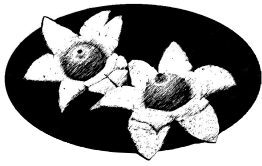


THE QUEENSLAND MYCOLOGIST



Bulletin of
The Queensland Mycological Society Inc.
Vol 7 Issue 1, Autumn 2012



The Queensland Mycological Society

ABN No 18 351 995 423

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Society Objectives

The objectives of the Queensland Mycological Society are to:

1. Provide a forum and a network for amateur and professional mycologists to share their common interest in macro-fungi
2. Stimulate and support the study and research of Queensland macro-fungi through the collection, storage, analysis and dissemination of information about fungi through workshops and fungal forays;
3. Promote, at both the state and commonwealth levels, the identification of Queensland's macrofungal biodiversity through documentation and publication of its macro-fungi;
4. Promote an understanding and appreciation of the roles macro-fungal biodiversity plays in the health of Queensland ecosystems; and
5. Promote the conservation of indigenous macro-fungi and their relevant ecosystems.

The *Queensland Mycologist* is issued quarterly. Members are invited to submit short articles or photos to the editor for publication. The deadline for contributions for the next issue is May 15, 2012. All original material may be reprinted or reproduced, unless otherwise stated, provided the source of the information and the copyright author are acknowledged.

Cover photo: *Dacryopinax spathularia*, photographed at Dilkusha Nature Reserve in November 2011.
© Fran Guard. See page 6 for more on that field trip.

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QMS Calendar 2012

Meetings are held in the Bailey Room at the Herbarium, Mt Coot-tha, commencing at 7pm on the second Tuesday of alternate months from February, unless otherwise scheduled. Check the website for any changes. **Note: The December 2011 meeting is on Dec 6.**

To assist those are unable to attend meetings, notes on the talks are included in the Queensland Mycologist wherever possible. However, the notes never do justice to the topic as they do not reflect the enthusiasm of the speaker or cover the discussion that follows. So remember, where possible it is better to attend the meetings, get the information first hand and participate in the invaluable information sharing opportunity.

QMS Meetings 2012	
Date	Items
10 Apr 2012	AGM & Guest Speaker Roger Shivas: "Rusts and Smuts"
12 Jun 2012	Talk: Foray reports
14 Aug 2012	Talk: Foray reports
9 Oct 2012	Talk: Foray reports
4 Dec 2012	Festive celebration. Talk: Foray reports

AGM April 10: All Executive and Office holder positions will be vacated and elections/re-elections will take place. **N.B.** It is very important for a community group like QMS, to share the tasks around. **Please be prepared to volunteer or "be volunteered" for a job! A new President and a new Secretary are required.**

QMS Supper Roster 2012		
Date	Savory	Sweet
10 Apr 2012	QMS AGM - all to bring a small plate.	
12 Jun 2012	Kim Q	Floss & Ken
14 Aug 2012		
9 Oct 2012		
11 Dec 2012	Party all to bring a small plate.	

QMS Forays & Workshops 2012

Field trip details may change as a result of drought or other unforeseen circumstances. Check the website for changes.

Date	Location	Leader (contact details)
31 Mar 2012	Chermside Hills, Brisbane	John Wrench & James Hansen (winandjohn@bigpond.com)
13-15 th April	Ravensbourne	John Dearnaley John.Dearnaley@jusq.edu.au & Ronda Warhurst warhurst@jstcelco.net.au
26 May 2012	Cunningham's Gap, Main Range National Park	Susan Nelles (zefarella@gmail.com)
30 Jun 2012	Linda Garrett, Sunshine Coast	Patrick Leonard (patbrenda.leonard@bigpond.com)
September 2012	Workshop: How to get to genus, and spores, details TBA	Patrick Leonard (patbrenda.leonard@bigpond.com)

2012 Workshop Program

The 2012 workshop program has yet to be finalised but a joint workshop with the arborists on polypores is being considered for July. Look out for details in the next newsletter and keep an eye on the website. Workshops are given on a cost recovery basis, so there will be a charge.

Vice-President's Report

Patrick Leonard

The second half of 2011 was a difficult time for the QMS, our President, Sapphire McMullan-Fisher resigned to go to Western Australia leaving behind a large gap. During her time as President Sapphire did a huge amount for the QMS, organising forays, encouraging members to join the committee and help with the tasks that make the QMS work. But above all she pressed for higher scientific standards. Our records of fungal collections made at forays and the accompanying photographs improved enormously under her guidance. So thank you Sapphire and we wish you good foraying in WA.

