



# OMPHALINA

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# FORAY NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

*is an amateur, volunteer-run, community, not-for-profit organization with a mission to organize enjoyable and informative amateur mushroom forays in Newfoundland and Labrador and disseminate the knowledge gained.*

*Webpage:* [www.nlmushrooms.ca](http://www.nlmushrooms.ca)

## ADDRESS

Foray Newfoundland & Labrador  
21 Pond Rd.  
Rocky Harbour NL  
A0K 4N0  
CANADA

E-mail: [info AT nlmushrooms DOT ca](mailto:info@nlmushrooms.ca)

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*Please address comments, complaints and contributions to the largely self-appointed Editor, Andrus Voitk:*

*seened AT gmail DOT com,*

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## **COVER**

*Russula paludosa*, photographed along the Labrador Straits, Aug 15, 2008. The red mushroom or redcap of the settlers along the Labrador coast and the Great Northern Peninsula was regularly collected and eaten with enjoyment and gusto in most northern communities among an otherwise mycophobic population. A few older people still eat it, but for the most part it is now a fond reminiscence of something really good that nan used to make.

*"It was so good. If I only had paid attention to what she told me. I wouldn't dare pick anything now, but I still remember how we used to look forward to eating the red mushroom."*

*Quote from a grandson of the Labrador coast.*

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## Message from the Editor

Reports from two separate forays.

The Birch Brook Nordic Ski Club organized a mushroom foray in Goose Bay at the end of August. It gives us great satisfaction to see an interest in mushrooms spreading throughout the province. Although FNL is a provincial organization in membership, scope and name, it cannot provide forays to all communities and regions. All are welcome to the FNL foray, but with a province like ours travel to the single annual event is quite expensive for many. Our Board has often discussed a foray in Labrador City, Goose Bay and other regions. The problem has always been the same: too expensive to organize and for most members to attend. If we leave our present members behind, we risk losing them. Other areas may not have the infrastructure to support a full foray, even though there may be plenty of local interest, were one to happen in the community.

We do not have the volunteer resources to organize more than one foray per year. The good folks in Goose Bay supplied the answer: organize your own! Organizing one major provincial foray, and providing expertise, advice and other consultative resources to others is a much more realistic function for FNL, than providing all the forays in the province, where there is interest.

The lead article is the first article on original local ethnomycology to appear in *OMPHALINA*. The ethno-word has been given a bit of a bad rep by the mycopress. You can be excused if you think it means smoking pot, putting LBMs on your pizza and drinking beer from the bottle while nude in a communal hot tub. It does not. This article is what

it really means. A great honours project, by the way, for anybody interested in heritage, community studies, etc., to dig into the use of the red cap along our coastal communities.

The balance of this issue is devoted to the Return of the Vikings. Gro Gulden had a lifelong dream: to visit the Viking site at L'Anse aux Meadows. After she retired, she could finally do it. Invited to our foray as an identifier, she came earlier, to fulfil her wish. Jon-Otto Aarnaes and a few Foray Newfoundland & Labrador members accompanied her for a very memorable week. The highlight was sharing Akvavit with the nouveaux Vikings at L'Anse aux Meadows. Or perhaps finding some small beautiful mushrooms. Or just sitting in good company, back against a hill, eating lunch, overlooking the sea, soaking up the last warmth for the year from the September sun.

These reports should get you all set for our own Foray Report, as a special Christmas treat, next month. Preview: the biggest yield ever, close to 400 species identified, and just under 100 species new to our cumulative list. Make sure your subscriptions are paid up, so that you can read all about it!

Happy mushrooming!

andrus



## EATING RED MUSHROOMS IN LABRADOR

Robin McGrath

The first time I ever saw an Inuk eat mushrooms was in Labrador. During twenty-five years of fieldwork in the Canadian Arctic, I often traveled with Inuit, and whenever I asked if it was okay to eat a certain food, generally the answer was, “You can eat anything if you are hungry enough.” I was hungry enough on several occasions to eat many things, including a very flea-ridden ground squirrel, the cartilage from a caribou nose, and some rather maggoty dried seal meat from the bottom of a toolbox. But in all those years, I never ate a mushroom nor did I ever see an Inuk eat one. Yet, according to everyone I asked, Inuit traditionally ate mushrooms. So, I wasn’t surprised when I saw my Inuk friend, Alex Saunders, picking mushrooms one day on the North West Islands of Lake Melville. Alex grew up among Innu in Davis Inlet, and an Innu elder had already told me that, “the only mushrooms Innu eat come on a take-out pizza.” However, Inuit are opportunistic eaters, willing to tackle just about anything.

By the time I had moved to Labrador in 2006, I was an avid chantereller. Several summer visits to Battle Harbour had introduced me to boletes, and I also enjoyed the occasional puffball. However, I still wasn’t confident about any other edible mushrooms Labrador had to offer, so I willingly signed on for an Edible Mushroom Foray sponsored by the Birch Brook Nordic Ski Club in Goose Bay. We had a marvellous time stomping around in the woods, followed by a pot luck supper on the last evening. And who should turn up at the pot luck but my old friend Alex Saunders?

In the next room, sorted, labeled, and laid out for display, were nearly 100 species of mushrooms, so it took but a moment to ask him if he saw anything he recognized. Instantly he went straight to the

***Russula paludosa***, and described with enthusiasm how he had loved to eat them as a boy. “We used to put a sheet of metal, tin or something, over a fire and toss these mushrooms straight onto that,” he explained, “same as you’d cook mussels or capelin. At home we’d put ‘em on the pan whole, cap down.”

