

Next Meeting Oct. 12th 2009

SPORES Afield

The newsletter of the Colorado Mycological Society

October 2009

October Spores President's Column



"Tree Killer Fungi"

We love to eat mushrooms. However some mushrooms and other fungi love to eat trees. Here is a very brief survey of some of the most devastat-

ing fungi (not necessarily mushrooms).

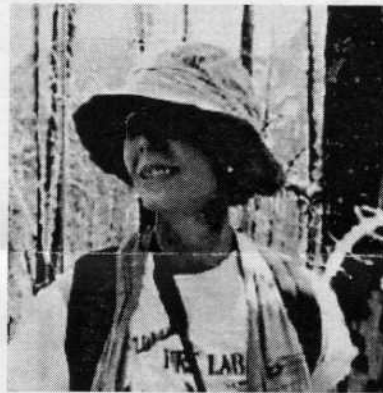
White Pine Blister Rust, *Cronatium ribicola*: Our last speaker of the year will be Professor Diana Tomback. She will talk to us about this devastating infection. Blister rust was introduced into North America near the turn of the century (1900) from a tree imported from Europe. It is a multi-host fungi belonging to the Division Basidiomycota. It has caused forest devastation from Canada southward. It kills Five-needle pines, including Western White Pine, Sugar Pine, Limber Pine, Whitebark Pine, and Bristlecone Pine. It has just recently been reported in Rocky Mountain National Park (personal communication Diana Tomback).

Blue Stain Fungi, *Ophiostoma clavigerum*, *O. montium*: there are actually a number of genera and species of pathogenic Blue-stain Fungi. This is the fungus associated with the mountain pine beetle *Dendroctonus ponderosae*. The beetles carry this fungus and infect the tree. The fungus damages the phloem layer and prevents transport of nutrients killing the tree.

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Speaker for the October Meeting:

Diana F. Tomback, Ph.D., Professor
"Blister Rust Fungus and the Five Needle Pines"



Diana Tomback is a Professor in the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of Colorado Denver. She teaches classes in Ecology, Evolution, and

Conservation Biology. Her research interests include the seed dispersal and ecology of five needle pines, and the conservation and restoration of whitebark pine ecosystems. Five needle pine ecosystems, including Limber and Bristlecone Pines in Colorado, are threatened by blister rust, a basidiomycete with an extremely interesting life cycle that includes multiple hosts. Professor Tomback will speak to us about the ecology of white pines and blister rust fungus and the relation to the Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga Columbiana*) as well as the effect of mountain pine beetles on five needle pine ecology.

From Professor Tomback's Web Page:
"Information on whitebark pine ecology has become particularly valuable as a consequence of (Continued on page 2)

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 12th CMS Annual general meeting and Election of Officers.
- Nov. 1st CMS Mushroom Dinner, see note this page.

Bring mushrooms for identification and display to any meeting.

All meetings are held the second Monday of each month from Mar. to Oct. at 7:30 PM unless otherwise announced. In 2009 the Colorado Mycological Society will be meeting in the Asbury Event Center at 3011 Vallejo Street in historic North Denver. The Asbury Event Center is in the old Asbury Methodist Church (built in 1890) complex which is today privately owned and no longer functioning as a church. There are several entrances into the facilities. The door to our meeting room is at the northeast corner of the building.

Nominations of Officers for 2010

Election of New Officers will occur at our October 12th meeting. The following individuals have agreed to run for office yet nominations will be accepted from the floor at the Oct. meeting, the nominee must have agreed to be nominated. Please consider offering your talent to CMS.

Nominee	Office
President	Ed Lubow
President Elect	Open
Vice President	Open
Secretary	Karen Ryan
Treasurer	Open
Editor <i>SporesAfield</i>	Norm Birchler
Webmaster	Linnea Gillman
Member-at-Large	Marilyn Shaw

(*Speaker continued from page 1*)

major population declines in the northern Rocky Mountains of the U.S. and elsewhere throughout its range. These losses result from a combination of past fire exclusion policies and white pine blister rust (*Cronartium ribicola*), a fatal fungal disease introduced from Europe to the western United States early this century. Currently, the upsurge in mountain pine beetles (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) poses an additional threat to whitebark pine." <http://thunder1.cudenver.edu/clas/biology/faculty/dTomback.html>

Out of concern for the future of whitebark pine, Professor Tomback and several of her colleagues started a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation <http://www.whitebarkfound.org/> which is dedicated to restoration of whitebark pine ecosystems and educating the public about the ecological importance of whitebark pine. Professor Tomback has served as founding director of the WPEF since 2001.

