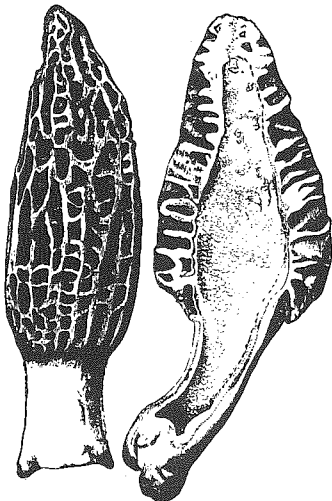


NEW ENGLAND'S SPRING ASCOMYCETES

For fungus collectors, one of the joys of spring is the anticipation of the first flush of fungi. The fungus hunter's eye, as well as his other senses, centers on morels. I doubt if there is any other fungus about which there is so much curiosity, intrigue, and lore. How many of us have viewed a large crop of these tender delicacies only to be answered evasively as to where they came from? We know they are found in old orchards, around dead or dying elms, in bark chips, or on burned areas; but just which locations they'll appear in in any given year remains a mystery. Still, if it were not for the lure and the evasiveness of morels, one might miss the fun of spring fungus foraging. Once lured, one may discover the other fungi to be found in the spring, among them some of the more easily identified of the large Ascomycetes. They are a group well worth taking some time to find and, once found, these beautiful fungi can be relatively easily identified.

Morels, false morels and their relatives

The genera which fall into this group are *Morchella*, *Verpa*, *Disciotis*, and *Gyromitra* (including *Discina*). They inhabit soil (or, more rarely, decayed wood) and tend to be found in wooded areas, trail verges or similarly disturbed habitats. Many species of *Morchella* have been described, but most taxonomists would cautiously choose to assign only a few specific names to this variable group. *Morchella esculenta* is the most common of the locally identified species, with *M. conica* a close second.

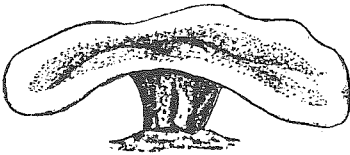
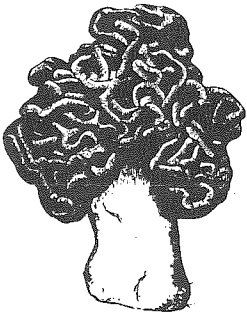
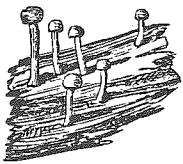
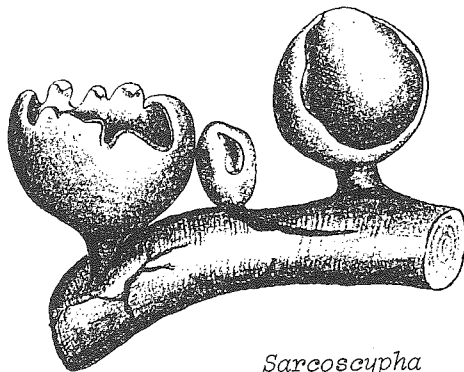
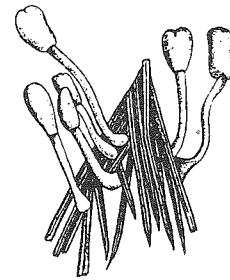


Morchella

Verpa and *Disciotis* are sister genera to *Morchella*. Two species of *Verpa* are known for North America, but judging from records I have seen, few collections of them have been made. *Verpa* differs in some microscopic ways from *Morchella*; macroscopically the feature to look for is the thimble-like configuration of the "cap" with its free margins. *Disciotis* is a genus which in the field most of us would call a *Peziza*; that is where *D. venosa*, our local species, is found in Seaver's book* (In the restricted sense, *Peziza* is a fungus with asci which become blue in an iodine solution.)

In the spring, *Gyromitra* in the Helvellaceae is often confused with members of the family Morchellaceae, leading to the appellation "false morel." Several *Gyromitras* previously treated in the genus *Discina* are also spring fungi worth looking for. The yellows of *Gyromitra leucosantha* and *G. korffii* can give the discriminating collector a visual treat.

