



# Alabama Mushroom Society Newsletter

## April 2022

Happy Spring my fungiphiles!!

We are thrilled that spring seems to finally be here! We are beginning to see those harbingers of spring, but these couple of frosts overnight have set us back just a smidge. If you aren't finding your coveted spring edibles just yet, keep looking!

We had a fantastic turnout for our 2022 Morel Foray! With so much interest this year, for the first time ever, we had to close down registration a week before the foray! We had a total of 117 members in attendance and was able to raise over \$500 to support the park! We are so grateful for everyone's interest and support! If you were hoping to attend this year and couldn't get in, be sure to register early next year. See our foray photos throughout the newsletter to see how we did!

If you didn't get to attend the morel foray, there are plenty of other exciting events you can get in on this year! For those interested in learning the how to contribute to Citizen Science by making scientifically useful observations, we have the Vouchering Foray coming up on April 30th. We strongly encourage attendance by anyone interested in participating in the foray at the Alabama Mushroom Festival. We also looking to see everyone out at the Georgia Mushroom Festival in May! Stop by the AMS booth and say hi!

We are also excited to announce that we have AMS merchandise now available on our Etsy store [HERE](#). Go get yourself an AMS shirt to show your love of mushrooms and support us in the process!

We have also run our very first DNA sequences of specimens from our Alabama Fungal Diversity Project! Thank you, everyone, for your continued involvement and support! Without it, none of what we do would be possible!



**Suspect  
Mushroom  
Poisoning?**  
Call US Poison Control  
at  
**1-800-222-1222**  
**EMERGENCY ID:**  
Poisons FB Group

AMS Board

President  
**Alisha Millican**

Vice President  
**Kelcie Brown**

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**Spencer Lowry**

Secretary  
**Becca Mahoney**

Mush Love,  
-Alisha Millican  
AMS President









Urnula craterium by Justin Weems



Cerioporus squamosus by Erin Braley

### Upcoming Events

Click [=>HERE<=](#) for more info or to register for an event!

- April 5th -----April AMS Meeting via Zoom
- April 2nd ----- Dekalb County Monthly Foray
- April 9th ----- Tallapoosa County Monthly Foray
- April 9th ----- Cullman County Monthly Foray
- April 9th ----- Baldwin County Monthly Foray
- April 30th ----- Vouchering Foray

Fuscoporia gilva by Brian Carrico



# **Mushroom of the Month**

By Anthoni Goodman

## **Helvella**

This is a medium sized genus in the Family Helvellaceae and Order Pezizales. The Order Pezizales is shared with Tuber (truffles), Morchella (morels), and many cup fungi (see Families Discinaceae (Gyromitra and other) and Pezizaceae). As a genus, Helvella are often referred to as the elfen saddles, though this description may be relegated to specific clades (non-species level groups within the genus). In fact, current estimates suggest about 150 known species of Helvella which have been divided into 5 clades that encompass most of these species as divided by phylogenetic lineages and morphological characteristics

(Skrede, Carlsen, & Schumacher, 2017; Skrede, Gonzalvo, Mathiesen, & Schumacher, 2020).

Clade A- includes *H. leucomelaena* lineages, B- the acetabulum-solitaria lineages, C- the lacunose, D- those with cylindrical (non-ribbed) stipes, and E- the elastica clade. I won't bother with the extensive lists of species inside of these clades but would like to discuss those most important features seen within them.

On the whole, *Helvella* shares the general texture of *Peziza*, *Morchella*, *Gyromitra*, and similar *Pezizales* which are often thin-fleshed, slightly diaphanous (some light passes through), and crumbly. I have a very hard time thinking of anything else with a similar texture to this phylogenetic Order. As *Ascomycetes*, the spores are born in sacs (*asci*) and gills or pores are not present. Rather, the hymenium (spore-bearing surface) is a smooth layer as in the interior of a shallow cup or bowl. In several species the cup can become flattened, inverted, or pushed into undulating or wavy shapes. Regardless, the hymenium itself is still smooth. In almost all species the cup is perched atop a stalk of some kind, often with striking shapes or textures. When large cup-shaped ascomycota are found without a stalk of any kind – consider the genus *Peziza* next. For the purpose of this write-up let's consider the term 'apothecia' to describe the cup-shaped portion (even when it is distorted to not look like a cup)

Clade A – those in the lineage of *H. leucomelaena* have deeper apothecia with an especially dark interior, lighter brown/tan shades on the outside and a short stalk which is heavily ribbed – but these ridges do not reach up onto the apothecia. The stipe is often white or much lighter than the rest of the apothecia, and these species may grow most prolifically in coniferous forests.