Deciding when we should hold forays has always been difficult. In the drought years when QMS was first formed, there seemed little point in having forays in November. But the spring of 2011 foretold the wet summer to come and our foray at Dilkusha (reported on page 6) was surprisingly productive. The February foray to the normally dry Cooloola site also yielded interesting collections. Thanks to Fran Guard for organizing both of these. It is also very pleasing to see lots of interest in the March weekend foray to the Bunya Mountains National Park. Fungi have been much in the news lately, not always for the right reasons. The deaths of three people from collecting and eating *Amanita phalloides*, which occurred in Canberra, once again emphasized how dangerous it can be to miss-identify fungi. The victims apparently thought they were collecting *Volvariella speciosa* which is a good edible fungus. Although *Amanita phalloides* is an introduced fungus from Europe and not known to occur in Queensland, there are lots of

native *Amanita* species here and for most of them, we do not know their toxicity. And there are toxic species amongst boletes and *Cortinarius* as well.

On a brighter note, in February the Courier Mail carried a story on the appearance of a luminescent *Mycena* in suburban Mt Gravatt. Known from several locations in Queensland, *Mycena chlorophos* seems to be revelling in the wet conditions of summer 2012.

Our AGM is approaching and we again face the prospect of having to fill vacancies on the committee. The QMS have been very fortunate in having members who have been willing to undertake the routine administrative tasks that any small organisation has to undertake in order to do the fun things. We are all very grateful to Fran Guard who has been our Secretary this past year and to Gretchen Evans our minutes secretary. But Fran and Gretchen are retiring and we need a new volunteers. Fran is willing to stay on as Foray coordinator and that will be a great help as that post has been vacant this past year and Fran, Sapphire and I have somehow muddled through the tasks.

Thanks also to Matthea Paulus who has happily agreed to continue for another year as our Treasurer. Our finances are sound, although it is probably time to increase membership rates. This will be discussed at the AGM. I am also very grateful to Susan Nelles and Gretchen Evans who have both taken on events for 2012. Klaus Querengasser has joined the committee this year and commenced the task of sorting out all our photos.



Mycena chlorophos © Frances Guard

But we do need more members to volunteer to do a stint on the committee and to help organize forays and workshops.

The QMS has a surprisingly good library on fungi. Susan Nelles is our Librarian and has stored the Library in her house. The Committee have long had the ambition of seeing the Library housed at the Herbarium so it is easier for members to access on meeting days. We are therefore delighted to report that Megan Prance has succeeded in finalising this and we are grateful to Ailsa Holland and the Herbarium's Director Gordon Guymer for agreeing to this.

Technology moves at an amazing speed these days. Our website had sadly become very dated and almost impossible to alter and keep up to date. Andrew Kettle did a great job keeping it going for as long as he did. The committee have taken the plunge and agreed to go for a new and rather more ambitious website. Sapphire McMullan-Fisher and Jeffrey Black volunteered to set it up and members can now see the early results, we also have a new web address: <http://qldfungi.org.au/>.

We intend to put lots more information on the website:

- Details of forays and pictures of the fungi that we have seen at each of our regular foray sites.
- Our Library catalogue.
- Fungi of Queensland with pictures and descriptions of fungi we have found.
- Trial keys.

The committee will be very interested in member comments on the new website so please contact me or Sapphire or Jeff if you have ideas about what should be on the website or comments on what has been done.

Whilst on the subject of technology, Fungimap are proposing to develop an application to put details of Fungimap target species in to an application for smart phones and have asked QMS to participate in trialling the system. We hope members will welcome participating.

A plea from the editor

Once again we have far fewer reports than there have been forays and talks. It is never too late and I would really appreciate receiving more material from 2011 as well as for this year's activities, as close to the event as possible. Within reason I can help with formatting, but I need enough information on which to base an article.

A Powerpoint presentation may be enough, though I do prefer to receive a full article as I do not have unlimited time. I also like original, full-size photos, as that gives me more flexibility in trimming and resizing with minimal loss of quality. Photos suitable for the front page are also desperately needed. Portrait, 4:3 ratio.

Fungi and fire in Australian ecosystems

Sapphire has written an article on fungi and fire management for the first SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium Newsletter. To read the article (and other items in the newsletter), go to: <http://www.fireandbiodiversity.org.au/news.html>

Sapphire has also pointed us toward an item on the Atlas of Living Australia site about deathcaps. This is a good reminder for us to visit ALA: <http://www.ala.org.au/blogs-news/deathcaps-hitchhikers-rather-than-malicious/>

More on fungal poisonings on pages 8 and 9.

