MushRumors

The Newsletter of the Northwest Mushroomers Association

Volume 19 Issue 1 February - March 2008

Bounty of the 2007 Mushroom Season Heralds in 2008 at the Northwest Mushroomers Annual Survivors Banquet

What promises to be one of the best Survivors Banquets yet held by the Northwest Mushroomers Association shall ring in what we hope will be one of the best mushroom years ever in the Pacific Northwest. Following a bountiful fall for many edible species of mushrooms, not to mention the glut of king boletes in the high country of our entire area in the still midsummer month of August, we expect to present a cornucopia of gourmet mushroom delights to adorn the serving tables of this years' event.

The banquet will be held, as it was last year, at the beautiful Squalicum Yacht Club, on Saturday, March 15th at 5pm. In addition to the exquisite potluck dinner, featuring everyone's favorite "secret mushroom recipe", we will also hold our traditional auction of mushroom-related items.

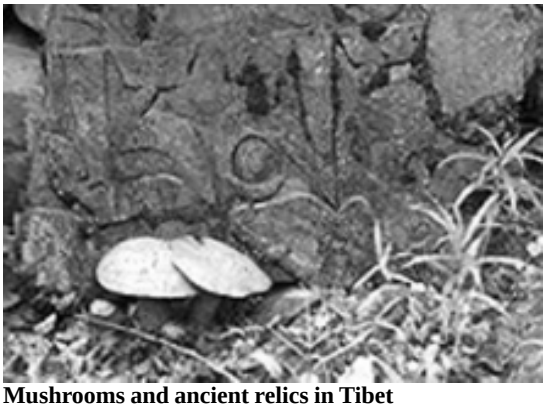
We are very fortunate this year to have a well traveled and extraordinary presentation of "Tibet's Main Mushrooms" brought to us graciously by Daniel Winkler, who has forayed extensively in the Asian high country in search of the regions mushrooms, as well as researching many other facets of the area's ecology and agriculture. The program will outline information on the various species of fungi found there, as well as an overview of Tibetan culture, and the importance mushroom collecting to rural in income generation and a bit of ethnomycology. A fascinating evening awaits!

photo by Daniel Winkler

Mushroom habitats at 23,000 feet

Directions to Squalicum Yacht Club at the bottom of page 5.

photo by Daniel Winkler



Mushrooms and ancient relics in Tibet

In this issue:

These "evocative, earthy, and sexy" truffles will cost you

By Kristin Dizon An article from a November issue of the Seattle Post Intelligencer

If you want to taste the white truffle of Alba, Italy, you'll need to fork over $4,000 apound.

That price probably makes it one of the single most expensive food items in Seattle.

Truffle season recently began, so local purveyors of fine food are getting shipments of the intensely aromatic, earthy fungus. Delaurenti Specialy Food & Wine (delaurenti.com) at Pike Place Market received its first half-pound batch Tuesday and had sold out by Thursday. Fortunately a second shipment arrived that day.

Co-owner Pat McCarthy said the store has been selling the beloved gourmet item since its start in 1946. In the past, the price has topped out at no more than $3,000 a pound. He said the store doesn't make much money on the fungus, but carries it for passionate cooks who crave it.

MERYL SCHENKER / P-I

White truffles from Alba, Italy, sell at DeLaurenti Specialty Food at Pike Place Market for $4,000 a pound. A small truffle costs $30 to $50.

A small truffle of less than an inch in diameter sells for between $30 and $50, McCarthy said.

The record-setting prices this year are due to a smaller supply and the exchange rate.

"They are very hard to find, coupled with the euro being so high against the dollar, it's just exploded prices, ' McCarthy said. "But it's a special culinary treat."

Weather, too, is a factor.

Rei Hanscomb, La Buona Tavola (trufflecafe.com), also in the Pike Place Market, calls herself the truffle queen. She was smitten at first taste.

"I fell in love", she said. "They just got under my skin. And I could not resist finding a way to share them with people."

Describing the singular flavor of the pungent white truffle is a challenge. Hanscomb calls it, "evocative, earthy, and sexy." Its flavor shoots straight from the taste buds to the brain, and that distinct taste can be confused with no other.

Hanscomb's truffle-hunting sister-in-law lives in Italy and connects her to suppliers. Hanscomb likely will get some white Alba truffles next week and thinks she'll be able to price them about $3,000 a pound.