Labradoreans of European and Inuit origin have been eating mushrooms with far more enthusiasm than their neighbours in Newfoundland for well over a century. Emma Dicker Voisey, born in Rigolet in 1884, used to pick mushrooms at Voisey’s Bay, but was careful never to let her children harvest them unless she was with them. “She knew the kind that was poison and the ones that was good to eat, and showed them which ones to pick, which they would cut up like onions and fry in the frying pan,” said her daughter Rose in Them Days magazine. “Oh, I loves mushrooms,” she added.

According to Grenfell nurse Kate Austin Merrick, Sir Wilfred Grenfell once had the mushrooms on Indian Harbour Island examined to determine which were edible, and wrote that in 1929 the nurses used to gorge on them in season, although they could not get their Newfoundland staff to share their feasts. It seems that the most popular and possibly only mushroom eaten regularly in Labrador was the ***Russula*** Alex Saunders identified. Called variously “red tops”, “red caps” or just plain “mushrooms,” Jemima Learning recalls that her niece once came across a big patch of them when she had nothing in which to carry them. She stripped off her petticoat and tied it to her waist to make a bag, because they were too good to leave behind. Learning used to gather mushrooms around Dumpling Island and Pack’s Harbour, where they would fry them up in pork fat or butter, or stew them. Harold Hamel of



*Alex Saunders making pisik (dried fish) in his yard, October 18, 2012.*



Cartwright said the mushrooms were fried up and then mixed with bread and water to make a sauce. Some people believed that it is best to peel the red skin off them. Doris Saunders, wrote that her father used to “come home with mushrooms and peel the skin off of them and throw ‘um in the pot when Mom had a soup on.” Although Doris made it a point to get the mushrooms early to avoid worms, her father was not averse to a little extra protein. “You’d have to take your spoon and scoop the worms off the top. They’d always float up to the top,” she said.

Inuit from Hopedale recall collecting mushrooms for the Moravian missionaries, but did not eat them themselves. Inuit or Settlers of the south coast were more likely to collect and eat mushrooms. If Inuit traditionally ate mushrooms, one would expect the custom to have persisted in the more northerly areas, rather than in the south where there was more exposure to Newfoundlanders who were wary of them. Perhaps the difference between north and south coast Inuit eating habits is related to their disparate origins. According to John C. Kennedy, the more northerly Labrador Inuit descended from Thule Eskimos while their southern counterparts descended from the remnants of the Dorset people. The Thule would not have been exposed to poisonous mushrooms until they moved south. Having lived and traveled below the treeline for far longer than their Thule relatives, the Dorsets had more time to adjust to the diverse mushrooms on the south Labrador coast. Greater contact with the Basque and French may also have contributed to their incorporation of edible mushrooms into their diet. It is perhaps this lineage and mingling that made most Settlers on the south coast mycophages of the red top, while their northern relatives, and Innu and Anglo-Saxon neighbours remained gustatory mycophobes. In any case, I had heard so much about the red top, and speculated about its identity, that it was a real pleasure to have Alex unravel the mystery, restoring *Russula paludosa* to its rightful place of pride in the culinary heritage of Labrador.

# GOOSE BAY FORAY 2012

Betty Anne Fequet

Summer before last (2011) during some very pleasant wild flower walks at Birch Brook Nordic Ski Club, our group was amazed by the variety of mushrooms also found along the trails. A few people in the group could identify a few fungi but most of us had no mycological expertise. "We should hold our own foray!" someone suggested.

I contacted Andrus Voitek, who very patiently tried to explain what a foray would entail.

OK, so we'd need some cash. There would be lots of time to worry about the other stuff later! Oh my. So naïve!! Anyhow...

The Provincial Wellness Grants Program supports initiatives that promote wellness and healthy living. We were fortunate to secure a grant to host a series of activities based on "Local Foods: Harvesting Wild Plants and Fungi". The idea was to encourage fitness through foraging along Birch Brook Trails, while promoting environmental appreciation and the benefits of eating locally harvested foods. Our Edible Wild Mushroom Foray to be held the weekend of August 24-26, would be the highlight of our project.

Foray registration took place at a booth at the town's Saturday morning Farmer's Market and was completed within an hour! Interest surpassed space but we wanted to keep the facilitator / participant ratio manageable to ensure quality interactions. Twenty-five lucky people made the cut!

Around our registration booth at the market, there was a bit of 'buzz' and reminiscing. A number of people who had grown up on the coast, particularly in the Cartwright area, remembered eating only one kind of mushroom, a 'large red-topped mushroom with white in under.' Wow! That's quite vague! With

Title banner: Maria Voitek

Photos: Tracy Leal





the abundant diversity that a picker in Central Labrador would encounter, it would be very easy to commit a foraging faux pas if one relied only on that 'traditional' information!

Following the Friday evening foray reception and introductory mushroom talk in the lobby of the O'Brien Arts Center, participants met in earnest the next morning at Birch Brook Chalet. Andrus led a group along some wood chipped ski trails through mature stands of black spruce and birch. Among the treasures found was a nice site for *Craterellus tubaeformis*, the winter chanterelle or yellow legs. Maria's group explored some shady snowshoe trails, a regenerating burnt area and along the sides of an excavated ski trail. It was a pleasant surprise to find a nice patch of *Hydnum repandum*, hedgehog mushroom, right along an excavated ditch. Both of those edible varieties are in sites that will be easily found again.

We sampled a very small portion of the Birch Brook trail network but everyone returned to the chalet with collection baskets overflowing with intriguing finds. The combined collection was much larger than could be realistically identified in the short amount of time available but enthusiasm was not to be curtailed! Most of the mushrooms picked were not edible but part of our intent was to learn about our mushroom heritage, and become aware of the few mushrooms to avoid at table.

After a lunch provided by Doreen and Tracey, loyal foray volunteers, Andrus was left to identify as much of the mushroom collection as possible, while others drove to an area near Goose Bay airport characterized by caribou moss and dwarf birch. Local mushroom pickers frequently find chanterelles there in abundance. Nature didn't disappoint that day and baskets were quickly filled! We met again at Birch Brook Chalet for a public potluck supper after which Andrus presented an interesting talk, which inspired us all to delve further into Kingdom Fungi.