Foray to Dilkusha Nature Refuge 5 Nov. 2011

Photos and text by Fran Guard

This foray was held very early in the fungi season and we were rather concerned that there would be no fungi to be found. However, some good rain fell a few days before the outing and in fact 28 species were seen by the six forayers. As the property consists mainly of regenerating subtropical rainforest, not surprisingly, almost all the fungi were wood rotters. To our great delight we found one *Russula* coming up through the bitumen(!) on our road under a large planted eucalypt. Patrick was able to identify it to *Russula aff cyanoxantha*.

There were a number of polypores and these proved difficult to identify. However, one that had a brown glossy sheen to its upper surface and a grey undersurface, which was growing on an old *Casuarina* branch, proved to be *Coriopsis strumosa*.

The most common fungus on the property, *Lentinus sajor-caju*, had had a fresh fruiting about a month before the foray, so most of the fruit bodies were in poor condition, though still abundant. It occurs on all the large leafed privet trees (*Ligustrum lucidum*) that have been poisoned in our rainforest restoration. As well we saw another white *Lentinus* at the base of a dead privet. This was a much more delicate fungus than *L. sajor-caju*, occurring in caespitose clumps, with an almost translucent cap and very noticeable intervention between the moderately crowded gills. It was identified to *Lentinus aff cladopus*.

Lastly, one very bright little orange fungus was found on some well rotted logs and thought to be a coral. However, later it was realized that it was *Dacryopinax spathularia*, which is a rather tough jelly fungus of the Dacryomycetales family.

After our walk, we shared lunch at Fran's home and were able to go over the specimens more closely, look up the books and start identifying the species that were not easily identified in the field. A good time was had by all.



Russula aff cyanoxantha growing through a bitumen road



Coriopsis strumosa upper surface and grey pored undersurface



Dacryopinax spathularia



Lentinus aff cladopus

Cooloola National Park Foray 3 March 2012

Photos and text by Frances Guard

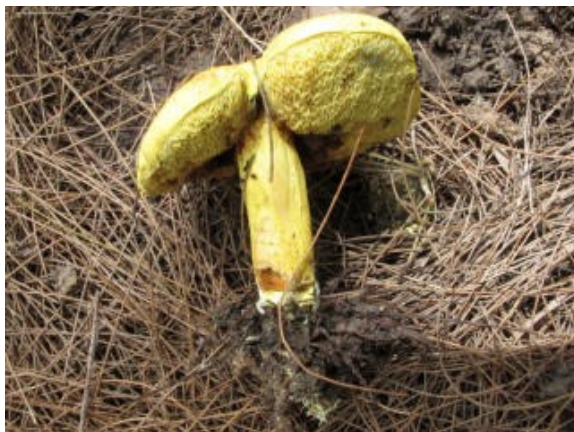
This foray was scheduled for 25th February, when the area received a drenching of nearly 300mm in the preceding week, with a severe weather warning on the actual day! Naturally enough the outing was postponed, and one week later we enjoyed a beautiful mild day, with a little welcome sunshine. As the park is a sandy heathland community, with scattered scribbly gums, banksias and casuarinas, it was almost dry underfoot. The understory of grasses and small shrubs was very thick, due to good rain and lack of fire. This meant that the best places to find fungi were along the fire trails and under the casuarinas where the needles suppress other plant growth.

We were delighted to find 19 different species of fungi. Despite the absence of an experienced mycologist, we were able to name a number of the fungi, at least to Genus. (It would be interesting to visit this regular site in a different month next year, as there may be a different suite of fungi fruiting then.)

Among our more exciting finds were:

1. *Amanita roseolamellata* (pink gilled amanita), which as the name says has pale pink gills. It had a rather reduced annulus and a saccate volva. There were scattered patches of flat cream velar remains on the cap surface.
2. An apricot coloured *Omphalina* sp. growing in a wet mossy bank with a green algal mat. It had decurrent gills and a depressed centre to the cap, (omphalus= "belly button"). This fungus is probably a lichenised macro-fungus.
3. A black/dark grey-brown rather coral-like small fungus, growing on the fire trail. There was quite a lot of it present. Unlike corals the tips were rather flattened. It dropped a brown spore print and the spores were bluntly ovoid, 10x 3.5µm and decorated with spines. This places it in *Thelephora*, which like stereums drop their spores from the whole surface of the fungus, not from pores as in the polypores.
4. We also found a couple of boletes, one of which had a bright yellow cap surface, flesh and pores. It turned slightly blue, but very slowly, when cut in half. It had already been discovered by the maggots, so we left it there. We weren't able to find it in the books we had on boletes.

Altogether a good Foray.