"This is actually shaping up to be the worst year in truffle history. It was hot and dry over the summer. It stunts the growth of the truffles," she said

But a small truffle goes a flavor mile. "The good news is that if its good quality, you don't need a lot," she said. "You can do nice stuff with a half ounce truffle."

Continued on page 6, column 2

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The Northwest Mushroomers Association meets at the Bellingham Public Library, 210 Central Ave., Bellingham, in the Lecture Room, at 7:00 pm on the second Thursday of the months April, May, and June and September, October, and November. *Note:* Each year one or two of these meetings may be moved to the NW Room of the Fairhaven Public Library. We will inform you in advance of these changes. Membership dues are $15 for individuals and families and the special price of $10 for students. Please make checks payable to NMA and forward to:
Cris Colburn, membership, at the mailing address above.

We need a field trip coordinator. Could it be you? If so, contact Doug. It's fun, and besides, someone feeds you!

MushRumors is published every other month (roughly). Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of odd-numbered months. (Of course, exceptions will be made in the event of fungal finds of unusual import!)
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Mushroom of the Month

Cantharellus tubaeformis (Fries ex Fries) *By Buck McAdoo*

Sometimes called the Winter Chanterelle, this essentially edible, thin-fleshed member of the Cantharellaceae can often be found a month after our regular chanterelle has ceased to fruit. Unassuming and often mistaken from the aerial view for just another fiber-head, *Cantharellus tubaeformis* may possibly be the most controversial mushroom we have yet handled in a newsletter. Not only are there a full range of opinions on the edibility, but the name of the species itself has jumped back and forth like a football on a rugby field.

For those of our readers who don't enjoy the Latin names, '*Cantharellus*' is Greek for 'vase'. The name '*tubaeformis*' is Latin for 'trumpet'. Thus, the Trumpet Shaped Vase is your best bet for linguistic accuracy. The problem is… the Trumpet Shaped Vase has long been confused with the Funnel Shaped Vase, or *Cantharellus infundibuliformis*, the Latin name we are most accustomed to associating with this species in our area. For years it has been debated up and down and across two continents whether they are the same species or not. Dr. A.H. Smith separated them by spore print color. The late Dr. Harry Thiers listed the main differences. *Cantharellus tubaeformis* had white to pale yellow spores, yellow to orange-yellow stems, and yellow-gray to yellow-brown caps. *Cantharellus infundibuliformis*, on the other hand, had yellow to ochraceous spores, lemon yellow stems, and gray-brown to black-brown caps. Others have described these cap colors as dull orange to orange-brown to tan. There were, in fact, so many different combinations of cap colors to stem colors and eventually even spore colors that Dr. Bigelow and Dr. Ron Petersen came to believe we were all looking at variations of the same species. Dr. Thiers finally agreed, and in his *Cantharellaceae of California*, which has the most complete description of the species, he listed *C. infundibuliformis* as a synonym of *C. tubaeformis*. This is good news for us. It means that we no longer have to tell people at our forays that we can't put a name to it until we go home and get a spore print.

Caps of *Cantharellus tubaeformis* are 1 ½ - 6 cm. wide, thin-fleshed, at first convex with incurved margins, and then umbilicate to funnel shaped with wavy, irregular margins in age. The surface can be smooth or fibrillose-scaly, the fibrils slightly darker than the base color. The colors vary from tan to orange-brown to dark brown with all sorts of variations in between. To complicate the picture, Von Frieden suggests that caps are hazel-yellow in dry weather becoming dark brown in damp weather. The center of the cap is often perforated, leading directly to the hollow stem. The gills are blunt to ridge-like, yellowish to buff or pale cinnamon at first and then grayish to lilac-gray in age. They are deeply decurrent, usually forked and somewhat intervenose. They have also been described as waxy in appearance, which suggests an affinity with *Hygrophorus*. The stems are 4-8 cm. long and ½ - 1 cm. thick. They are smooth, tough, often flattened or grooved, and generally hollow. (Kauffman believed that stems of *C. infundibuliformis* were hollow from the beginning while those of *C. tubaeformis* were solid at first, becoming hollow in age.) The stem colors range from pale yellow to yellow-orange to even grayish yellow in age. The odor is pleasantly aromatic and the taste bitter to mild. The spore print can be white to yellow or ochre or even pale pinkish buff in the Appalachians. What causes this variation in spore color, I have no idea. The spores, according to Thomas, measure .00035 to .00045 inches long. *Cantharellus tubaeformis* prefers cool, wet forests with acid soils and is usually found next to rotting stumps or logs or its favorite habitat – decomposed logs that have just turned back into soil. It has also been found in sphagnum bogs. Its growth habit is gregarious to clustered, and more rarely cespitose. Although not particularly common, it can be found all across the northern hemisphere, down through Appalachia in the eastern U.S., and from Alaska to San Francisco on the Pacific Coast.