Sunday morning we met for a nutritious breakfast provided by Doreen, Tracey and Robin at the chalet and then the 'edible' part of the foray began! Robin had prepared a delicious Mushroom Picker's Pâté and also demonstrated preparation of Mushroom Rissotto which everyone eagerly sampled. Maria demonstrated how to prepare fresh mushrooms and how to preserve them for later use. Andrus

reviewed our mushroom collection, demonstrating spore prints and the use of keys as aids in the identification of a given specimen. He emphasized our edible samples and some possibly confusing look-alikes that could inflict unpleasant side effects if carelessly ingested.

We finished our foray with full bellies, minds expanded and much extra 'food' for thought in terms of future endeavors!





# NOTES ON

collecting

# EDIBLES

Maria Voith

What's good for the gander may not always be good for the goose! A mushroom eaten by slugs, squirrels or moose may not necessarily be safe for you—some creatures have different digestive systems. And, who is to say that these creatures have not succumbed to fungal toxins in some unknown part of the woods? Toxic species produce a variety of poisons, so that there is no single test for a safe or poisonous mushroom. If anyone tells you that there is, run! So, my new friend, your health and life depends upon eating only what is truly an identified edible!

Learn to really recognize the edibles you plan to eat. Learn only a few common species at first, then add a few each year. It would be wise to familiarize yourself with poisonous species beforehand—avoid picking fungi even vaguely resembling such suspect species! To aid identification, dig up the entire mushroom including its base. Avoid haste and look over what you pick. For example, *Craterellus tubaeformis* (winter chanterelle, shown in the title banner) grows in proximity and looks grossly like the reputedly deadly *Cortinarius gentilis*. Chanterelles grow in sandy soil in the woods and should not be confused with *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca* (false chanterelle), which grows on rotten wood and has a hollow stem. Nor should they be confused with the small but toxic orange *Amanita flavoconia*, which often grows among

them. Chanterelles have decurrent gills, while *Amanita* species have free gills. Look!

At home, spread out your finds and check them to make sure you have the edibles you thought you were picking. Keep only the ones you absolutely recognize. When in doubt, when something doesn't quite look, feel or smell right, throw it out! Even better, when possible, ask a knowledgeable friend to look over your finds until you are familiar with the species you are collecting for your table.

Pick firm young mushrooms but not in the "button" stage when they are difficult to identify; put each species into a separate paper bag. When picking non-edibles to identify, keep them in separate paper bags. Avoid plastic bags for collecting—they invite bacterial growth and your collections, especially boletes, become mushy rather quickly. Do spore prints in the field or at home to help you identify your bounty.

Always sort, clean, then refrigerate or cook your mushrooms; decide which you will eat within a week and which to preserve for the months ahead. With a new wild mushroom species, taste only a little, in case it does not agree with you.

Clean your mushrooms with a small soft brush. Despite advice against washing, rinsing under the tap works for firm mushrooms such as chanterelles. Slice the caps and check the stems

for maggots or slugs, which usually begin their eating frenzy from the base upwards.

Like fresh produce, edible wild fungi are best eaten when fresh (but not raw—always cook them first). Proper preservation will keep what you cannot eat at once tasting good throughout the off-season. Parboiling or sautéing and then freezing has been shown to keep the greatest food value as well as flavor. Some, such as morels and boletes do very well dried. Others, like chanterelles become bitter. Mushrooms can be dried in a dehydrator, a coolish oven, or air-dried on screens, then put into airtight containers.

Many of the crunchier mushrooms (*Lactarius*, *Hydnum*, *Albatrellus*, *Russula*) are good pickled, salted or preserved in oil. Mixed fungi and other odds and ends can be sautéed, chopped to rice-size in food processors, then put into ice-cube trays and frozen. Two cubes flavor any sauce or soup and easily melt in the hot liquid.

No talk of edibles in the Goose Bay area can ignore its chanterelles. The Base has what surely must be one of the great chanterelle patches of the world. At the right time the forest floor is orange! A beautiful sight and a gorgeous resource placed in your hands to keep.

Then, why was *Cantharellus roseocanus*, the Newfoundland Chanterelle, not listed as a signature species? If comparison were to be made only with the forest around the Ski Club and the Base, yes, it would be a signature species for the Base area. However, on a larger scale, the Newfoundland Chanterelle is relatively common in other areas as well, although perhaps not as bountiful, so it will not help to distinguish this area from many others in the province and elsewhere. Still, the “happy” of Happy Valley surely must come from this blessing! With good husbandry, there are enough chanterelles there to supply the needs of every citizen in the area for centuries to come.



# WHAT GROWS UNDER THE HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY SKY...

Andrus Voitek

## SKI CLUB

### **Agaricus silvicola**

Amanita porphyria  
Amanita sinicoflavia  
Amanita vaginata

### **Cantharellula umbonata**

Collybia cirrhata

### **Collybia tuberosa**

Coltricia perennis

### **Connopus acervatus**

Cortinarius alboviolaceus  
Cortinarius angelesianus  
Cortinarius armillatus  
Cortinarius camphoratus

### **Cortinarius caperatus**

Cortinarius cinnamomeus  
Cortinarius collinitus  
Cortinarius flexipes  
Cortinarius rubellus  
Cortinarius semisanguineus  
Cortinarius traganus

### **Craterellus tubaeformis**

Cudonia circinans  
Cystoderma amianthinum  
Cystoderma jasonis  
Dacrymyces chrysospermus

