwards. *Stalk*: it is grayish black. *Odor*: mild. *Taste*: mild.

Where To Look: On rotting wood and occasionally on well rotted organic matter such as well rotted leaves.

How Often They're Found: Rare to occasional.

How They're Grouped: It is found singly or in-groups.

Social Plants: Moss can be present.

When To Look: July-October.

Edibility: Unknown but too hard to be eaten.



Russelton, turn right at the first intersection, look for a drug store, bank and liquor store and turn right. Go a short distance you will see a Deer Lakes Park sign, turn left into the park. Just past the first lake, there is a large parking lot, meet there

July 7th 10:00-12:00 at **Kiski Prep**, Westmoreland County, with *Carol Kelly and John Plischke III*. From the West, continue on Rt. 22 (but there may be construction delays as they are widening Rt. 22). Continue to the traffic light at Rt. 981 in New Alexandria; turn left (North) onto 981 until you come to the stop sign at the bridge into Saltsburg (the town is to your right, and the Kiski campus is atop the cliff to your left at that point). Proceed ahead after stopping (be advised that traffic coming down the hill toward the bridge, as well as traffic crossing the bridge from your right have the right-of-way! Be careful!) but where the road forks just in front of you, bear LEFT up and around the curve following the sign for 286 West. (Rt. 981 continues straight ahead toward the Kiski Valley Inn and on to Avonmore; do not take that.) Just about 100 yards out of the curve, as you crest the hill, the entrance to the school is on the left, between the tall brick pillars, before you reach the BP/Subway. Meet in the parking area to the right just past the security shed.

July 14th 1:30 at **Blue Knob State Park**, Bedford County. Meet *Kim Plischke and John Plischke III* at the park amphitheater. Walk, hunt and identify mushrooms. Take the Pennsylvania Turnpike to Bedford, Exit 11. Go north on I-99 to Route 869 west (at Osterburg). Follow Route 869 to Pavia, then follow signs through Pavia to park.

July 14th 10:00-12:00 at **Stockdale**, Washington County. Meet *Gavin Farkas and LaMonte Yarroll*. From I 70 take the Charleroi Exit. Turn right on 88 S. Go 5-6 miles past the Allenport Steel Mill. After you pass the Speedy Mart, take the 2nd right on Walnut St. Look for a sign that says Howling Hills. After that sign there is a tee in the road, at the tee, go right. That takes you to the Jackson farm. The time from Pittsburgh is about 1H 10M. The wide variety of habitats makes hunting good.

July 21st 10:00-12:00 **Chanterelle Mania at North Park**, Allegheny County. Meet *Randy Danielson* at the Swimming Pool parking lot. Last year this spot produced bags and bags full of beautiful chanterelles. There were also a good number of boletes and other species. You never know what the season will bring, but it could be very good again. North Park has a variety of habitats, although the area abounds in large oaks there is a large variety of trees and habitats that make this an exceptional place for hunting mushrooms. Directions below.

July 28th 10:00-12:00 at **Emmerling Park**, Indiana Township, Allegheny County with *Jim Tunney*. Enjoy this mushroom walk along a part of the Rachel Carson Trail. From Route 8, go east on Route 910, or from Route 28, go west on Route 910. The park is on Cove

Road almost directly across from the Indiana Township Municipal Building. Meet at the large parking lot in the park.

July 27-29: Join the **Ohio Mushroom Society** for their Summer Foray at Carlisle Reservation, Lorain County Metroparks, near Oberlin, Ohio. Contact Dave Miller at 440-774-8143 or David.H.Miller@oberlin.edu

August 9-12: **NEMF Foray** will be held in Orono, Maine, on the University of Maine campus. There will be lectures and workshops all day Saturday and Sunday, as well as many forays to choose from. There is no membership requirement. On the web, see www.nemf.org for upcoming info and registration form for the foray.

August 16-19: **NAMA Foray 2007** will be held at the **Pipstem State Park** in West Virginia. Bill Roody will be the Chief Mycologist. On the web, see www.namyc.org for the registration form and more information.