Please mark your calendars!!!

The 2009 CMS

End-of-Season Fungi Feast

is scheduled for Sunday, November 1ST.

This event fills up fast so contact Tom Ruzicka to make your reservations! You can contact Tom at 303-447-2740.

SporesAfield

SporesAfield is published from March through October by the Colorado Mycological Society. CMS dues are \$28 for the first year and \$25 thereafter. Send membership dues to Linda deLeon, CMS Membership Chair, 14310 W. Fifth Ave. Golden, CO 80401-5226. All CMS members receive *SporesAfield* as part of their membership

CMS is an affiliated member of the North American Mycological Association.

CMS web site: www.cmsweb.org

You Had to Be There

By Ellen Jacobson

We all awaited the arrival of the 2009 mushroom season with high anticipation of a great year prowling the meadows, woods, lawns, and cottonwood bottoms of Colorado. In late April after promising spring rains and my usually good intuition, I skipped off to my favorite morel grounds to be greeted by absolutely nothing. The soil was moist, the humidity high, the temperature perfect. Nothing. A week later, two very small morels, three days after that, nothing. So I changed venues and headed out to Waterton Canyon, where I found about an acre of Poison Ivy, but no morels. For me in 2009, they were just not meant to be. The city, on the other hand, produced more mushrooms than I have ever seen and I was quite happy eating my favorite, *Agaricus arvensis*.

Oh, such a good watery wet June. So much so that the State of Colorado declared that the reservoirs were full, the drought was over, and it was surely time to begin the construction of many new dams to hold all this aqueous bounty. We'll see said the skeptics and by now I was one of them. Round about June 25th, I headed for the mountains for just a peek at the *Boletus* patch and what to my wondering eyes did appear, but 17 lb. of perfect *Boletus edulis*. This was an unexpected treat and the area continued to produce for the next three weeks. In 35 years of mushroom hunting, I had never seen them this early.

Dark clouds of the wrong kind, however, appeared on the horizon. With little rain, low humidity, and unusual heat for the Front Range, few other mushrooms appeared. The reliable *Agaricus* poking from their deep beds of duff made for several tasty meals; there were a few *Chantarelles*, a fair number of *Russulas*, not many Hawk Wings, and almost no *Suillis*. There was something wrong with this picture. I traveled far from my normal path and found similar conditions. Reports from Breckenridge and Vail were dismal. Rain and very cold or no rain and very cold.

Some lucky souls had success on the Rampart Range Road, others near Wellington Lake, and a few more in the Pike's Peak Region; but for the most part, to be diplomatic, it was not an abundant season. The Fair rolled around and we wondered what we might have on the tables. On the day-before-the Fair Foray to Arapaho Springs, we actually found about 40 species, most were brown and small, but everyone enjoyed the day and several were new additions to the Colorado List.

The Buena Vista Festival was excellent as always, but many of our usual finds were among the missing. I wish I could say that the Vail and Shrine Pass were great, but once more the combination of late rain and early frost did us no favors.

The 2009 season challenged us all to pay very close attention to the weather. Not only rainfall, but also moisture, humidity, and temperature are of great importance for mushroom fruiting. Remember the words of Alexander Smith, the dean of wild mushroom hunters, "They grow where they grow." There is always next year.

Upcoming Forays

NAMA Foray 2009 in Lafayette, Louisiana, Nov. 26 to Nov. 29. The deadline for registration is Oct. 19, 2009. Information and a registration form are available on namyco.org/events. You must be a member of NAMA or the Gulf States Mycological Society (GSMS) to attend. Inserted into this month's newsletter is the North American Mycological Associations membership application and more information about NAMA.