Fomitopsis pinicola  
Gloeophyllum protactum  
Gloeophyllum sepiarium

Gymnopilus penetrans

Gymnopus confluens

Gymnopus dryophilus

Gyromitra ambigua

Hebeloma sacchariolens

### **Hydnum umbilicatum**

Hygrocybe acutus

Hygrocybe marginata

Hygrophoropsis aurantiacum

Hypomyces chrysospermus

Inocybe leptophylla

Ischnoderma resinosum

### **Laccaria bicolor**

### **Lactarius deterrimus**

### **Lactarius helvus**

Lactarius hibbardae  
Lactarius rufus  
Lactarius scrobiculatus var.  
canadensis

### **Lactarius thyinos**

Lactarius trivialis

### **Leccinum holopus**

### **Leccinum scabrum**

### **Leccinum snellii**

### **Leccinum varicolor**

### **Leccinum vulpinum**

Lichenomphalia umbellifera

Lycogala epidendrum

Lycoperdon perlatum

Lycoperdon pyriforme

### **Macrotyphula fistulosa**

Onnia tomentosa

Paxillus involutus

Peziza badia

Phellinus igniarius

Pholiota alnicola

Pholiota spumosa

Piptoporus betulinus

Pluteus cervinus

Psathyrella piluliformis

Psathyrella semivestita

Pucciniastrum goeppertianum

### **Rhodocollybia maculata**

Russula aeruginea

Russula aquosa

Russula brevipes

Russula discolorans

Russula emetica

### **Russula paludosa**

Suillus brevipes

Tyromyces chioneus

Xerocomus badius

Xerocomus gracilis

## BASE

### **Amanita wellsii**

### **Cantharellula umbonata**

### **Cantharellus roseocanus**

### **Chalciporus piperatus**

### **Clitopilus prunulus**

### **Collybia tuberosa**

### **Gomphidius glutinosus**

### **Hydnum caeruleum**

Hydnum peckii

Hydnum pineticola

Hygrophoropsis morgani

### **Laccaria bicolor**

### **Lactarius helvus**

### **Leccinum vulpinum**

Phellodon tomentosus

### **Suillus glandulosus**

### **Trichloma focale**

Tylopilus chromapes

Codes:

**Black bold** = species found in both sites

**Green bold** = good edibles

**Red bold** = species not found on the Island of Newfoundland to date

**Brown** = wood decomposer

**Orange** = prefers sandy soil

The 93 species collected are listed on the previous page: 80 spp. from the Ski Club trails and 18 spp. around the Base, with an overlap of 5 spp. The first thing that is obvious is the great difference in diversity from the two regions. No organism lives in isolation—all have coevolved to form interdependent relationships with other organisms. So, too, with fungi. Whether they form mycorrhizal relationships with plants, or decompose organic matter, many prefer or have even specialized to specific partners. This explains the observed discrepancy—there are far more plant species around the forested ski Club area than in the sandy semi-barren Base region (Figure 1), and therefore also more mushroom partners.

The other thing of note is that the behaviour of the mushrooms from the two areas differs significantly. Species that prefer a sandy soil were only collected from the Base and those decomposing wood only from the Ski Club area. Closer examination of the species from the Ski Club area shows that wood decomposers seem to be disproportionately high for a “normal” woodland census. An explanation is not

far: the ski trails were covered with wood chips, from which many of these species were collected. If you know the habits and preferences of mushrooms, a list can give you a good idea of their habitat.

Led by the ubiquitous *Laccaria bicolor*, the five species common to both regions are generalists of few demands, happy to live anywhere, with anybody, able to harvest their needs in varied circumstances.

An interesting association is that of *Gomphidius glutinosus* and *Suillus glandulosus*, both collected from the Base region. The intimate association of these species has been reported by Grund and Harrison from Nova Scotia. Recent research suggests that *Suillus* is mycorrhizal with *Larix* and *Gomphidius* is a parasite on *Suillus*.

Each site has its own signature species—species found reasonably frequently there and rarely, if at all, in other regions, i.e. species by which a region can be identified. For the base area, *Amanita wellsii* is a good signature species. For the Ski Club forest, at least the part with wood chips, *Gyromitra ambigua* is a signature species.

**Figure 1.**

Map from Google Earth showing the foray areas. **S** marks the Birch Brook Nordic Ski Park, north of Gosling Lake:

53°26.002'N,  
60°22.702'W, 35m ASL.

**B** marks the Base area west of the airport:

53°22.648'N,  
60°25.590'W, 14m ASL.

The barren nature of the latter is evident on this aerial view, most of the land being made up of a gigantic sand bar between the Churchill River and Lake Melville, a protected inland inlet from the ocean with brackish water.



# GYROMITRA AMBIGUA



*Gyromitra ambigua* is an uncommon mushroom. Finding it once may be fortuitous, but finding several separate collections in one area on the same day is a clear signal that this rare species is common to the area, a true signature species. Because this known digester of wood was only found on the wood chips spread on the ski trails, it is as much a signal for the chips as it is for the region. However, wood chips are used elsewhere, where *G. ambigua* does not grow, so its presence must be a comment on the region as well as the chips; *G. ambigua* is known to be a northern species. These chips came from a local mill, so we are not dealing with an imported species.

Like other members of the genus, *G. ambigua* contains monomethyl hydrate, a carcinogenic rocket fuel that is also toxic to liver cells in sufficient doses. Therefore, even if you find a horde of them, do not eat them, or you will be disqualified for your Healthy Eating grant.

Unlike other *Gyromitra* species that fruit in the spring, *G. ambigua* fruits in the fall. It is not the only *Gyromitra* species to do so: *G. infula* also fruits in the fall, and looks like *G. ambigua*. Their primary difference is in the shape and size of their spores: those of *G. ambigua* have small projections and are longer. It should not come as a surprise to learn that some treat the two species as one, most consider them as separate, and some suspect that these are but two species in a

larger species complex.