Cantharellus tubaeformis, that innocuous little mushroom being tossed around in your pasta, has had a tumultuous nomenclatural history from the very beginning. According to Watling & Turnbull, Elias Fries himself was confused. What he originally called *Cantharellus tubaeformis* in 1821, he later changed to *Cantharellus infundibuliformis* in 1838. The former name became a different species. Fries had initially inherited the name '*tubaeformis*' from the Dutch mycologist, Persoon. The mistake was made in 1838 when he accepted the Scopoli name of *C. infundibuliformis*, not realizing it was identical with the earlier *C. tubaeformis*. Dr. Lorelei Norvell informed me by email 'that it took a number of years for this mistake to be uncovered, and during that time folks thought that *C. infundibuliformis* was a different fungus than *C. tubaeformis*. (Let's try over a century and a half.) Since *C. tubaeformis* was the earlier name used, *C. infundibuliformis* became an illegitimate name. The good news is that we no longer have to pronounce 'in-fun-di-bully-formis' to puzzled people at our forays anymore.

Now that the correct name had been unearthed, it was important to conserve the name in the International Code of Botanical Literature. Dr. Norvell headed up a Committee for Fungi which recommended to the Botanical Congres in Vienna in 2005 that the name *Cantharellus tubaeformis* be conserved, and alas, she is happy to report that today it is conserved on page 425 of the appendix to the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature. This should keep the name *C. infundibuliformis* from cropping up again.

But this is far from the end of the story. There are still problems with the taxonomy. Olle Persson notes that due to recent DNA studies, *Cantharellus tubaeformis*, along with other leathery, thin-fleshed members of *Cantharellus*, now belong in *Craterellus*. Dr. Lorelei agrees with this assessment. However, this coming attraction cannot yet be made because of more complications revealed by the DNA studies. The DNA data suggest that our west coast *C. tubaeformis* is different from the European *C. tubaeformis*. This means a new name will have to be found for ours, which is temporarily being called *Craterellus neotubaeformis* nom. prov. until that new name emerges. Furthermore, according to the authors of the *New Savory Wild Mushroom*, European mycologists believe that our west coast *C. infundibuliformis* probably represents a group of species differing slightly from one another. If so, these species would need to be clarified before the new *Craterellus* name could emerge.

Fortunately there aren't too many look-alikes if you discount the variations in the species itself. The closest relative might be *Cantharellus infundibuliformis var. lutescens*, an all-yellow variety not to be confused with *Cantharellus lutescens. Chrysomphalina chrysophylla* can mimic the colors and cap texture, but it has a flaccid cap, true gills, and belongs in the *Omphalina* group. If you focus on the ridge-like gills, small tan to brownish caps, yellowish, hollow stems, and the tendency to fruit near rotten logs, you can be pretty confidant in your identification.

Unfortunately, you still have to decide whether to eat it or not. There are indeed conflicting reports on the edibility of the *C. tubaeformis* complex. While most authors agree that it is edible but not nearly as good as our fleshier chanterelles, there are a few who urge caution. Orson Miller, Kent McKnight, and Dr. Edmund Tylutki all report mild gastrointestinal disturbances from eating the species. My guess is that these reports are out of Idaho since all three of these mycologists are either from there or have spent time there repeatedly. My personal experience is even worse. A friend's girlfriend became violently ill from eating it in San Francisco back in 1982. While Peter and I felt no ill effects, she had to be taken to emergency to have her stomach pumped out. The collection was probably from Mendocino County. Since then, I have heard of no cases remotely similar. In fact, Mike Beug, recent past president of the Pacific Northwest Key Council and a member of the committee that reports on mushroom poisonings in our region, tells me there are no negative reports concerning *C. tubaeformis*.