Sept 15th **Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray** Don't miss it, register today! See the registration form in this newsletter.

DIRECTIONS to North Park

www.county.allegheny.pa.us/parks/parkphon.asp

From Pittsburgh go north on Rt. 8. Turn left onto Wildwood Road onto the Yellow Belt (Ford Dealer and Boston Market on the right). Go 1.3 mi. to a red light; go straight (W Hardies). Continue another 1.6 mi. to a red light at North Park Entrance, road name changes to Ingomar Road at this intersection, Turn left on Babcock Blvd. Follow the signs to the Swimming Pool parking lot and find the car with a yellow ribbon on the antenna.

DIRECTIONS to Hartwood Acres: From PA Turnpike: Take Allegheny Valley (Exit 5). Stay right on the exit ramp. Turn right onto Route 910 West. Go 4 1/2 miles and turn left onto Saxonburg Blvd. at the red blinking light. Follow Saxonburg Blvd. about 2 1/2 miles, entrance will be on your right. This is about a mile and a half from Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve.

For all walks and forays, bring water and lunch. Dress for the weather. Bring basket, wax or paper bags (no plastic) to keep mushrooms separated, whistle, compass, chair, hand lens, insect repellent, cell phone, and books for identification. Also bring a knife to dig up mushrooms for identification or to cut edibles off to keep them clean. Try to dig up 3 of the same species at different stages of development. Don't pick old mushrooms; leave them to drop their spores. Bring your membership card and a friend or two. You are responsible for not getting lost, if you have that tendency stick like glue to others. We won't wait for you, and we won't come look for you. Don't take the identification of the person standing next to you, they might not know as much as you do. Only club mycologists and identifiers should be used for advice. The Walk Leader will tell you when to be back at the walk starting place where the mushrooms will be put on paper plates and the Walk Identifier or Club Mycologist will put names on only the mushrooms that they know well. Take notes and pictures to help you remember the mushrooms. You should go home and check books yourself. Whether you decide to eat a mushroom, is ultimately only your decision.



THE SIXTH ANNUAL GARY LINCOFF

MID-ATLANTIC MUSHROOM FORAY
SATURDAY, SEPT. 15, 2007

7:30-8:15 Registration, 8:30-7:30 Program



**Let the Hunt
begin!**

SPECIAL EARLY REGISTRATION FORM FOR CLUB MEMBERS ONLY

Featured speaker will be Gary Lincoff, author of the *Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms*. Gary is the nation's best know mushroom expert. He is past president of the North American Mycological Association (NAMA).



Join us for an exciting day of fungi, fun, and friends and mushroom exploration. We will hunt and field-identify mushrooms. Gary Lincoff will give a slide show, talk and autograph his book. We will taste mushroom cooking.



Special guest mycologist, Renee Lebeuf, is one of Canada's premier mycologists and a mushroom photographer. She identifies and does one day forays for the Cercle des mycologues de Montréal (CMM), the largest mushroom club in the Americas.

Special guest mycologist, Bill Russell, recently published, "Mushrooms of Pennsylvania and the Mid Atlantic." Bill has been studying and teaching about mushrooms for over fifty years. Get him to autograph your book.



Special guest mycologist, Dave Miller, just retired from teaching biology and mycology at Oberlin College in Ohio. He will be giving a program geared to the beginning mushroomer.

A host of other mycologists will be on hand to help you learn mushrooms, including: Fred Schrock, John Plischke III, Robert Boice, Kim Plischke, and La Monte Yarroll.

FUNGI FUN FRIENDS

Cost is only \$50 at the door or only **\$23* each pre-registered and paid by July 15**, (*does not include club membership). Children 11 & under free. Registration is limited. Send your registration in today!

Contact **Glenn Carr** 412-369-0495 qbrown2carrs@cs.com

Signing and dating the release is an absolute requirement for attendance. No refunds
Make check payable to: Western PA Mushroom Club, 1848 Fairhill Road, Allison Park, PA 15101

Name 1 _____

Name 2 _____

Name 3 _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

RELEASE

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 _____

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