Below is the only other such mushroom I have seen, growing in soil in tuckamore near Forteau, Labrador. Macroscopically it looks different from the mushroom from the Ski Club, but its spores were in the lower end for *G. ambigua* and had the requisite projections. The spores of the mushrooms from the Ski Club were in the upper end of the spectrum for *G. ambigua*. If spore size is the only criterion for speciation, the two are both the same species. Since these are not common finds in our province, I am unable to say whether *G. infula* even grows here. An investigation of the genetic make-up of these mushrooms might shed considerable light on these uncertainties.





# AMANITA WELLSII



*Andrus Uotik*

*Amanita wellsii* is an uncommon mushroom. People who seek out mushrooms regularly say that they might encounter it once every five years. In Newfoundland and Labrador we have an opportunity to see it every year, whether in Labrador or on the Island. We have recorded it once in Central Newfoundland, but in Cape St. Mary's on the Avalon and on the Base in Goose Bay, it is a signature mushroom. It is a partner of leafy trees and likes a sandy soil. On the Avalon it seems to team up with the dwarf willow, *Salix*

*uva-ursi*, and on the Base in Goose Bay it is mycorrhizal with dwarf birch, *Betula glandulosa*.

Pound for pound, *Amanita wellsii* provides the most pleasing numbers of colours of all our *Amanita* species. Whereas there are not many people living on the hyperoceanic barrens of Cape St. Mary's, in Goose Bay there is no shortage of people, who can enjoy the beauty of its pastel colours. Depending on age and exposure, it runs the gamut through pink, peach, orange and yellow, bleaching to pale only after

prolonged exposure to sun and wind. Its pretty pastel shades are subtle and subdued, not like the garish neons favoured by some of its relatives. As so many of the genus, it should be considered highly toxic—look only!





# The empty skillet

Maria Voïtk, ed.

## MUSHROOM PATÉ À LA GOOSE

Robin McGraw

### INGREDIENTS

12 oz mixed fresh chanterelles, sweet tooth and birch boletes	2 cloves garlic, crushed
3 tbsp. olive oil	1 tsp. fresh or dried thyme
1 medium onion, diced	½ cup bread or cracker crumbs
1 stick celery, diced	1 tbsp. lemon juice
1 cup cooked lentils	½ cup vegetable stock
½ cup cashew nuts	4 egg yolks
	Salt and pepper to taste

### PROCEDURE

Sauté onions and celery in oil until translucent, add mushrooms and stir-fry for several minutes. Experiment with other species of different taste and consistency.

Transfer to a food processor, add the remaining ingredients and process until smooth. [Optional: add 1 tbsp cognac]

Pour into a loaf pan, stand it in a roasting pan half-filled with boiling water and bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes.

Serve with bread, toast or crackers, hot or cold.



*Always pay somebody to prejudge your paté at home, before serving in public*



# RETURN *of the* VIKINGS



# THE SAGA

Andrus Voitk



In 2010 we took our foray to the Great Northern Peninsula. Anticipating some northern mushroom species, we invited Gro Gulden, an international expert on arctoalpine mushrooms, to join our faculty. For various reasons she was unable to come in 2010, but wrote the next year:

I'm just reading a biography of Helge and Anne Stina Ingstad (since I've met them and am interested in the Viking settlement of Vinland) written by their daughter Benedicte in 2009-10. It would have been such fun to see the country and collect there. Maybe I can visit there next year (2012) with a colleague or two? The Arctic-Alpine aspect of the area interests me, and it has been

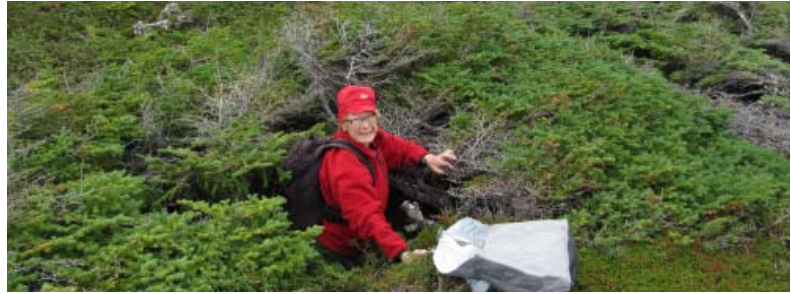
my dream to see Vinland.

Of course, we invited Gro as faculty to our 2012 foray and organized a trip to the GNP before the Faculty Foray. Gro came with Jon-Otto Aarnaes, who does the layout for the Norwegian mushroom journal, *Agarica*. On our side, we have several members, who are glad for an excuse to visit the GNP, so we formed a small group consisting of Michael Burzynski, Phyllis and Henry Mann, Roger Smith and Andrus and Maria Voitk. We stayed at Tickle Inn on Cape Onion, and spent a day each collecting on L'Anse aux Meadows, Burnt Cape and Cape Raven. L'Anse aux Meadows even held a private reception for us, complete with Vikings.

Collections were databased, photographed and dried, as at our foray—the list from this trip follows. It will be added to our database and the new species to our cumulative list, as a small foray. On the following page are a few photos from this adventure. The forest was low, but thick. Jon-Otto may look shaky, manning the bellows of the forge in the smithy, but he had just shared a bottle of Norwegian Linje Akvavit with the blacksmith and assorted Vikings, so the result is not unexpected.

Photography by Maria Voitk, first photo next page by Henry Mann.