And as you can imagine, there are varying opinions on the flavor. Dickinson & Lucas write, 'experts disagree about the food value of this fungus. It is very tough, often dry and fibrous, and has a bitter taste.' A.H. Smith also didn't think much of it. In one book, he wrote 'not edible.' In a later guide, he amended his opinion to 'not recommended. Edible but not very good.' On the other hand, Lorelei Norvell and David Pegler, a past president of the Kew Botanical Garden in London, both deem it a choice edible. Arora writes that it has a good flavor, especially when dried-sauteed. He notes that it is commercially harvested in Finland. Olle Persson, author of The Chanterelle Book, adds that 'it is only in the past 50 years that *Cantharellus tubaeformis* has become popular in the kitchen, and now it is even being served in soups in restaurants. Because of its long shelf life, it is one of the few wild mushrooms sold in Sweden today.'

The Chinese have found a different use for *C. tubaeformis*. They found that extracts of sporophores have inhibitory action on certain species of bacteria.

Now that we have sampled the opinions of the mycologists, it is time we turned to the chefs. In The Ultimate Mushroom Book by Jordan & Wheeler, the authors note in their culinary section that the species dries well and can be preserved in virgin olive oil or wine vinegar. They also note, 'they are very versatile in cooking, with an extremely nice, sweet flavor that goes especially well with fish.'

Jack Czarnecki calls *C. tubaeformis* and other small chanterelles the 'chop suey' chanterelles because that is what they look like in the pan when most of the liquid evaporates. He thinks the flavor is not bad, but not particularly distinct. He also writes that drying is the only method of preservation.

While cautioning that a few people have reported mild digestive discomfort after eating *Cantharellus tubaeformis*, Bessette & Fischer claim that most people enjoy it. They note that 'it is highly regarded by many mycophagists, not only for the aromatic flavor and delicate texture, but for their almost flower-like appearance. They suggest that dried specimens can be pulverized and added to various dishes as a flavoring.

To back up their claim to fine dining, they even have a special recipe for *Cantharellus tubaeformis*.

The Trumpet Chanterelle Omelet
½ cup chopped green pepper
½ cup minced onion
3 tblsp. butter
2 cups trumpet chanterelles, beheaded
¼ tsp. mace
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. black pepper
dash of hot sauce
1 tblsp. minced parsley
4 eggs
¼ cup light cream
½ cup grated cheddar cheese

First sautee the onions and green peppers in 2 tblsp. of the butter. When tender, add the mushrooms and cook down until liquid is evaporated. Add spices and seasonings. In another pan, melt the remaining tblsp. of butter and pour in the whisked eggs and cream. When nearly set, sprinkle in the cheese and top with the mushroom mixture. Cook another minute, fold, and serve.

Jack Waytz, your editor, actually tried this recipe, and this is what he has to say about it:

In past years, I had never found this mushroom in enough quantity to really consider trying to prepare a recipe in which it was featured. However, at precisely the end of the regular chanterelle season, upon checking one of my favorite spots near home for the last gasp of chanterelles, I discovered that although I was late for them, there was an unbelieveably thick crop of Cantharellus tubaeformis in their place. I harvested them and upon arriving home, promptly called Buck, who quickly furnished this recipe. Whatever criticism of the flavor of this mushroom you have read should be utterly disregarded. I was very pleasantly surprised at its quality, a very unique and distinctive flavor. Late next fall I will definitely be on the prowl for this diminutive version of the chanterelle again.

Nonetheless, because of random reports of discomfort from eating the Trumpet Chanterelle, I would suggest trying a small amount at first to determine whether you are affected negatively by it or not. Then, if you are good to go, there is more good news on the horizon. Peter Jordan informs us that they fruit in the same location several years running, so you can mark your spot, and come back for more.

Finally we would like to thank Dr. Mike Beug for looking up the Northwest poisoning report for us, and Dr. Lorelei Norvell for all her information on the latest taxonomical and nomenclatural problems associated with *C. tubaeformis*. Never forget the words of one of our mycology sages: The mushrooms never change-only our opinions of them do.