*Fred J. Seaver. *The North American cup-fungi. (Operculates).* 1928 (reprinted in 1978 by J. Cramer.).

Mitrula, Vibrissea, and other inhabitants of streams and bogs*Verpa**Disciotis**Gyromitra**Vibrissea**Sarcoscypha**Mitrula*

In early spring, when the fiddleheads are just unrolling and before the mosquitoes have come to be a nuisance, it can be profitable to look at those temporary pools where the skunk cabbage grows. Most of us have felt the thrill of finding *Mitrula*, the yellow-salmon lollipops, in such water-soaked spots. About the same time of the year, on waterlogged twigs and branches in streams with running water, the brown gelatinous cushions of *Pachyella babingtonii* can turn up along with the small but more brightly colored *Vibrissea truncorum* and *Miladina lechithina*.

Sarcoscypha coccinea: the fairest of them all

Those scarlet discs found in early spring probably began to grow the autumn before. As the snow melts, the apothecia become symbols of a new season. The first Discomycete I ever collected was this one. I can well remember the spot--on the slope behind Collins Hall at Miami University--and the time--an early spring walk--and the wonder of the sight, the bright color amid the leaves and twigs. Over a century ago, Mrs. Hussey, lady naturalist, in her "Illustrations of British Fungi" wrote of it, "However opinions may differ as to the beauty of Funguses in general, this plant in particular always meets with admiration."

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

There are other cup-fungi of spring to be had for the looking: small Sclerotineaceae in the leaf litter and on bits of debris, Plectanias and Pseudoplectanias on twigs hidden in part by their dark brown to black color. And for those in the West and higher elevations, there is the fun of collecting the snow bank fungi which appear just as the snow recedes. To quote again Mrs. Hussey: "And these beautiful objects of study are within the reach of all. They may be procured without money and without labour, except a pleasant walk in pure air; they spring up and attain perfection and die away."

Donald H. Pfister

SPRING LIBRARY OPENINGS, OR, MAY IS MOREL MONTH IN MASSACHUSETTS, MAYBE...

The First Saturday library open hours continue under FoF sponsorship. Spring dates are April 7, May 5, June 2. The May session will have a special emphasis on Ascomycetes. Resident Ascophile Don Pfister will be available for consultation, inspiration, and identification. Appropriate books will be on display. As usual, on these dates the Library will be open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; enter through the green door between the Herbaria Building and the Farlow.

Second Annual Meeting, Cambridge, 5 November 1983

With a large contingent of Friends in attendance, President Moselio Schaechter opened the Business Meeting, welcoming Friends and reporting briefly on the year's activities. Director Donald Pfister described how the Friends have already helped the Farlow, through the First Saturday library openings, purchase of books, and, most of all, through the great moral support that 170 boosters gives a modest institution. A number of new activities or offerings were proposed, including gift memberships, introductory bibliographies, and specific topics for First Saturdays (Developments are reported elsewhere in this issue.)

Special guest Prof. Richard P. Korf of Cornell University presented a lighthearted but dramatic review of the tangled history of fungus names in botanical literature. He traced the changes in official rules of nomenclature through the years and demonstrated the effect each change had on the name of one unfortunate fungus that (so far) has answered to ten different names! Fittingly, a certain mythical Professor N. J. McGinty had the last word.

Having been educated and entertained by Prof. Korf, the Members adjourned en masse to our social event of the year, the Reception in the Farlow Library. The warm welcome and superb refreshments were once again produced by our faithful corps of volunteers, to whom we owe a hearty vote of thanks. Later, a few hardy souls continued on to a fine dinner at nearby Gund Hall.

Book Sale II

We're hard at work on this year's Natural History Book Sale. We've already received several welcome contributions. Deadline for arrival of books here is May 7th. The book lists and order forms will be mailed May 15th, with a sale closing date in early June. The sale will be open to individual members; most books will have a fixed price; the recipient of each book will be determined by lot. So--now's the time to "weed" your bookshelves of unused volumes and send them on for someone else to enjoy.