# VIKING MYCOTA

SpeciesName	BC	CO	LAM	CR	T
<i>Agaricus campestris</i>	1				1
<i>Agaricus silvicola</i>	1				1
<i>Ampulloclitocybe clavipes</i>		1	2	1	4
<i>Arrhenia philonotis</i>			1		1
<i>Bisporella citrina</i>			1		1
<i>Catathelasma imperiale</i>	1				1
<i>Chrysomyxa ledi</i>			1		1
<i>Clavaria argillacea</i>	1	1	1	1	4
<i>Clavariadelphus sacchalinensis</i>		1		1	2
<i>Claviceps purpurea</i>		1		1	2
<i>Clitocybe candicans</i> var. <i>candicans</i>	1	1			2
<i>Clitocybe candicans</i> var. <i>dryadicola</i>	1				1
<i>Clitocybe clavipes</i>				1	1
<i>Clitocybe diatreta</i>	1				1
<i>Clitocybe festiva</i>	3	1			4
<i>Clitocybe metachroa</i>		1			1
<i>Collybia cirrhata</i>	1				1
<i>Collybia tuberosa</i>	1		1		2
<i>Cortinarius camphoratus</i>				1	1
<i>Cortinarius cinnamomeus</i>			1	1	2
<i>Cortinarius croceus</i>		1		2	3
<i>Cortinarius evernius</i>				1	1
<i>Cortinarius grosmorensis</i>			1		1
<i>Cortinarius hercynicus</i>	1				1
<i>Cortinarius hemitrichus</i>		1			1
<i>Cortinarius huronensis</i>			1		1
<i>Cortinarius malicorius</i>		1		2	3
<i>Cortinarius mucifluus</i>				1	1
<i>Cortinarius pholideus</i>	2				2
<i>Craterellus lutescens</i>	1				1
<i>Craterellus tubaeformis</i>	1		1	1	3
<i>Crucibulum laeve</i>			1		1
<i>Exobasidium savilei</i>			1		1
<i>Galerina marginata</i>	1				1
<i>Gloeophyllum sepium</i>				1	1
<i>Gymnopilus junonius</i>		1			1
<i>Gymnopus alpina</i>			1		1

SpeciesName	BC	CO	LAM	CR	T
<i>Gyroflexus brevibasidiatus</i>			2		2
<i>Hebeloma crustuliniforme</i>	1				1
<i>Hebeloma incarnatulum</i>	1				1
<i>Helvella crispa</i>	2				2
<i>Helvella elastica</i>			1		1
<i>Hemimycena lactea</i>			1		1
<i>Hydnum umbilicatum</i>	1		1	1	3
<i>Hygrocybe borealis</i>				1	1
<i>Hygrocybe colemanniana</i>	1				1
<i>Hygrocybe conica</i>		1	1	1	3
<i>Hygrocybe lilacina</i>	1	1		2	4
<i>Hygrocybe miniata</i>		1			1
<i>Hygrocybe squamulosa</i>			1		1
<i>Hygrocybe turunda</i>				1	1
<i>Hygrophorus agathosmus</i>				1	1
<i>Hygrophorus erubescens</i>	1				1
<i>Hygrophorus speciosus</i>			1		1
<i>Hypholoma capnoides</i>				1	1
<i>Hypholoma elongatum</i>			3	1	4
<i>Hypholoma myosotis</i>			1		1
<i>Hypomyces lateritius</i>	1				1
<i>Hypomyces viridilutescens</i>	1				1
<i>Laccaria bicolor</i>	1		1	1	3
<i>Laccaria laccata</i>		1			1
<i>Laccaria proxima</i>			1		1
<i>Lactarius albocarneus</i>	1				1
<i>Lactarius deterrimus</i>	1	2		1	4
<i>Lactarius glycosmus</i>			1		1
<i>Lactarius helvus</i>				1	1
<i>Lactarius hibbardae</i>				1	1
<i>Lactarius lanceolatus</i>			1	1	2
<i>Lactarius mucidus</i>				1	1
<i>Lactarius necator</i>				1	1
<i>Lactarius pallidus</i>				1	1
<i>Lactarius pseudouvidus</i>			1		1
<i>Lactarius rufus</i>			1	1	2
<i>Lactarius scrobiculatus</i> var. <i>canadenis</i>	3			1	4
<i>Lactarius seriffuus</i>	1				1

SpeciesName	BC	CO	LAM	CR	T
<i>Lactarius sphagneti</i>				1	1
<i>Lactarius torminosulus</i>			3		3
<i>Lactarius torminosus</i>	3				3
<i>Leccinum holopus</i>			1	1	2
<i>Leccinum variicolor</i>	1				1
<i>Leotia lubrica</i>	1	1			2
<i>Lepista gilva</i>				1	1
<i>Lichenomphalia umbellifera</i>		2		1	3
<i>Lycoperdon pyriforme</i>	1			1	2
<i>Marasmius androsaceus</i>		1			1
<i>Melampsora caryophyllacearum</i>			1		1
<i>Melanoleuca melaleuca</i>				1	1
<i>Mycenella trachyspora</i>	1				1
<i>Mycetinis scorodoniis</i>		1			1
<i>Paneolina foenseccii</i>		1			1
<i>Paxillus involutus</i>			1	1	2
<i>Pleurocybella porrigens</i>				1	1
<i>Pluteus cervinus</i>	1				1
<i>Pucciniastrum goeppertianum</i>				1	1
<i>Ramariopsis kunzei</i>			1	1	1
<i>Rhizomarasmius epidryas</i>	1				1
<i>Rhodocollybia maculata</i>			1		1
<i>Rhodocybe caelata</i>		1			1
<i>Russula alnetorum</i>			1		1
<i>Russula paludosa</i>			1	1	2
<i>Scutellinia superba</i>				1	1
<i>Stropharia alcis</i>			1		1
<i>Suillus clintonianus</i>	1				1
<i>Suillus paluster</i>			1		1
<i>Suillus spectabilis</i>			3		3
<i>Tricholoma hemisulphureum</i>	1				1
<i>Tricholoma stiparophyllum</i>	1				1
<i>Tricholoma subsejunctum</i>				1	1
<i>Xerocomus gracilis</i>	1				1
<i>Xeromphalina caudicinalis</i>				1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>167</b>