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Directions to Squalicum Yacht Club

Take Exit 253 off I-5, on to Lakeway Dr, heading west. At the Ellis street light, the road becomes E. Holly. Stay in middle lane thru downtown, and take a left at Central Ave, at the bay, and then a right on Roeder Ave. Follow on Roeder 0.7 mile to take a left turn on Coho Way, (LSF is on the corner), then in short block, take the first right onto North Harbor Loop, and you're in the parking lot. The boat house is a single story building on your left.

Northwest Mushroomers Association
2008 Calendar of Events

Our meeting dates for the year (second Thursday of the month at Bellingham Public Library, downtown, 7 PM) will be

April 10
May 8
June 12
Sept 11
Oct 9
Nov 13

The April 10th meeting will feature Nancy Smith Weber of Corvallis, OR. Ms. Weber is a lifelong student of mycology, being the daughter of Alexander Smith, and the author of numerous mushroom guide books in her own right. This promises to be a very interesting and educational presentation.

Our Annual Wild Mushroom Show is scheduled for Sunday, October 19th, at Bloedel Donovan Pavilion. Mark your calendars, and more on this later.

Morel Madness 2008 *By Margaret Dilly*

This year our annual Morel Madness will be the Mothers Day week-end May 9th,10th.11th*. With a little luck the weather will warm up and melt all the snow so we can find some morels. Like everything else the Tall Timbers camp fee has increased so our nightly fee will be $20 per person or $40 for two nights plus a $2 registration fee.
A brief summary of the even for all you newcomers: We have secured two self contained buildings on the grounds of the Tall Timbers Presbyterian Camp located north of Lake Wenatchee. It is situated in a beautiful cirque with mountains on three sides and a river on each side. Each sleeping room contains a double bed and a set of bunks and a vanity sink.

Cedar Hall, one of our buildings, is just for sleeping and the rooms are equipped the same as Schultz Hall, where we convene for meals. Schultz has a kitchen, dining and living area and two bathrooms and two bedrooms on the first floor. In addition to the six bedrooms on the 2nd floor there are two toilet and shower rooms. We are responsible for our own meals except for Saturday night, when we have a potluck and Sunday morning when we clean up the leftovers and are treated to wonderful mushroom omelets created by our chef Fien.

We spend Saturday hunting for mushrooms and have them identified in the afternoon. We then enjoy refreshments and conversation before potluck.

It is an event you don't want to miss. Since we are limited in space you need to get your application in early.

I will have application forms at the Survivors Banquet and at the April Meeting. This is a great event so I hope to see you there.

If you have any questions you may contact me at thedillys@msn.com or call (360) 675-8756
**At the time of publication, it seems vastly unlikely that record snows will recede by the time May 9th rolls around. We are actively engaged at trying to procure a later date for Tall Timbers, or perhaps try another location suitable for our morel adventure. Updates will be sent out as soon as we have news - Jack*

Truffles *continued from page 2*

Hanscomb suggests keeping it simple: pasta with butter, quality Parmesan, and a shaving of white truffle, or truffle mashed potatoes.

She said there's a good alternative for those who love truffle flavor but blanch at fresh truffle prices. Hanscomb carries a white truffle oil (not artificially flavored, like some) for $19.95 for 500 millileters. Or, fresh black truffles from Italy are $500 a pound.

The longer a truffle sits, the more moisture, and thus, flavor, it loses. So, Hanscomb makes sure to sell them three to five days out of the ground.

Time is of the essence, too, for Dale and Betsy Sherrow at Seattle Caviar Co. (caviar.com). They bring in white truffles only when ordered by clients, so the truffles don't sit for more than 24 hours.

Dale Sherrow the white Albas will likely sell for about $4,000 a pound. Some clients are shocked by this year's price, but people still buy.

"There is a good and consistent demand in this marketplace for luxury food goods," he said.

Sherrow is also bringing in an Iranian Osetra sturgeon caviar, which he called some of the best wild caviar in the world. He's not sure what it will retail for yet, but its per-pound price also likely will be $4,000.

"An ounce of white truffles goes a lot further than an ounce of caviar," he added. Another reason that white truffles are so expensive is that there's a 100 percent tariff on them. The season, depending on weather and other factors, lasts until about the end of the year.

Many thanks to club memberNadine Lihach for furnishing this "tasty" article.

