



The Woodland Observer

Enjoy Nature!

Nipissing Naturalists Club

October 2008

Pres: Angela Martin - welcome@ontera.net

www.nipissing-naturalist.com

Fungi Walk

By Bonnie Brownstein

About 10 Nip Nats, two chefs, and two miniature naturalists went looking for fungi on Sunday, Sept. 14th. This outing was organized by Jeremy St. Onge (the FunGuy) and Lucy Emmott, and we were accompanied by two chefs from Canadore College who offered to cook and serve the edible specimens that we found. As rain threatened we gathered in a classroom at Canadore College.

Lucy Emmott treated us to a very interesting talk and passed around some dried mushrooms for us to touch and sniff. She had brought a diverse collection of books with topics ranging from mushrooms as art to detailed field guides on all things fungal. Lucy spoke about broad families of mushrooms, distinguished between "choice" and "edible", showed a list of the "choice" mushrooms found in this area and mentioned the most common poisonous mushrooms. We also heard about Lucy and Jeremy's favourite eating mushrooms, and the ones that they have yet to find "choice" local specimens of.

Lucy explained some of the intricacies of mushroom toxicity. For example, the toxicity of some fungi is brought out when a mediator is ingested. One could eat a toxic mushroom and feel fine, but drinking an alcoholic beverage the next day could bring out the toxin and result in illness. Eating some very toxic mushrooms can result in illness in a day or two, then a period of remission of two weeks, followed by death. Lucy gave a history of mushroom fatalities, all of which were caused by certain common poisonous mushrooms except for one case that was judged to be suicide. Moral of the story – be very certain of what you are doing when you eat wild mushrooms!

When collecting, go with someone you trust and teach yourself using a very detailed field guide. You need to be able to definitively differentiate between mushrooms. Even some common "choice" mushrooms, such as chanterelles, have lookalikes that are not edible. The "Bible" of mushroom field guides according to Lucy and Jeremy is called "*Mushrooms Demystified*" by David Arora. It is no longer in print but you can find used copies in second hand bookstores, or you can go to www.abebooks.com/Canada/ and see if you can order a second hand one.



Green-headed Jelly Babies (Leotia viscosa)

Then we all headed out onto the college trails with baskets and mushroom brushes, and with Jeremy and Lucy to tell us what we were finding. We were instructed to put edible specimens and inedible or yet to be

Continued on Page 2

Photo Contest

Start sorting through your photo's and decide which of your great shots you are going to submit to the Photo Contest! As in the past, you are allowed three entries per person.

Pictures must have been taken within a same area as is designated for the Christmas Bird Count. There are four categories - Flora, Fauna, Landscapes, and People Enjoying Nature.

Send your entries to Christine at crispy@vianet.ca, or bring your photographs in to the October or November meeting. The cut off date for entries is Nov. 12th.

At the Dec. meeting, there will be a slide show with all entries, and the members present will vote for which pictures they think are best. Winners will be announced at the January AGM.

New Members

Rose & Andy McClelland

Welcome!