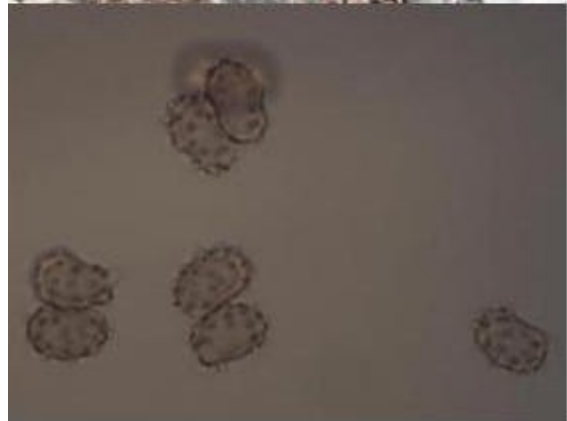
The bright yellow bolete



Amanita roseolamellata



Omphalina sp.



Thelephora sp. coral-like fruit body and decorated spores

Fungal Poisonings

David Holdom

Patrick has already mentioned the tragedy in Canberra in December, where some Chinese residents ate fungi that were mistaken for edible species when in fact they were the extremely toxic *Amanita phalloides*.

The case was widely reported in the media, for example the ABC and the Sydney Morning Herald: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-01-04/two-die-from-death-cap-mushrooms/3757764?WT.svl=news0>
<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/two-die-after-eating-death-cap-mushrooms-20120104-1pk38.html>

This is not dissimilar to a case reported a few years ago in the UK where a migrant from Thailand collected the same fungus, mistaking it for one she knew in her homeland.
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_news/england/hampshire/8574915.stm)

In a paper published in the Medical Journal of Australia in December 2011 a Perth Doctor, Lindsay Mollison, described in some detail his symptoms from eating *Chlorophyllum molybdites*. This large fungus is widespread and is quite common in places. When mature the gills have a distinctive green colour, but may be paler in immature specimens.



He described examining the fungus and recognising that the larger ones were inedible, but collected some button mushrooms that he took to be a different (edible) species. He tried two small (about 5g) samples, finding them to be quite pleasant. He ate no more, but about two hours later he became very ill, with severe nausea and other symptoms described in the paper, and was eventually taken to hospital for treatment. He was later able to confirm the identity of the fungus, after spending some time finding suitably qualified mycologists to assist.

Dr Mollison also discussed other fungal poisonings with this species (the most common cause of mushroom poisoning in the USA) and others, in

particular *A. phalloides*, which is particularly toxic and which has caused a number of deaths in Australia and overseas.

This is a fortunate case where the victim survived to tell the tale. The simple point made in the paper was "*never eat any mushrooms with white gills nor any wild mushrooms, and even more simply — do not eat any mushrooms that you do not positively know.*"

The two *A. Phalloides* cases discussed here have another dimension, in that the people who collected the fungi were migrants in an unfamiliar environment. If locals such as Dr Mollison incorrectly identify fungi, how much harder must it be for people who are unfamiliar with local conditions and species? As the population becomes ever more urbanised and mobile, with people living far from where they grew up, knowledge of what is safe and what is not will decline from already low levels. Interest in "natural" or wild foods/bush tucker and the like can only increase the risk, especially where what look like "familiar" species can be found in urban areas or nearby parks.

Better education may help, but it is difficult to get this sort of message across to casual pickers, especially if they do not understand English well. I fear that these cases will not be the last.

[Mycotoxins are not all bad, though. A paper just published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute reports that alpha-amanitin, the deathcap toxin, shows promise for cancer treatment, causing regression in cancers in 9 of 10 treated mice. The paper was reported in The Scientist at http://the-scientist.com/2012/04/04/poisonous-shrooms-battle-cancer/.](#)

One thing we should all be concerned by is the comment by Dr Mollison that:

"Initial attempts to identify the mushroom via the Western Australian Poisons Information Centre and various WA Government and university departments were unsuccessful due to lack of suitably qualified staff." He eventually received the needed assistance from Neale Bougher and Heino Lepp, but the lack of trained and employed mycologists able to identify macrofungi is a concern. Expert amateurs, retired academics and groups like QMS can contribute a lot, but we still need professionally staffed herbaria.

And while *The Scientist* included a photo of a death cap in its reporting on the cancer paper, a biotech site they seem to have picked up the story from used a picture of a common mushroom. Not helpful.

Kevin Mitchell has more on poisonings in the next article.

Reference

Mollison, L.C. (2011) Mushroom poisoning: a personal vignette. *Medical Journal of Australia* **195(11/12)**: 720-721.

