Alabama Mushroom Society Newsletter

February 2021

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Suspect Mushroom Poisoning?
Contact US Poison Control at
1-800-222-1222

Hello all!

We are all counting down the days until Spring arrives and are enjoying the occasional warm days sprinkled into the forecast. The days getting longer and some sunshine are getting us thinking about the much anticipated Spring forays. It's a little too soon yet to nail down dates, but we will be scheduling monthly forays in two locations: in/around Cullman County and in/around Lee County. Access to these monthly forays are one of the perks we offer to Alabama Mushroom Society members and will therefore only be open to paid members. We will still occasionally have events open to the public but we want to offer something great for membership in addition to VIP access to our Member's Lounge at our website.
Not a member yet? It's only $20 a year for your whole household and includes access to our private webpages, private guided forays, discounted or waived rates and first-notification of several educational lectures, select discounts at Local mushroom growers FungiFarm, $5 off a membership to the North American Mycological Association, and a vote for board-member elections. We also have a few other member's-only perks in the works and you will not want to miss out! Join up here.

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Hygrocybe species. Photo by Melisa Yeend, used with permission

Schizophylum commune
Photo by Kira True Nichols, used with permission

Mushroom of the Month

Trametes

In the family Polyporaceae is the exceptionally common genus of Trametes. This genus includes some of the most prolific and voracious wood-eaters such as *T.'s: lactinea, versicolor, betulina, aesculi* (including *gibbosa*)*, cinnabarina, conichifer,* and *hirsuta*. Furthermore, these species tend to be complexes which require genetic sequencing to further divide as their morphological features are otherwise indistinguishable. More detailed descriptions of these genetic delineations can be found here.
The genus Trametes can be fairly easily identified to these species (or rather species complexes, as we will treat them) by a couple of easy-to-find features, namely: the thickness of the specimen, the presence and length of the hairs on the surface, the pore size/distribution, and the color or patterns of the cap. Most of these species can be readily found in our online pictorial ID key found here.
While most of these species can be found growing on dead/dying wood year-round, they have explosive growth during our cool wet months, typically from October to March. Depending on the species, they may start as amorphous globs of rubbery/corky texture which often take effused-reflexed growth patterns and grow primarily from the margins of the fruitbody (as opposed to developing a structure that is expanded by water such as Amanita).
Trametes are all non-toxic and, as foodstuff - non edible. Though some folk have been known to make teas or even tinctures with the fruitbodies.

1. Does the hymenium (spore-bearing surface) contain elongated and modified maze-like or gill-like structure, typically deep and sometimes becoming effused-reflexed with the fruitbody? Cap will almost always be fuzzy/wooly/hairy. Typically shades of tan/ocher/grey ***T. betulina***

   Not exactly as above 2.

2. Cap/pileus surface rubbery/bald without obvious radial zonation. Typically lumpy, white to tan in color with a white hymenium containing small pores. The growth ring of the margin (outer edge) may be slightly zonate. Pores are elongated and maze-like.
   T. asculi

   Not completely as above. 3.

3. Fruitbody thin, from paper thin to cardboard, almost always less than 5mm thick. 5.

3. Fruitbody thicker . 4.

4. Fruitbody a shade of red/orange on both pileus and hymenium ***T. cinnabarina***

4. Fruitbody not a shade of red/orange. 6.

5. Fruitbody forming small white ‘cup-like’ structures, often on small twigs or branches. These cups develop tan radial striations as they develop. Pores becoming grossly enlarged and often significantly damaged by environmental conditions. Some fruitbodies maturing to become bleached-white fans with tattered edges, sometimes up to 1.5” inches long. Fruitbody is always thin. ***T. conochifer***

5. Containing small pores on the underside which are visible with the naked eye. Pileus radially zonate with some zones containing short hair/fuzz. Color of the zones vary from steel-blue to white/tan to reds and ochers and greys. Often growing in dense shelves or sometimes fused rosettes ***T. versicolor***

6. Cap surface rubbery/corky and bald or containing only the thinnest layer of velvet. Radially zonate with a flat to domed pileus in various shades of grey/tan and white. Small pores separated by hymenal tissue wider than the pores. **T. lactinea**