Clade A or B



Clade B - the acetabulum-solitaria lineages (my personal favorite) often present as wider apothecia with shades of grey, black, white, and tans along the outside with a darker (but not black) hymenial surface. This clade sports short, highly ribbed stalks in which the ribs often creep up along the sides of the cup.



Probably *H. solitaria*



*H. acetabulum* note the short stalk and ribs which extend deeply up the apothecium



Clade C – *H. lacunosa* type

Clade C – those of the lacunosa lineages take on what I imagine is the prototypical shape of a *Helvella* – exceptionally ribbed and tall stipes which often have elongated holes in them, all of which disappears into the amorphous, lumpy, *Gyromitra*-like inverted cap. *Helvella lacunosa* itself is black and grey (hymenium is darker). While *H. crispa* technically falls outside of this clade, the general shape is exactly the same, but the fruitbody is white/cream in color. Also see *H. sulcata* for a perfect example of an elfen saddle.

Clade D – those with non-ribbed stipes to include those such as *H. macropus*, pezizoides, atra, and latispora. This clade is dominated by longer stipes which are very thin, hollow, and support apothecia ranging from cup, inverted cup, to saddle. The colors range drastically but are earthy greys, tans, whites, and greys – often with fuzz on the stipe or underside (the non-fertile or ahymenial) of the cap. These are often the least conspicuous and smallest of the listed clades.



Clade D



Clade D, non-ribbed/fluted stipe



*H. macropus*



Clade E – includes the elastica clade which is typified by... *H. elastica*. Of all the *Helvella*, this is the clade most likely to be growing on dead wood. The stipe is usually tall, hollow, but may be slightly ribbed or fluted. Along the top is a (usually) perfect saddle – in which the inverted apothecium has bent inwards like a fortune cookie. The cap is tan, and the stipe is white.



*H. elastica* Note the fortune-cookie shape!

## Bibliography

Skrede, I., Carlsen, T., & Schumacher, T. (2017). A synopsis of the saddle fungi (*Helvella*: Ascomycota) in Europe - species delimitation, taxonomy and typification. *Persoonia*, 39, 201–253. doi: 10.3767/persoonia.2017.39.09

Skrede, I., Gonzalvo, L. B., Mathiesen, C., & Schumacher, T. (2020). The genera *Helvella* and *Dissingia* (Ascomycota: Pezizomycetes) in Europe - Notes on species from Spain. *Fungal Systematics and Evolution*, 6, 65–93. doi: 10.3114/fuse.2020.06.05

## **Fungi Foragecast**

By Anthoni Goodman

The mushrooms found this month will range substantially depending on your location in the state and recent temperatures and precipitation. April is a tenuous month when we transition from abundant Ascomycetes- all those funny little cups, urns, and funny-shaped morels - to a dead season in which it may be hard to find many macro-fungi! Don't give up hope, we're still just getting into morel season, which was set back with the recent overnight frosts.

During April, Southern AL is likely to start finding Amanita species and some spring Laetiporus. In mid and North Alabama you may be better off crouching over and shuffling the duff for smaller fungi as the larger Helvella species (including the larger H's acetabulum, solitaria, queletii, or even lacunosa or crispa [or our Eastern versions]) are replaced with the smaller Helvellas which seem to follow in April-May. These species may include Helvella macropus, pezizoides, cupuliformis, latispora, or elastica. While wandering through the woods you may smell a sweet bergamot; 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 levis 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. 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. Galiea rufa, the 'peanut butter cup' of the woods will start to show up in great numbers, unfortunately they don't taste as good as they sound. 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! Don't forget to post your cool and unusual finds both on our [Facebook group](#) and on [iNaturalist!](#)

Morchella species by Mark Burger



Morchella species by Kevin Hebert

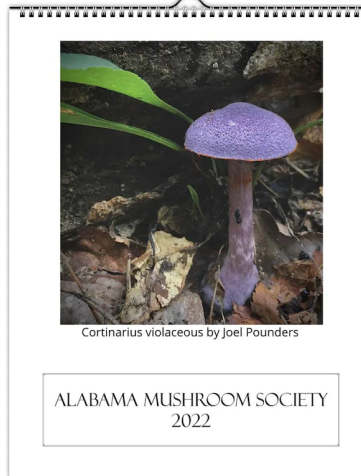




## **Calendar Contest**

The 2022 calendars featuring all of last year's amazing winners are available for sale on  
→[our Etsy Shop](#)←

**NOW MARKED DOWN!** ~~\$17~~ → \$14!



Congratulations to our February winner Carolyn Jackson with her photo of a Schizophyllum commune from Jefferson County!