New Year Fatal Fungi Foray

Kevin Mitchell

Mushrooms don't feature in the news media very often, usually when you read about fungi it's in conjunction with a recipe for beef stroganoff or pizza or the latest antifungal medication for tinea. But in the New Year fungi featured prominently although unfortunately for all the wrong reasons.

On the fourth of January 2012 the ABC news ran a story with the heading 'Two die after eating death cap mushrooms'. Apparently on New Year's Eve in Canberra a chef at a Chinese restaurant cooked a meal at a private gathering for four people. The four were of Asian heritage and the person that picked the mushrooms mistook them for a common Asian variety:- *Volvariella volvacea* or the straw mushroom. This mushroom does not grow naturally in Australia however a closely related species does – *Volvariella speciosa*. Both species resemble *Amanita phalloides* (aka the Death Cap). The main thing in common with both mushrooms is that there is a volva present but there are some main differences between *V. speciosa* and *A. phalloides*. Some of the major differences are that *V. speciosa* has no ring on the stem, has salmon pink gills, an umbo on the cap and importantly has a pink spore print whereas the death cap has white spores.

I certainly don't consider myself an expert on mushrooms and I feel very sorry for these poor people and their families but just a little knowledge of fungi would have saved lives.

Two years ago I found several specimens of *V. speciosa* growing along the Ross River in Townsville. I was able to make what I considered a positive

identification only after consulting Young (page 184), Fuhrer (page 179) Fungi Down Under (page 59) amongst other references.

I was careful to take a spore print also and only after I was completely satisfied with my identification did I take a taste test: Cooking and eating several of these fungi. (I took some comfort in the knowledge that *A. phalloides* doesn't grow in Queensland, although I have seen other amanitas and possibly even *A. virosa*) David Arora [<http://www.davidarora.com/>] is correct when he says that these are "edible but mediocre"!

So if this poor unfortunate fellow had actually found what he was looking for i.e. an edible mushroom that resembles the straw mushroom growing in Australia he would have been disappointed. *V. speciosa* really doesn't taste that great believe me (but it certainly wouldn't have had such dire consequences). Ironically the death cap has been reported by survivors as being a choice edible which is why the diners ate so much of it – they must have because they had both passed on only three days later. Being that all these people were of Asian heritage with the associated differences in culture and language perhaps an education campaign for these groups about the dangers of these mushrooms is the answer to avoiding more tragedies of this nature.

Picking and eating wild mushrooms is not dangerous in my belief but not being thorough and extremely careful invites disaster.

Tasmanian Fungi Festival 2012

The Tasmanian Fungi Festival is a unique gathering of people who are passionate about fungi. Fungi are a fascinating group of organisms that are often overlooked but play a vital role in our natural world. They also have a long history of human use in food production, agriculture and medicine.

Events at the Tasmanian Fungi Festival are aimed at all levels of interest and include:

[Fungi Conservation and Management Symposium](#) (Thursday 26 - Friday 27 April)

[Debate: 'Eating wild fungi: Fun or foolhardy?'](#) (Friday 27 April, evening)

[Fungal forays and workshops](#) (Saturday 28- Sunday 29 April)

[Download full event program](#) (does not include talk or workshop abstracts)

[Download registration form](#)

Abstracts uploaded for talks in the [Symposium](#)

The Tasmanian Fungi Festival is jointly organised by [NRM South](#) and Fungimap and supported by the Australian Government's Caring for Our The [Old Woolstore Apartment Hotel](#) is the Principal Sponsor and Official Hotel of the Tasmanian Fungi Festival.

There may still be room for late registrations (\$225, plus additional fees for weekend events for those interested). Go to <http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap/tasmanian-fungi-festival-2012> or follow the embedded links above for more information. The above information is taken directly from the website.

If you have not been by in a while, visit the Fungimap website:
<http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap>

Queensland Mycological Society Inc

ABN 18 351 995 423

Membership Renewal 2012

Surname: _____ **Given Names:** _____

Address: _____

_____ **Post code** _____

Phone: _____ **Mobile:** _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Amount due: \$20.00 per person

Due date: 1st January 2012

Amount paid: \$ _____

Renewal Forms may be submitted in person at a QMS general meeting at the Queensland Herbarium, Mt Coot-tha or posted to:

The Treasurer

Queensland Mycological Society Inc

PO Box 295

Indooroopilly QLD 4068

Payment Options

Please circle as appropriate:

Cheque / Money Order / EFT / Cash (only in person – not by mail)

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Bank Details:

Account Name: Queensland Mycological Society Inc

Westpac Bank BSB 034 055 Account Number 21-3324

Receipt No

*** Please ensure your name is on the transfer entry**

*** Please also send an email, including EFT reference number to**

The Treasurer at mcmpaulus@hotmail.com