BC = Burnt Cape

CO = Cape Onion

LAM = L'Anse aux Meadows

CR = Cape Raven

T = Total

Red box = New to FNL cumulative species list

Yellow = Pedestrian species (very common in area)

Green = calcium lover

Blue font = "northern" or tundra species sl

## Quick observations

1. Trails were equally productive. Cape Onion was surveyed about half the time spent on the other trails.
2. Greatest number of collections of one species is 4, a very low number. This is usually seen with experienced collectors, who tend to be more interested in species diversity than relative abundance. More than 2 collections in this setting indicates that the species is very abundant, or is of great interest. For example, *Gyrophlexus brevibasidiatus* was seen only twice, and both times a collection was made. *Lichenomphalia umbellifera* was seen untold number of times, but only three collections were made. The former is very rarely seen and the latter is a weed in this habitat.
3. To get new species, it helps to go to a different habitat. And it helps to have along an expert in the mycota of such a habitat. 77% of species were different from the previous foray at Terra Nova. Every fourth species we collected was new to our cumulative list. This is about the same as when we forayed the Great Northern Peninsula the year after Central.
4. Note the calciphiles, almost all from Burnt Cape.
5. The list is an interesting mix of boreal forest species (most were associated with tuckamore — Krummholtz or scrub brush of *Picea* and *Abies*), and tundra to subalpine species on the barrens, heath and bog. The tundra-subalpine species are shown in blue font. In addition to these, there is a whole host of species that are more common in the north—not unusual in this region, but infrequently encountered by most North Americans (those are the ones writing most of the mushroom books).

## SUMMARY

167 collections

110 species

7 common (pedestrian) to the region

26 new to cumulative list (24%)

# MYCENELLA TRACHISPORA

Gro Gulden



*Mycenella* may be a new genus to you. As name suggests, *Mycenella* species resemble *Mycena* species. All are brownish, grayish or almost black. Often they can be distinguished from a *Mycena* in the field by their a fuzzy stem, seen with a loop as very short hair-like projections. Often the stem is long and rooting. To be certain you have *Mycenella*, a microscopic examination is necessary—also required to find out which of the handful of *Mycenella* species you have found. Under the microscope, this one fit nicely with *Mycenella trachyspora*.

This is an uncommon genus. As the photo shows, if you do not know about the radicating stem, you may break it off too soon, instead of carefully digging it out. Still better than one companion, who thought it was a caribou dropping!

Most *Mycenella* species are calciphilic, likers of calcium. Therefore, if you want to see these, you should explore our limestone barrens. However, this was the only one we saw on Burnt Cape, so

even there they are not that common.

The lichen is *Lecanora epibryon* (kindly identified by Michele Piercy-Normore).



# RHIZOMARASMIUS EPIDRYAS

Gro Gulden



***Rhizomarasmius epidryas*** (formerly *Marasmius epidryas*) is almost impossible to find in dry weather, even if you know that it grows on dead parts of mountain aven (*Dryas* spp.). When dry, it is about the size of a pin, but with rain or fog, it revives and may expand to a cap width of 0.5-1.5 cm. We were happy to find one half-dry specimen on the limestone barrens of Burnt Cape where mountain aven abounds (title banner). Happy not only to find such a beautiful small mushroom, but also because the

Editor of this august journal has looked for this species on our limestone barrens for over five years, with no luck until now.

The cap is more or less brown, radially furrowed and has broad, light gills on the underside. The dark brown, velvety stipe, well illustrated on the top photo, next page, is very characteristic of the species. The middle photo shows a few mushrooms growing on dead parts of living aven. Growing on dead parts of the host, *R. epidryas* is generally considered to be a saprophyte. However, fruitbodies have been recorded on both living and dead branches of *Dryas*.<sup>1</sup> In my opinion, it is equally probable that the fungus is a parasite that attacks the living plant, kills a part, where it subsequently produces fruitbodies.

*Rhizomarasmius epidryas* is a typical circumpolar species of cold environments occurring in all regions where *Dryas* grows, from the Arctic and the North-Atlantic islands and coasts to alpine areas, in Europe as far south as in Romania and Spain.

In North America it extends

south to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

On the bottom of the next page is an updated distribution map of all the 300 or so documented localities for the species, kindly provided by Ania Ronikier from a recent article on the subject.<sup>2</sup>

There are no documented coastal finds in North America south of Hudson's Bay in the East and Bear Glacier, BC, in the West,<sup>2</sup> so that our find represents a southern coastal outpost.

Genus *Marasmius* encompassed small

whitespored mushrooms with the special ability to revive after desiccation. Recent review of the genus has seen it subdivided into several small genera. Based on recent DNA-analysis, our species, after a brief and tumultuous ride through the genus *Mycetinis*, has found a home in the small genus *Rhizomarasmius*. As is often the case, retrospective review of morphology shows that this fit is a felicitous move, grouping like with like.<sup>3</sup>