**Only a few days left to vote on your favorite mushroom photos on February's  
Calendar contest on Facebook!!**

[Go vote now!](#)

**Leadership Opportunities in NAMA (North American Mycological Association) are Available!**

From Trent Blizzard, NAMA President and Dave Layton, NAMA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Nomination Committee Chair

*NAMA is a dynamically expanding organization headed toward an exciting future! If you want to help lead NAMA as it plays a pivotal role in the burgeoning interest in fungi, here are opportunities for NAMA members to help shape our future.*

**Board Secretary**

NAMA Nomination Committee seeks potential nominees for the position of Board Secretary for a 3 year term starting in January of 2023. The primary duties of Board Secretary are to attend NAMA Executive Board meetings either by Zoom or in person at the board meeting held during the annual foray. Registration fees for the Annual foray are waived for board members since they are required to attend. The Board Secretary takes minutes of each board meeting and emails them to the board in a timely fashion for revision. Board Secretary is a full voting member of the Executive Board who helps to shape the direction of NAMA's future. Qualifications for this position include:

- Current NAMA membership
- Coherent communication and writing skills
- Ability to use Internet and computer applications such as Zoom
- Willing to take responsibility for timely presentation of minutes.

Please address interest and inquiries to Dave Layton [davelayton54@gmail.com](mailto:davelayton54@gmail.com) PH# 563-321-7383 (cell)



NAMA is also seeking individuals for the following positions:

- Membership Director This is an executive position. The successful candidate must have good verbal and written communication skills and be comfortable learning to use the many features of Memberleap software: <https://www.memberleap.com/>
- New regional trustees for the Mid Atlantic and Appalachian Regions (states listed here: [https://namyco.org/regional\\_trustees.php](https://namyco.org/regional_trustees.php)). They would be appointed until the annual meeting, when they would be officially elected if they choose to continue serving.
  - Fundraising Committee Seeking both Chair and Members - This newly formed committee is charged with helping to find new revenue sources for NAMA to pursue. There are a myriad of opportunities presenting to us in 2023 and beyond. Ranging from new membership types to federal grants, to simple advertising we are hoping to shape policies and plans to improve our financials and need your help!
- Financial Committee Seeking both Chair and Members - This committee is charged with helping NAMA oversee and manage its financial resources and decision making. There are several very important money problems (or opportunities) that need immediate attention. With issues ranging from our endowment investment process to our non-profit status this committee really needs individuals with a finance background or financial savvy. Please join, we really need your help to be good stewards of our monetary resources.

Please address interest and inquiries to Trent by email [president@namyco.org](mailto:president@namyco.org) PH# 970-379-6754 cell.

## **In The Kitchen**

By Kevin Hébert

### **Morel, Leek, and Goat Cheese Crostini**

The weather is warming and the morels are popping up! This quick to fix recipe pairs the morel's subtle nuttiness with some funky goat cheese and savory leeks. This dish can be served as an appetizer or a meal (if you find enough morels!)



### **Ingredients (appetizer portion):**

20 medium to small fresh picked morels  
2 medium shallots  
5 cloves of garlic  
1 large leek  
1 bunch of wild chives  
2-3oz of goat cheese

½ crusty french baguette  
¾ cup white wine (or stock)  
2 tbsp butter  
3-4 tbsp olive oil  
salt and pepper to taste



## **Directions:**

### **Step 1: Prepare the ingredients**

Clean the morels with a brush and soak in salt water for about 5 minutes. Thinly slice the shallots. Roughly chop the garlic. Thinly slice the leek. Thinly slice the chives. Slice the baguette at an angle into ¼ inch slices. Remove the wine, butter, and goat cheese from the refrigerator and let it get up to room temperature. Remove the morels from the water and dry on a rack or towel.

### **Step 2: Toast the crostini**

Brush both sides of the sliced baguette with your best olive oil. Heat a flat pan to medium high and add the baguette slices. Toast until crispy and golden on one side, then flip and toast the other side until golden. Remove the crostini from the pan and sprinkle with sea salt. Be careful, because they burn shortly after they reach perfection!

