



Photo By Taylor Lockwood



Morel Booster™

Morel Mushroom News From Morel Mania, Inc.

Editor: Tom Nauman

Issue No. 15 • April, 2011

Sponsored By:

The 51st Annual National Morel Mushroom Festival Boyne City, Michigan

The weekend after Mother's Day
May 12 through 15, 2011
morelfest.com

**SEE
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FOR
COMPLETE
SCHEDULE**

The *Morel Booster*™ is free publication from
Morel Mania, Inc.

8948 Illinois Highway 18 • Magnolia, Illinois 61336
email: tom@morelmania.com

Phone: 309-364-3319 • Web Site: <http://www.morelmania.com>

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Billboard on I-55 south of the I-80 interchange near Joliet, Illinois.

Morel Season is Here!

Yes, reports to the Sightings Page of morels being found in Southern Illinois started on March 22. If we can avoid the early heat wave we received in 2010 and get some soaking spring rains, it should be a good season.

For those that think you didn't receive the *Morel Booster*™ for March, you're correct. We didn't mail one. For seven of the past nine weeks we've only been home for three days a week. The rest of the time was spent on the road at weekend expositions. In addition to that, yours truly caught a bad case of the flu or a cold (I didn't get a diagnosis as to which it was) and could barely get out of bed for two weeks. I also lost my voice for two weeks. I just simply did not have the time or energy to keep up with my duties.

The Midwest Morel Fest is progressing nicely. We did have one problem in that the webmaster for the Ottawa Visitor Center had an emergency appendectomy and was absent for two weeks. So, a register-online page was not created.

If you haven't registered yet, you may do so by calling

815-434-2737

Or print the brochure from the website at
<http://www.experienceottawa.com>

and mail your registration to
OTTAWA VISITORS CENTER
100 W. LAFAYETTE STREET
OTTAWA, ILLINOIS 61350

The deadline for registration is April 27, 2011

Here are some interesting web pages with more information:

<http://mywebtimes.com/archives/ottawa/display.php?id=425795>

<http://www.ottawaradio.net/pages/9333272.php>

Editor's note: In the December 2010 issue of the Morel Booster™, I wrote an article titled "Bad Rap for Mushrooms" explaining how mushrooms have gotten some bad press over the years. I then told some of the lesser known benefits of mushrooms and fungi. One benefit I did not mention was that fungi can be very beneficial to plants. It's all described in the following article.

A Love Story: Your Plants and Mycorrhizal Fungi

By Dr. Mike Amaranthus and Zack Amaranthus

The world of science first reported the mystery of mycorrhizal fungi in 1885, but these fungi have been in a joint venture with plants since they schemed their way from the ocean to the mainland. Mycorrhizal literally means fungus (myco) and root (rhiza) and refers to the combination of fungus and root that is preeminent with plants in their natural habitats. Fossils of roots over 460 million years old contain mycorrhizae (plural for mycorrhiza) much as they look today. Mycorrhizae are among the most important symbiotic relationships on the planet and between 90 and 95% of all plants form mycorrhizae.

So what is the big deal about this special group of fungi? It is surprising how many mushroom hunters fail to understand how

important mycorrhizal fungi are in their garden or landscape. The mycorrhizal hyphae (filaments) attached to roots can



significantly increase the effective rooting 100 to 1000 times and dramatically increase the availability of nutrients and water to the plant. Several miles of these ultra-fine filaments can be present in less than a thimbleful of soil. And it is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the benefits these fungi pass to their partners as they grow.

In 2003, Dr. David Douds, a USDA microbiologist undertook a study

of mycorrhizae at the Rodale Institute. The results of a number of pepper and potato trials were reported in various publications.

"We had vegetable experiments where some treatments were a control with no inoculum, another treatment inoculated with a mixture of mycorrhizal fungi and another inoculated with just one species commonly found in commercial inoculum," explains Douds. "We found in the 3 years of trials the mycorrhizal mixture increased the performance of marketable peppers 34% compared to the control. Last year we tried to inoculation of potatoes, and we are up to 50% increase compared to the controls."

For the home gardener and landscaper "endo mycorrhizae", when present, supply the water and nutrients needed by the plants for establishment, fruiting and flowering, and, in return, receive sugars and other compounds from the plant to fuel the fungus growth. Endomycorrhizal fungi (order Glomales) actually penetrate into the cells of the root compared to the ectomycorrhizal fungi (mostly mushroom, puffball and truffle species) that go around rather than into root cells.

Unfortunately, most of our man-made environments were built using practices that destroy the soil conditions supportive of these beneficial soil organisms. Where there has been vegetative removal, compaction, erosion, grading, topsoil removal, overgrazing, fallow, tillage, fertilization, paving, pollution, and the use of soilless planting mixes, mycorrhizal fungi have been reduced or eliminated completely. Many garden and landscape projects in disturbed urban and suburban environments, it has been documented that the new plants had not formed mycorrhizal relationships many years after planting,

-Continued, see *Love Story* on page 3

Crooked Knee Announces A Mushroom Field Day



<http://www.crookedkneegc.com>

1274 County Road 950 E. • Henry, Illinois 61537
Phone 309-364-3012

Crooked Knee Golf Course will host a Mushroom Field Day on Sunday, May 8, 2011. The cost for ages 13 and up will be \$25 and ages 12 and under will be \$10.