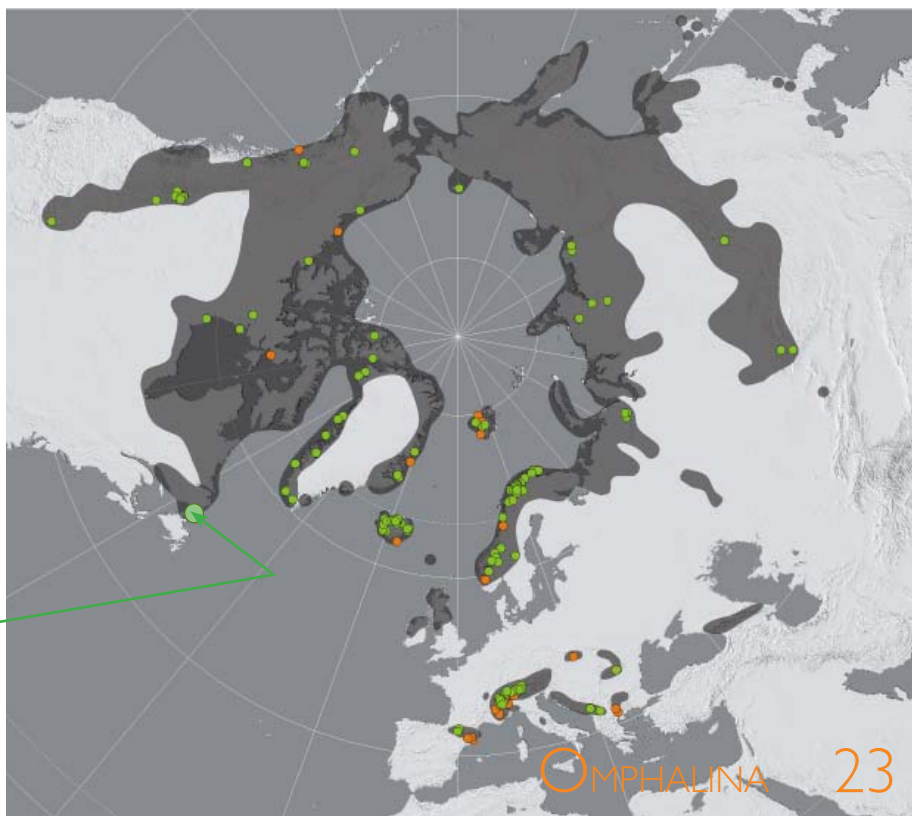
## Acknowledgments

Title banner photo from Burnt Cape by Andrus Voitk. Photos this page from Norway, by kind permission of Kolbjørn Mohn Jenssen. Map this page by kind permission of Ania Ronikier.<sup>2</sup>

## References

1. Eckblad F-E: Notes on some larger Basidiomycetes and their distribution in Norway. *Nytt Mag. Bot.* 8: 179-88. 1960.
2. Ronikier A, Ronikier M: Biogeographical patterns of arctic-alpine fungi: distribution analysis of *Marasmius epidryas*, a typical circumpolar species of cold environments. *North American Fungi* 5 (5): 23-50. 2010.
3. Ronikier M, Ronikier A: *Rhizomarasmius epidryas* (Physalacriaceae): phylogenetic placement of an arctic-alpine fungus with obligate saprobic affinity to *Dryas* spp. *Mycologia* 103:1124-1132. 2011.

Our find, professionally identified and secure in the FNL fungarium, brings the contiguous *R. epidryas* range to its southernmost point on the North American east coast.



# THE MAIL BAG

OR WHY THE PASSENGER PIGEONS ASSIGNED TO SERVE THE  
LAVISH CORPORATE AND EDITORIAL OFFICES OF *OMPHALINA* GET HERNIAS

⇒ That big knife you are wearing in the T-shirt ad must be some babe magnet! ON



**Ed response:** Indeed. Works like a charm! Am considering renting same for short periods for exorbitant fee. The knife was given to me as a gift by its maker, Jon-Otto Aarnæs, at the foray. Jon-Otto's father was also a knife maker and several of Jon-Otto's knives, copies of old Norwegian knives, are now in museum collections, e.g. <<http://www.digitaltmuseum.no/things/kniv-og-slire-drakttilbehr-1988-kopi-laget-av/NF/NF.14947-001>>.

⇒ Suggestion: ID those gorgeous photos in you last issue (and in the future) with the genus and species names. BB

**Ed's answer:** I assume you mean the pictures in the Halloween article, not the *Gymnosporangium*.

The decision to leave the pictures unlabeled was an editorial one. If wrong, our solemn promise to you is that it was not, is not and will not be the only editorial error in this publication.

If we had our way, we'd fire the whole bunch in that Editorial suite! First there was that artsy-fartsy Editor of Matters Aesthetic, saying that labeling destroys the appearance of photos. Bad enough that you feel you have to give author credit and good on you for doing it unobtrusively. Labeling for information is useless if done unobtrusively. Then there was the Learned Scientific Editor, who all-knowingly said that everybody knows these common fungi.

Besides, they are all mentioned in the text, so if you put them in the order they appear in the text, there should be no problem. As if that wasn't enough, the Macho Foray Editor piped in that surely for a group identifying almost 400 species at its recent foray, with neither label nor accompanying text on the mushrooms, it is child's play to follow the text.

Of course, we do not listen to these spoiled and pompous specialists, even though they are retained as consultants on the Editorial Team at a very high cost. In truth, the decision was made by the leader of the Office Typing Pool, who declared in bellicose tones, between enthusiastically bursting gum bubbles, that they have no time to put on so many labels with foreign names, what with so many fingernails still in need of polish and so forth. And that was that.

Inventive retrospect always awards the course of history to the big leaders, but in reality it is set by the actions of those on the ground doing the grunt work.

⇒ Fascinating volume—I learned so much about Halloween. JP

⇒ I really enjoyed the piece about Halloween. MCA

**Ed comment:** Here we toiled beyond natural endurance to teach you about our *Gymnosporangium* species, and you tell us you learned about Halloween! There's no justice.

⇒ Very nice pictures! You really can tell the gymnos apart by their looks. May I use them for my Mycology lectures ? BK

**Ed reply:** Of course! We'd be flattered. We live for the day when readers will find value in our text as well...

⇒ Your coverage of *Gymnosporangium* was fantastic. BTW, the fly larvae you note are species of *Mycodiplosis* (Henk et al., Fungal Ecology 4:284; 2011). Cathie Amie

**Ed comment:** Toldja somebody would know! Even had the gender right. More on this later.

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# FORAY

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