6. Cap surface wooly/fuzzy/hairy. Radially zonate with a flat to domed pileus in various shades of grey/tan and white. Small pores separated by hymenal tissue wider than the pores. **T. hirsuta**

Fungi Foragecast

The mushrooms found this month will range substantially depending on your location in the state and recent temperatures and precipitation. Most notably, and commonly reported are an abundant crop of Pleurotus (the Oysters), and Hericium (the Lion's Mane). Of course you can't get far in our AL woods without seeing the many dozens of small polypores (especially Trametes and Stereum) with gelatinous and sometimes colorful growth around them (the Jellies!) and often parasitizing the Stereum. These jellies are discussed in great detail in our blog-post here. As the winter holds us in it's not-so icy grips, we'll also see the explosion of Ascomyces. This entire phyllum of the kingdom Fungi is massive but will include the cup-fungi of the class Pezizomyces (including morels!), the hard lumpy balls of *Hypoxylon, a*nd the fingery appendages of *Xylaria* and similar in the class Sordariomycetes. You may still be finding many Basidiocarps such as the Hydnum (hedgehogs), Clavariadelphus (sweet clubs), Hygrocybe and Hygrophorus (wax-caps), and Lepista (wood blewit and allies). There are also a host of Mycena and other especially small fungi that thrive in this season, but for those, you may need a hand-lens and to crawl around a bit!

Don't forget to post your cool and unusual finds both on our Facebook group and on iNaturalist!

Calendar Contest

January's winner is Charlotte Baker with her photo of Armillaria mellea taken in Chambers County. Don't forget to submit your own photos on the Calendar Contest thread of our Facebook page! Our 2021 calendars with all of this year's winners have already sold out! If you didn't get one and still would like to place an order, please reach out to us at Almushroomsoc@gmail.com and express your interest. We have to have enough interest to warrant placing another bulk print order. Thank you all for your support of the Alabama Mushroom Society.

In The Kitchen

We've been seeing a lot of oyster mushrooms being collected these past few weeks so for our recipe today, we will be sharing with you a way to preserve some of your bounty. This recipe is for turning your oyster mushrooms into oyster mushroom jerky and was contributed by Spencer Lowry.

Ingredients for marinade:

1/4 cup soy sauce (or dales)
1/4 cup worcestershire sauce
1 tsp cracked black pepper
4 tbsp Frank's RedHot
1/4 cup water
Just a splash of apple cider vinegar

Mix ingredients together and set aside. Clean your oyster mushrooms and tear into manageable sized pieces. Boil them in water for about 20 minutes. Drain and add the mushrooms to a ziplock bag and pour marinade overtop. There should be enough marinade to thoroughly coat the mushrooms. Remove as much air from the bag as possible and set in the fridge for 24 to 48 hours.
Drain off marinade and dehydrate mushrooms in a dehydrator set to 180 degrees until dry. It's not a very pretty snack, but it is pretty tasty!

Photo courtesy of FungiFarm L,
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MEETING INFORMATION

We will be resuming our monthly meetings for AMS members via Zoom. Our first meeting will be **February 2nd at 7pm**. The Zoom link will be sent out via email. We will be introducing the new Board Members and talk about our plans for this upcoming year. Our president Allen Carroll will give a presentation on the Fundamentals of Backyard Mushroom Cultivation + Q&A.

Monthly meetings will occur **the first tuesday of every month at 7pm** via Zoom. We hope to begin hosting in-person meeting options in the near future.

2021 Scavenger Hunt

We are starting up a brand new year of mushroom hunting! Find and properly identify as many mushrooms in Alabama as you can from our contest list and win prizes at the end of the year! You get credit for finding the mushrooms when you add them on iNaturalist. Read the full rules on our website here. Any observations you upload to iNaturalist will be automatically submitted to the project.
Joining the project is easy!

1. Download the iNaturalist app on your smartphone or access it via the website www.inaturalist.org.
2. Sign up for free to make your account.
3. **Member Scavenger Hunt Registration Link Register your iNaturalist user name by joining the scavenger hunt event on our website so you get credit for your finds!**

Pleurotus species
Photo by Brodie Lowry
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Is there something you would like to see included each month? Do you have foray photos, a recipe or something else you would like to contribute?
Reach out to us at
<Almushroomsoc@gmail.com>