### **Step 3: Sautee the aromatics**

Heat a heavy bottom skillet to medium high and add about 2 tbsp of olive oil once hot. Add the garlic, shallot, leek, and a pinch of salt. Sautee, stirring frequently until the leeks have softened slightly. If the pan is burning, add a little more olive oil. Once the leeks are soft, remove all ingredients from the pan and set aside.

### **Step 4: Crisp the morels**

If the pan is dry, add a little more olive oil and heat to medium high. Add the small morels whole and cut any large morels into bite sized pieces. Sautee on one side until golden, then flip. Season with a pinch of salt.

### **Step 5: Finish the cooking**

When the morels are golden and looking delicious, add the aromatics back to the pan and add about ¼ cup of white wine. When the wine cooks off, add another ¼ and repeat this process until the wine is all gone. Next, reduce the heat to low and add the butter and fresh ground pepper to taste. Stir until the butter has melted, then turn off the heat and continue to stir until it is well incorporated. Remove the pan from the burner.

### **Step 6: Compose the dish**

Spread the goat cheese on the bottom of the crostini. Add a heaping spoonful of the cooked morel, shallot, garlic, and leek mixture to each crostini. Garnish with the wild chives, serve with a glass of wine, and enjoy!

## **Meeting Information**

AMS meetings take place the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm CST via Zoom and are open to the public.

Join us April 5th where, after a brief business meeting, we will have the pleasure of hearing from Dr. Rosanne Healy.

Dr. Healy is a mycologist at the University of Florida. She works with Dr. Matthew Smith on phylogenetic relationships, ecology and biogeography of Pezizales, truffles and their closest above ground relatives. She is one of the researchers we are collecting specimens for as part of our Alabama Fungal Diversity Project!

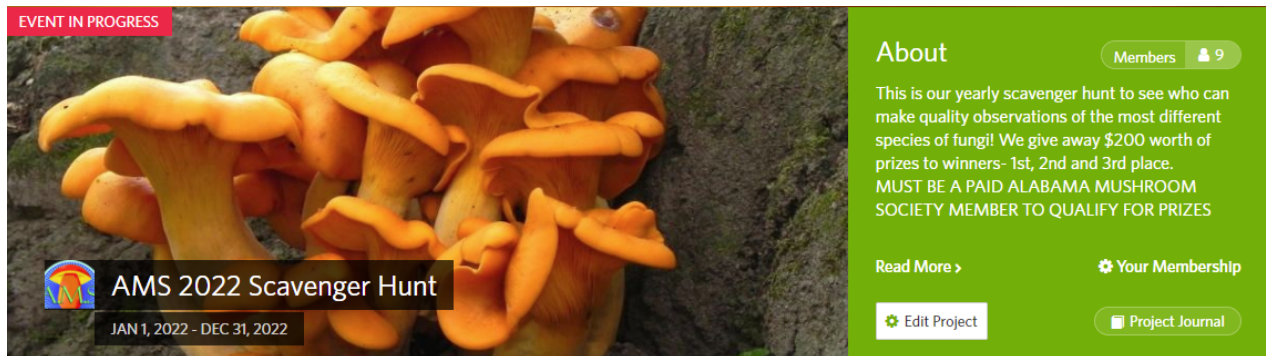
She will be giving us the highlights of the different members within the order Pezizales, their ecology, and what sort of research her lab is working on to help us all better understand them. She will also be discussing truffles, an important member within Pezizales, where to look for them and how to collect them!

Link to the zoom meeting: [Join Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 895 6557 1063

Passcode: 392039

## **2022 Scavenger Hunt**



EVENT IN PROGRESS

AMS 2022 Scavenger Hunt  
JAN 1, 2022 - DEC 31, 2022

About Members 9

This is our yearly scavenger hunt to see who can make quality observations of the most different species of fungi! We give away \$200 worth of prizes to winners- 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. MUST BE A PAID ALABAMA MUSHROOM SOCIETY MEMBER TO QUALIFY FOR PRIZES

Read More > Your Membership

Edit Project Project Journal

Have you heard about our scavenger hunt yet?! Find and properly identify as many mushrooms in Alabama as you can and win prizes at the end of the year! You get credit for finding the mushrooms when you add them to our project on iNaturalist. Read the full rules on our website [here](#). Any observations you upload to iNaturalist will be automatically submitted to the project after joining. 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. Join the iNaturalist project titled "AMS 2022 Scavenger Hunt"  
→Must be a paid AMS member to win←

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 [www.almushroomsoc@gmail.com](mailto:www.almushroomsoc@gmail.com)