Crooked Knee was the site of the Illinois State Morel Championship for several years and many readers know of the abundance of morels that magically appear there.

The Mushroom Field Day will not be a guided event and advanced registration is not necessary. Simply show up, register, and go find them mushrooms! You will be required to cut or pinch any morels you gather above ground and use a mesh sack to carry them.

The course is open from 7:00 a.m. to dusk. Personnel from Morel Mania, Inc. will be there mid-day.

Love Story - continued from page 2

and were surviving only through “intensive care”—fertilizers, pesticides, and lots of water.

Many “endo” mycorrhizal fungi that form with home and garden plants do not have fruiting bodies such mushrooms or puffballs that disperse their spores in the wind, but must grow from root to root, or be dispersed by animals, so a close proximity to healthy and undisturbed natural sites is necessary to repopulate a disturbed soil. In lieu of that, mycorrhizae need to be provided as soil additives. Otherwise plants need to be watered and fertilized frequently and kept in a protected environment.

Thousands of studies have proven the superior growth and health of plants inoculated with mycorrhizae. An independent product testing in Urban Grower Magazine with Plant Success Mycorrhizal inoculant, demonstrated pepper plants had 12-25% more fruit set compared to controls, healthier leaves, larger flowers and greater root branching. On onions, presented at the National Allium Research Conference the Mycorrhizal inoculum within the Plant Success Products improved onion yields 65%.

Purdue University documented a 7% increase in watermelon yield with the Plant Success Mycorrhizal inoculant. Bowen Crop monitoring service documented a 30% increase in tomato biomass. A Jackson Perkins roses study demonstrated increased drought tolerance and 54% increase in flowering when inoculated with the Plant Success Mycorrhizal inoculant. Mycorrhizal fungi are sold as spores, the “seeds” of fungi. Spore material includes spores both outside and inside of roots, and some mycorrhizal inoculants like Plant Success products are viable for two years. The spores come in different forms. Plant Success “granular” can be mixed into potting soil and added to planting holes. Plant Success “soluble powder” can be mixed with water and drenched into porous soil, or injected into the root zone of existing plants. Handy Plant Success “tablets” can be dropped into planting holes or placed in the root zone of existing plants. The goal is to get the inoculum in the soil with the roots that they will colonize. Application is easy and inexpensive, and requires no special equipment. For small plants, cost is pennies per plant. Plant Success products come in 4 oz, 8 oz, 16 oz, 32 oz and even 5lb containers. To purchase mycorrhizal products go to

<http://www.mycorrhizae.com>

Learning about the role of mycorrhizae, and the conditions that promote or deter their presence in the soil, is the first step toward more productive plants and healthier landscapes. The next step is to add the fungi to the root zone when transplanting garden or nursery grown plants, and when restoring soil that was stripped of millions of years worth of nutrient and microorganism development. If you feed the soil with mycorrhizal inoculum, and protect the soil organisms from major disturbances and toxins, they will, in turn, feed and protect your plants better than any method we have ever developed—and with so little effort on your part! They may not taste as good as Morels but the vegetables, fruit and berries that emerge from the garden is a “love story” that will warm the heart like a successful mushroom hunt.

2011 Mushroom Events

Mountain Mushroom Festival Irvine, Kentucky

The 20th Annual Mountain Mushroom Festival will be April 30th - May 1, 2011.

www.mountainmushroomfestival.org

Mansfield, Indiana Mushroom Festival

The annual Mushroom Festival at Mansfield, Indiana is scheduled for April 30 and May 1, 2011.

www.mansfieldhilltopfarm.com

Midwest Morel Fest Ottawa, Illinois

A first-time festival co-sponsored by Morel Mania, Inc. and the City of Ottawa.

www.experienceottawa.com

Register by phone:

815-434-2737

See brochure on pages 5 & 6

National Morel Mushroom Festival Boyer City, Michigan

The 51st Annual Festival takes place from May 12 through 15, 2011.

www.morelfest.com

See brochure on page 4

Other Mushroom Festivals

We don't have up to date information on all the mushroom festivals, but here's a list of some of them which you should be able to find if you do a Bing or Google search:

Richmond, MO

Wyoming, IL

Lewiston, MI

Mesick, MI

Mid-America Morel Festival - Jonesboro, IL

Muscoda, WI

Spores 'n More - Shelbyville/Sullivan, IL

Don't Forget!

Email your reports to the Sightings Page
webmaster@morelmania.com

51st National Morel Mushroom Festival - Schedule of Events

Thursday
May 12

3:00 pm Schmidt Amusements Carnival opens in Veterans Park.

