



## Alabama Mushroom Society Newsletter

May 2021

Written and Edited by Alisha Millican and Anthoni Goodman

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Greetings fungiphiles!

We are gearing up and getting ready for the Georgia Mushroom Festival this weekend! Come out and find us at our booth and enjoy the many speakers, presentations and forays that will be going on. We can't wait!

We are still needing a couple volunteers to sit at the booth on Sunday from Noon-2 and 2-4. If you will be there and can spare 2 hours, we would very much appreciate your help! Stop by our booth to speak to one of us, as we probably won't be checking the email while at the festival.



Speaking of festivals, we are in the very beginning stages of planning the first annual Alabama Mushroom Festival which will be taking place at Rickwood Caverns in Warrior, AL on May 21-22 of next year. We are already beginning to get some speakers and presentations scheduled. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer to contribute, please email us at [www.almushroomsoc@gmail.com](mailto:www.almushroomsoc@gmail.com). We will also have the option to pay to rent a booth space up on our new website here in the next few weeks.

New website!?! That's right. We are transitioning to a new webhost so we can begin offering new and exciting things to our members. All the great content that is there now will still be available, but expect it to look just a little bit different. We aren't exactly sure what the process of transitioning members over will look like, but keep an eye out for an email with more information in the coming weeks.

**Looking for a way to get more involved?**

We are looking for members who want to serve on committees to help with upcoming projects. These include the Alabama Mushroom Festival Planning Committee, the Health Dept Certification Course Committee and the FunDiS Vouchering Committee.

Attend our May Monthly Zoom Meeting for more information.



*Clockwise: Teloschistes sp. by Chasa Fulkerson, Laetiporus sp. by Tracy McGuire, Tubifera ferruginosa by Molly Arthur Canter and Laetiporus sp by Nicole Vincent. Photos used with permission.*

## Upcoming Events

Click [HERE](#) for more details or to register for an event.

- May 1st-2nd -----Georgia Mushroom Festival
- May 4th -----Members Meeting- open to the public!
- May 8th -----AMS North-Central Monthly Foray
- May 8th -----AMS South Monthly Foray
- May 22nd-----Tree ID Walk

## Mushroom of the Month

### *Russula*



*Classic Red Russula sp.*

Perhaps one of the most commonly encountered toadstool, typically the only mushroom you even find during a dry spell. Crumbly, kickable, sometimes peppery as all get-out. Let's get to know this expansive genus of hyper common mushroom!

*Russula* (**Roo-soo-lah**) belong to the Class Agaricomycetes, Order Russulales, and Family Russulaceae. The Family Russulaceae includes *Lactarius*, *Lactifluus*, and oddly enough - a couple of crust fungi. The genus *Russula* is considered to have about 750 species worldwide. On the whole, *Russula* can be distinguished by their lack of ring/annulus, attached/adnexed gills which are especially brittle and tightly packed, a white-to-tannish spore print, and a complete lack of latex when cut/bruised.

*Russula* are also well known for their varied and intense coloration, typically easy to spot even at some distance against the green or dingy brown duff. *Russula* will always be growing from the ground.

Unlike so many other featured mushrooms, *Russula* are incredibly hard to identify to a species level. There are some notable exceptions for the green,

and yellow capped ones.

Unfortunately for the red capped *Russula*, the colors (shades of red, burgundy, mahogany, and even purple) overlap significantly and can be a real pain to discriminate from one another.



*Some of the many colors of Russula*

Fortunately, there is one way to help discriminate between edible and inedible species of *Russula* without identification to species. Please note that this is only true for the Red Capped *Russulas* (including some purple-tinted ones). Take a nibble, if it tastes acrid or peppery, its not edible. If it tastes bland - it is edible.



*The delicate, yet usually colorful cap membrane.*

If you think you've found a *Russula*, but aren't too sure, there are a couple of things you can check for. The cap of *Russula* can often be peeled off with ease. In fact the environmental conditions often degrade this thin membrane enough that the gills, brittle that they may be, are exposed from the top. When wet or partially degraded, most *Russula* will have a "striate margin" meaning that the

edges of the cap will have stripes, in this case (see the bottom image) it is because the cap membrane is collapsing into the gills along the edge, where there is little context (internal flesh) to continue to support it.



The stipe (stem) may be the most critical feature used to identify this genus. The stipe will be crumbly when old, and when young and *fresh*, will snap in half like chalk. The fruitbody, including the stipe is distinctly non-fibrous. Because of that, you are more likely to see pits and craters or pock-marks on their caps and stipes from environmental damage. Plus squirrels and slugs love to nibble on them, so expect to have to fight for your finds!

Some notable species found in Alabama include *Russulas brevipes*, *aeruginea*, *virescens*, *xerampelina* group, *crustosa*, *cessans*, *pectinatoides*, *laurocerasi*, *flaviscicans*, *flavidia*, *tenuiceps*, *variata*, *cyanoxantha*, *vinacea*, and several more.



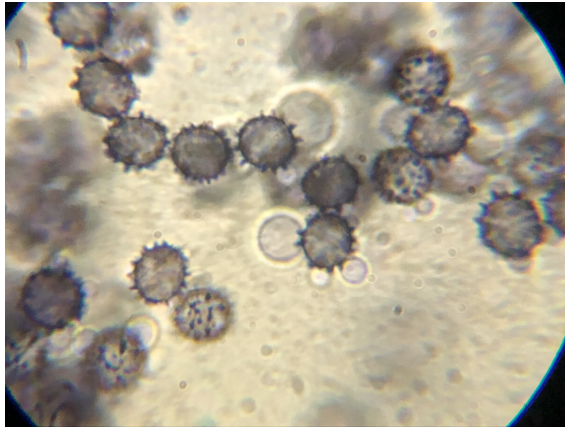
*Classic Red Russula sp.*



*Yellow/tan capped Russula*



*Russula virescens*



Unfortunately, most *Russula* require microscopy of their spiky and spherical spores to get to a species level ID.