Membership Report

You can give gift memberships at any level to your cryptogamic friends! Send us their addresses; we'll send a gift card and a packet of FoF publications. (Gift orders received now will cover the 1984/85 membership year.)

This will be the last mailing for those who haven't sent this year's dues. Have you renewed your membership???

Please fill out and return the enclosed form for either a renewal or new membership. For categories of membership and membership privileges, see "Facts" on page 5.

FoF Bookplate

We have a new bookplate (see mailing panel). We're happy to say that it's already installed in several very welcome books donated by Friends. It will be used also for memorial book funds.

Presidential Prestige

Our fearless leader, Moselio Schaechter, has been chosen President-Elect of the American Society for Microbiology for the year 1984-85; he'll serve as President the following year. The ASM is a worldwide, 30,000-member professional organization which publishes numerous scientific journals. Congratulations, Elio--we're pleased as punch!



One of the suggestions made at the Annual Meeting was that FoF could develop bibliographies to help people get started learning about our various plant groups. Here's our first offering in response. We've included both introductory reading and identification aids which focus on the New England area.

☆☆☆ INTRODUCTORY ARTICLES AND AN INTRODUCTORY BOOK ARE:

The New Encyclopedia Britannica (1980), v. 10, p. 882-888, and previous eds.

McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology (1982), v. 7, p. 762-673.

(Also, most mycology textbooks contain chapters on lichens.)



Richardson, D. H. S. 1974. The vanishing lichens. New York: Hafner. 231 p.

"This book on lichens was written to be enjoyed and not be the last word on any aspect of the subject." It's a good first word. Discusses history, dyeing, medicines, animal associations, symbiosis, pollution, habitat destruction and conservation.

☆☆☆ BOOKS WITH MORE MATERIAL ON MANY ASPECTS OF LICHENOLOGY ARE:

Ahmadjian, Vernon & M. E. Hale, eds. 1973. The lichens. New York: Academic Press. 607 p.

A scientific compilation with sections on structure, growth, environmental response, lichen substances, symbiosis, taxonomy, and culturing symbionts.

Hale, Mason E. 1983. The biology of lichens. 3rd ed. London: E. Arnold. 190 p.

A semipopular treatment of the standard lichen topics, well illustrated, readable, and informative.

Seaward, Mark R. D., ed. 1977. Lichen ecology. London: Academic Press. 550 p.

Covers lichen associations in many different environments. Includes a glossary and a very valuable bibliography of lichen floras of the world.

☆☆☆ MATERIALS FOR IDENTIFYING NEW ENGLAND LICHENS ARE:

Brodo, Irwin M. 1968. The lichens of Long Island, New York: A vegetational and floristic analysis. New York State Museum and Science Service. Albany, NY. 330 p.

Includes keys to all major groups, but lacks illustrations.

Brodo, Irwin M. 1981. Lichens of the Ottawa region. Syllogeus No. 29. National Museum of Natural Sciences, National Museum of Canada. Ottawa, Ont. 137 p.

An excellent introductory treatment with many crustose forms included.

Dobson, Frank. 1981. Lichens: an illustrated guide. Richmond, England: 5
Richmond Pr. 2nd ed. 368 p.

Lavishly illustrated in color and black and white; keys, distribution maps for British Isles, glossary, microscopic details. 60-70 o/o overlap with North American species.

Fink, Bruce. 1935. The lichen flora of the United States. Univ. of Michigan Press. Ann Arbor, MI. 426 p.

Keys and species descriptions included but now out of date. Out of print.

Hale, Mason E. 1979. How to know the lichens. 2nd ed. Wm. C. Brown Co., Dubuque, IA. 246 p.

Recently revised and enlarged, found in many bookstores; keys and illustrations, glossary. The most useful taxonomic reference for beginners.

Hale, Mason E. and W. L. Culberson. 1970 (reprinted 1975). A fourth check-list of the lichens of the continental United States and Canada. Bryologist 73: 499-543.

Up-to-date to 1970. Many name changes since. Available from The Bryologist.

Thomson, John W. 1967. The lichen genus Cladonia in North America. Univ. of Toronto Press, Toronto. 172 p.

The most valuable reference for the identification of Cladonia as well as the segregate genus Cladina.