4:30 pm Morel Challenge Car Race Registration Racing begins @ 5:30 pm.
Bring the whole family for racing fun!

6:00 pm Showcase of Local Musicians! Listen to a wide variety of local talent under the tent, Veterans Park.
Admission by donation. Cajun meal provided by our sponsors **Northwestern State Bank and The Jordan Inn.**



Friday, May 13

1:00 pm - 6:00 pm Craft Show in Veterans Park. Showcasing crafters with unique, hand-made items.

1:00 pm - 6:00 pm Michigan Outdoor Recreational Experiences and Living Show in Sunset Park. Where businesses and organizations showcase their products and services.

3:00 pm Schmidt Amusements Carnival opens in Veterans Park

3:30 pm Morel Seminar Featuring local morel expert **Anthony Williams**. Purchase morel soup from local restaurants. Beer & Wine available.

4:30 pm Festival "Guided" Morel Hunt Departs from Veterans Park Visit a nearby forest to look for the elusive morel & other edibles! Transportation provided (space is limited). Register in advance online @ www.morelfest.com \$12.00 registration fee. (Will hunt for 1 hour and return by 6:30 p.m.)

5:30 pm Morelfest "Wine & Dine" 5:30-7:30 pm @ the Beach House Restaurant. Featuring hors d'oeuvres paired with fine wines. Advance reservations required, call 231-582-6222.

8:00 pm Michigan's Premiere Country Band, Annabelle Road performs under the heated tent in Veterans Park. Admission is \$8.00 in advance \$10.00 at the door. For advance ticket sale locations, visit our website at www.morelfest.com. Beer & wine available.

Saturday, May 14

7:00 am -10:00 am Morel Breakfast in the tent in Veterans Park.

7:30 am Boyne Valley Lions' National Mushroom Hunt Registration. Leave at 9:00 am. Winners announced at 3:00 pm.

10:00 am - 6:00 pm Michigan Outdoor Recreational Experiences and Living Show in Sunset Park. Where businesses and organizations showcase their products and services.

10:00 am - 6:00 pm Craft Show in Veterans Park. Showcasing crafters with unique, hand-made items.

11:00 am Schmidt Amusements Carnival opens in Veterans Park

12 - 3 pm TASTE OF MORELS Our Premiere Event!! Beer & wine available. Purchase taste tickets at the door. Area restaurants & chefs providing morel infused delicacies!

4:30 pm Private Property Morel Hunt leaves from Veterans Park. Register in advance online @ www.morelfest.com for \$25.00 (Strictly limited to first 50 guests).

8:00 pm Concert Featuring . . . The Emmy Award Winning Bihlman Brothers Band - "a hard rockin', bluesy, funky force of nature!" performs under the heated tent in Veterans Park. Admission is \$15.00 in advance \$20.00 at the door. For advance tickets sale locations, visit our website at www.morelfest.com. Beer & wine available.



Sunday,
May 15

11:00 am - 4:00 pm Craft Show in Veterans Park. Showcasing crafters with unique, hand-made items.

11:00 am. - 4:00 pm Michigan Outdoor Recreational Experiences and Living Show in Sunset Park. Where businesses and organizations showcase their products and services.


12:00 noon Schmidt Amusements Carnival in Veterans Park

1:00 pm The Cancer Crusaders present a concert under the tent in Veterans Park. Admission by donation. All proceeds to local families. Food, beer & wine available.

QUESTIONS

- Q. Do your guarantee that we will find mushrooms?
- A. NO! There are many factors that effect the outcome of the hunt including how 'good' you are at finding them!
- Q. Do I get to keep the mushrooms I find?
- A. YES! However, if you think you are a possible "winner", that is finder of the MOST mushrooms, you will need to turn them in at the hunt site. You'll get them back after they are counted.
- Q. Do I have to ride the bus to the hunt sight?
- A. YES. All registrants must take the pre-arranged transportation to and from the hunt site.
- Q. Can our group all ride on the same bus?
- A. YES! We want you to have fun with your group! Our volunteers can help you all get on the same bus.
- Q. Can I bring my dog?
- A. NO WAY! Although we LOVE our dogs too, this event does not allow fido on the transportation busses. Woof!
- Q. Can my friend come with me but not hunt?
- A. Sorry...there are only so many seats available they are all reserved for hunters. Take a look under "Other Stuff" on the reverse of this pamphlet for things to see and do!

For a complete list of rules, visit ExperienceOttawa.com



**MIDWEST
MORE! FEST**
May 6 & 7
LEARN • HUNT
AUCTION! Ottawa, Illinois

www.ExperienceOTTAWA.com

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE



- **INFORMATION**
- **SCHEDULE**
- **REGISTRATION**
- **QUESTIONS**

OTTAWA VISITORS CENTER
100 W. LAFAYETTE STREET
OTTAWA, ILLINOIS 61350