Until then, throw them at your foraging partner and watch them explode!

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## Fungi Foragecast

The mushrooms found this month will range substantially depending on your location in the state and recent temperatures and precipitation (I always say that!). May begins the late Spring season for Alabama and the diversity of fungi is about to blossom.

As April leaves us, so too do most of the showy Ascomyces. Though you may still find a plethora of *Xylaria* and gobs of *Galiella rufa* and some of the smaller *Helvella* including *Helvella macropus*, *pezizoides*, *cupuliformis*, *latispora*, or *elastica*. April and May are also a great season to work on your *Xylaria* identification skills as *Xylaria hypoxylon*, *longipes*, *polymorpha/cubensis*, and *liquidambar* will poke through the duff or grow on wood. How many can you document on iNat? More great opportunities for our year-long scavenger hunt!

If you haven't been following out Facebook page, the Spring chickens (particularly *Laetiporus cincinnatus*) have been popping all over the state (and indeed all up the East coast). Unfortunately we're only going to get another couple of weeks of those, so keep an eye on any likely spots.

We've seen early reports of Chanterelles in Southern Alabama, specifically *Cantharellus cinnabarinus*. Expect to start finding many more of those - especially around sandy creek beds. Southern Alabama may also start to see other Chanterelle species which will bloom throughout the warm months. Unfortunately, I can't provide too many specific species as it seems that Alabama may have quite a few undescribed species! That seems like perfect

fodder for the FunDis project! For more information check out our [Chanterelle](#) blog post.

While wandering through the woods you may smell a sweet bergamont; start investigating and you're likely to find *Trametopsis cervinus* poking through a crack in the bark or growing under a log. While you're under the log you might notice a *Pluteus* growing on another log in the distance. Perhaps a purple/red capped *Russula* growing in the duff or a big hairy *Pleurotus dryinus/laevis* growing from dead or decaying wood. *Geastrum* (the Earth stars) should make an appearance as well.

Don't forget about the genus *Panus* and *Lentinus* which will also be growing on dead wood.

We're going to be finding a lot of *Russula* and *Lactarius*, so break out that *Lactarius* book! Also many, many Psathyrellacea and coprinoids.

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



*Lacrymaria lacrymabunda*





*Scutellinia* sp.



## Calendar Contest

April's winner is Corderro Nero with his photo of *Coprinellus disseminatus* taken in Walker County. Another close competition this month! Don't forget to submit your own photos on the Calendar Contest thread of our Facebook page! Our 2022 calendars with all of this year's winners will be available to order on our website in December. Thank you all for your support of the Alabama Mushroom Society.

# In the Kitchen



*Photo by Spencer Lowery, used with permission*

We've been seeing quite a few Chicken of the Woods (*Laetiporus*) posted to the facebook page, so we thought we would share with you this amazing COW Chile Recipe curtesy of Spencer Lowrey.

## C.O.W. Chile

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter or oil
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 1 pound of COW, chopped into 1/4 inch pieces
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1 poblano pepper, chopped
- 2-3 jalapenos, cleaned and diced
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 1 (28-ounce) can fire-roasted tomatoes
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can red beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can hominy or chickpeas
- 1 (15-ounce) can sweet corn
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1/4 cup chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon chili powder

- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 1 1/2 teaspoon salt

1. Add butter or oil to pot. Add onions, COW, and chopped peppers and sauté until onions are starting to golden, then add garlic and cook until golden.
2. Add the chicken stock to deglaze the pan.
3. Add everything but the sweet corn and hominy or chickpeas
4. Simmer on

low  
for  
a  
few  
hours.  
The  
last  
hour  
of  
cooking  
add  
the  
sweet  
corn  
and  
hominy  
or  
chick  
peas.

For more recipes and ideas, don't forget to check out our webpage [here](#).

## MEETING INFORMATION

Our next AMS monthly meeting is **May 4th at 7pm** via Zoom. The Zoom link will be sent out via email and also be available on our Facebook page under events. We are excited to announce that Dr. Roo Vandegrift will be speaking to us after our brief business meeting. Dr. Vandegrift is a mycologist with Oregon State University and the herbarium liaison for the Fungal Diversity Survey (FunDiS). He will be talking about his work and also about what FunDiS is all about and why it's important. Find out how you can get involved contributing to the study and conservation of fungi right from your backyard!

Monthly meetings are now open to the public and take place on the **first Tuesday of every month at 7pm** via Zoom.

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*Laetiporus sp. Photo by Donna Williams, used with permission*

## 2021 Scavenger Hunt

Join in on our year long scavenger hunt and contribute to citizen science at the same time! 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](http://www.inaturalist.org) .
2. Sign up for free to make your account.
3. **Member Scavenger Hunt** Register your iNaturalist user name by joining the scavenger hunt event on our website

**Already using iNaturalist? Please consider joining the project FunDis-Fungal Diversity Survey. All your high quality fungi observations will automatically contribute to a database to help scientists and conservationists better understand and protect fungi all across North America. Our great state of Alabama is know for its biological diversity and it is under-represented in the FunDiS database. Your contributions matter! Check out their project [here](#).**

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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](mailto:Almushroomsoc@gmail.com)



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