Bowman Bay Foray November 10th, 2007

By Margaret Dilly

Just a brief note about the fall foray as it seems so far in the past. Claude and I arrived shortly after 9am and were greeted with some of our early bird members who graciously helped carry the foray supplies down to the shelter and then help get a fire going.

It was a beautiful sunny day and about 30 to 35 eager mushroom hunters showed up to try their hand at foraying for wild mushrooms. Many were new members and this was their first challenge. There were many mushrooms found but few edible. However those few were cooked up by Fien our super chef and enjoyed along with the wonderful potluck meal.

photo by Margaret Dilly

Fungi-gals have serious fun at Bowman Bay

I was pleased with the great interest in identification of mushrooms and hopefully in the near future we can hold some classes and create more identifiers. Buck McAdoo, Harold and I identified as many fungi as time and knowledge allowed. Some species we were unable to ID went home with Buck to work on with his microscope. Often times this is the only way to positively identify these wonderful little creatures. This year *Lepista nuda*, the blewett, which is usually abundant was very scarce as were *Cantharellus formosus*, the yellow chanterelle.

photo by Margaret Dilly

Glorious weather and lots of fungus. A perfect day.

There were six species of *Agaricus* identified but only four of them edible. This was the first time I had seen *Agaricus rodmani* here on the island. It is a medium sized solid mushroom with a smooth white cap and a distinctive double ring on the stem, one ring flaring up and the other down and it grows in hard packed soil. It is also is edible. I shall have to watch for it.

By mid afternoon as it began to cool and with the helpful hands of our loyal mushroom friends, we packed up all the supplies, redeposited of all the unwanted mushrooms back into the woods from whence they came and headed for home, contented to have ended another mushroom year.

Bowman Bay Foray Nov. 10, 2007
Species List

Gilled Fungi

Agaricus arvensis
Agaricus campestris
Agaricus comptulus
Agaricus hondensis
Agaricus moelleri (praeclaresquamosus)
Agaricus rodmani
Agaricus silvicola
Amanita muscaria
Amanita porphyria
Amanita smithii
Armillaria ostoyea
Bolbitius vitellinus
Chroogomphus tomentosus
Clitocybe deceptiva
Clitocybe dilitata
Clitocybe inversa
Clitocybe nebularis
Clitocybe prunulus
Clitocybe sp.
Collybia sp.
Coprinus comatus
Cortinarius sanguineus
Cortinarius sp (3)
Cystoderma amianthinum
Cystoderma fallax
Cystoderma granulosum
Gomphidius oregonensis
Gymnopilus spectabilis
Gymnopilus sp.
Hebeloma crustuliniforme
Hygrocybe conica
Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca
Hypholoma capnoides
Hypholoma fasciculare
Inocybe albodisca
Inocybe pudica
Inocybe sororia
Inocybe sp. (3)
Laccaria. bicolor
Laccaria amethysteo-occidentalis
Lactarius deliciosus
Lactarius olympianus
Lactarius tomentosus
Lactarius sp.
Lepiota cristata
Lepista nuda
Lepista tarda
Leucopaxillus albissima
Leucopaxillus amarus
Macrolepiota rachodes v. bohemica
Macrolepiota rachodes v. rachodes
Marasmius plicatilis
Mycena sp. (5)
Pholiota sp
Psathyrella hydrophila
Russula brevipes.
Russula crenulata
Russula gracilis
Russula rosacea
Russula xerampalina
Russula sp. (4)
Strobilurus tullisatus
Stropharia ambigua
Suillus brevipes
Suillus caerulescens
Tricholoma magnivelare
Tricholoma saponaceum
Tricholoma terreum

Non-Gilled Fungi

Aleuria aurantia
Boletus chrysenteron
Boletus zelleri
Cantharellula umbonata
Clavulina cristata
Hericium erinaceum
Hericium abietis
Fomitopsis pinocola
Helvella lacunosa
Lycoperdon perlata
Phaeolus schweinitzii
Pseudohydnum gelatinosum
Ramaria sp. (5)
Psathyrella sp.
Suillus caerulescens
Suillus luteus
Tremella mesenterica
Trametes versicolor
Tylopilus pseudoscaber
Xylaria hypoxylon

These juicy joys of spring were found in Whatcom County in March of 2001 on burned cardboard! Where will they make an appearance this year?

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