Weaver, Richard E. 1975. Lichens: mysterious and diverse. Arnoldia 35: 133-159.

Introduction to lichenology; key, good photos of common foliose and fruticose species in Massachusetts. Available from FoF; see p. 6.

Barry L. Wulff and Geraldine C. Kaye

FARLOW FRIENDS FACTS

FRIENDS of the FARLOW is an organization of people who are interested in the study of lower plants and fungi, and in the Farlow Library and Herbarium in particular. FoF was organized in 1982 and now has over 150 members worldwide.

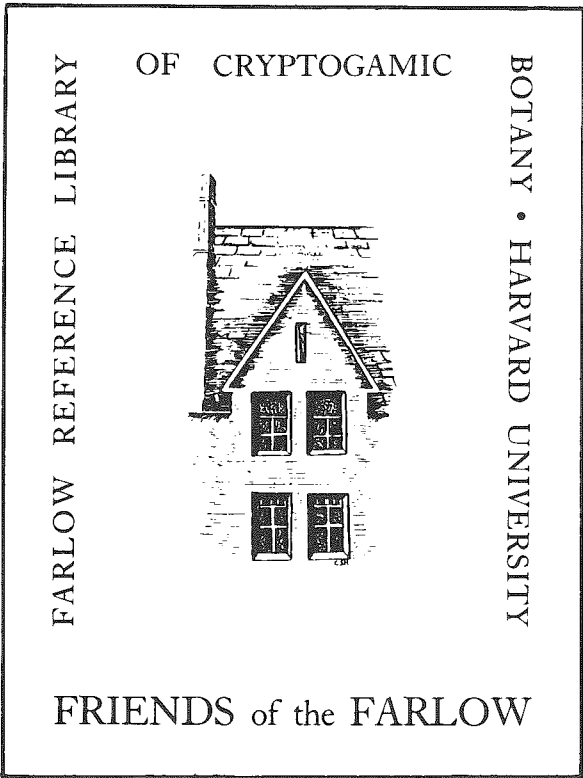
Membership categories are: Associate Member (students, seniors), \$5-15; Full Member, \$25; Sponsor, \$50-1000; Benefactor, over \$1000.

The membership year runs from July 1 to June 30; new members who join between January and June receive membership extending through the next year also. Members receive a 10% discount on Farlow publications. Full members may order photocopies from Farlow literature for a very low fee. Other privileges include book sales, meetings, tours, lectures, and, of course, use of the Library and reference services. (The Library is normally open Mon. 1-5, Tues.-Fri. 9-5; FoF sponsors open hours First Saturdays of the month, 10 am-2 pm, except during the summer.)

The Newsletter of the FRIENDS of the FARLOW is published twice annually, fall and spring...Newsletter editor is Geraldine C. Kaye...The striking masthead was designed by member Laurel Smith, a scientific illustrator...Carolyn Hesterberg, our talented secretary, drew the sketch of the Farlow building which appears on the book-plate...Subscriptions to the Newsletter for non-members cost \$5 per year.

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THE FARLOW MAIL ORDER CATALOG

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FOF Greeting Cards and Notepaper

Last December, as an experiment, David and Gerry Kaye produced a small batch of notepaper and greeting cards imprinted with an original mushroom drawing from the Farlow Library collection. The greeting cards promptly sold out; some notecards are still available at 3 for \$1. -- With this encouragement, we plan to offer several designs next fall.

Icones Prints

We still have some color lithographs, 11x14", of mushrooms from the Icones Farlowianae. Designs available are Boletus speciosus, Lactarius indigo, and Canthar-ellus flogcosus; they're \$2 each. Also, we have prints of line drawings of Laboul-deniales by Roland Thaxter, many different species, for \$1 each.

Booklets

Weaver, R. Lichens: mysterious and diverse. Arnoldia, v. 35, 1975. 32 p. \$3.
Litten, Walter. For the pleasure of the initiate. Farlow, 1983. 8 p., illustrated. \$1.

For members, take your 10% discount off the quoted prices. Add .75 per order for mailing costs. Please make your check payable to Farlow Herbarium.