



Summer 2026

Fungi Kingdom News

The newsletter of the Pioneer Valley Mycological Association

© Jess Evans



Cortinarius armillatus with a significant rosecomb mutation. For more on these mutations, see page 12.

Michael Krapin



Amanita jacksonii spotted by member Michael Krapin

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Pioneer Valley Mycological Association is dedicated to enhancing the public's knowledge and appreciation of the fungal kingdom by providing ongoing educational programming in the form of guided mushroom walks, lectures, newsletters, information on multi-day regional and national forays, and citizen science projects. Because fungi are integral components of complex ecosystems, we are committed to advocating for responsible and sustainable study and collection methods. We focus on, but are not limited to, the three counties of the Pioneer Valley in western Massachusetts (Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden).

PVMA is a member of the Northeast Mycological Federation (www.nemf.org) and the North American Mycological Association (www.namyc.org).

www.PVMAmyco.org

Also visit Dianna Smith's educational site fungikingdom.net for articles, fungi photos, and more.

Submissions Welcome!

This is your newsletter; we'd love to have you contribute to it! Art, prose, photos, drawing, recipes, scientific observations— send them all to:

jessicabensonevans@gmail.com or
jonkranz@kranzcom.com

From the President

Hello wonderful members! I know this issue of our club newsletter is woefully late. Thank you so much for your patience as I gathered content to make this a great edition!

We've had a fantastic summer for fun-gi, with plenty of rain across the Pioneer Valley and plentiful mushrooms week after week. We were due for a good season after a few dry ones in a row!

For mushroom travel, I had the pleasure of attending the Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association's Clark Rogerson Foray in NY over Labor Day weekend— member Karen Hidalgo shares her foray experiences on page 8 & 9. If you've never been to a mushroom foray, I highly recommend that one! It's a great way to immerse yourself in mushrooms for a whole weekend with guidance from local mycologists.

If you haven't come to a walk yet this season, there's still time. We have several walks remaining for the year— details on page 13!

Hope to see you soon!~~~Jess



Entoloma abortivum, both the aborted form and gilled form, spotted in Shutesbury in mid-September. This species parasitizes *Armillaria* species; "honey mushrooms."

© Jess Evans

The “Ballerina Waxcap”



Lyra Johnson-Fuller

On August 1st while hiking in conserved forest in my small Hilltown, I stumbled across an intriguing pink and sharply conical cap poking up from woody debris. After a bit of research, and confirmation from our waxy cap expert Peter Russell, we found it to be a Pink Waxcap, a version of the European *Porpolomopsis calyptriformis*. They're more common in Great Britain, but there's just a handful of observations in the Northeast. It used to be sheep meadows where they were found, so my son's theory is that the sheep brought over some spores on their wool from Europe.

Also known as the Ballerina Waxcap with their tutu that unfurls, I was delighted to observe 4-5 over the course of a week.



Two views of *Porpolomopsis calyptriformis*, the “Ballerina Waxcap.”

More details on this intriguing species can be found here: [Porpolomopsis calyptriformis species dossier](#)

Jess Evans

According to various online sources, *Porpolomopsis calyptriformis* is a European species, with an as-yet-unnamed North American variation. It is generally considered rare, and is listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

This species was first described in 1838 and was placed in *Agaricus*, as *Agaricus calyptraeformis*. From there it was moved to *Hygrocybe* in 1889. Finally, in 2008, *Porpolomopsis* was proposed, and DNA analysis confirmed that it doesn't belong in *Hygrocybe*. Thus this beautiful mushroom was confirmed as *Porpolomopsis*. A mouthful of a name for a tiny, beautiful mushroom!

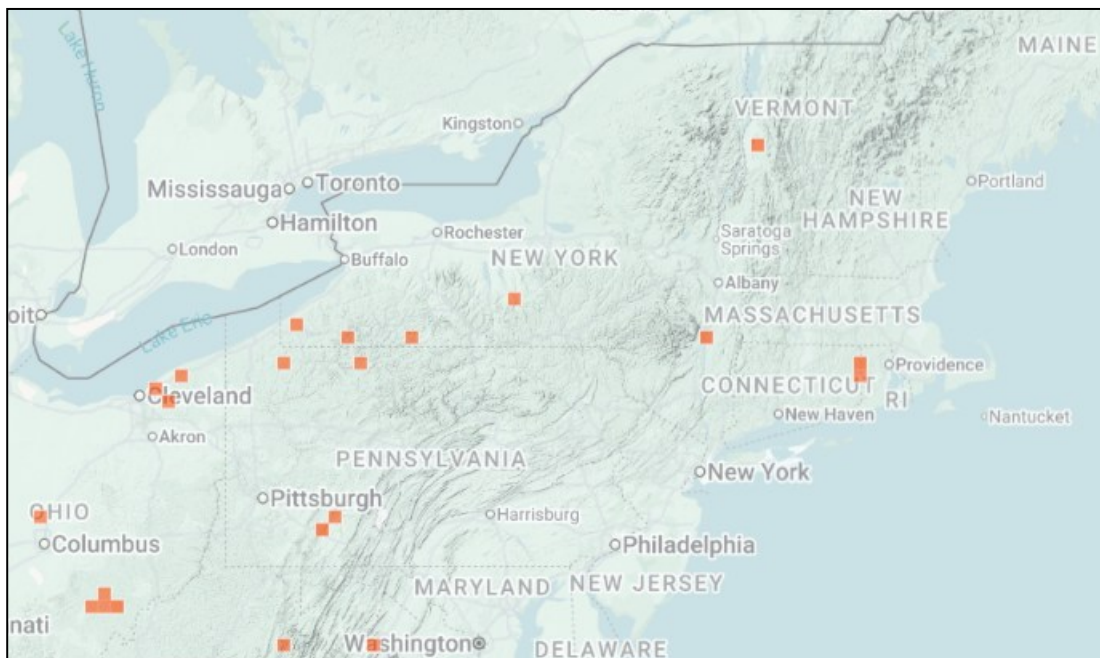
In the UK, this species fruits primarily in September, October, and November. As Lyra mentioned, this is a species found in sheep meadows and other semi-natural grasslands. Interestingly, it's also found often in churchyards and cemeteries. As Peter Russell has noted in a talk he gave for PVMA on wax caps, it's interesting that *Hygrocybes* and other waxy caps are considered woodland species here in North America, while they are primarily in grasslands in the UK. In Europe, this species predominantly fruits with various lawn mosses. Whether this represents an association or simply a habitat



preference is unknown. Lyra's specimens here in Massachusetts all fruited in/around woody debris.

It sounds like this species needs much more study here in the Northeast— I'm hoping Lyra will collect the next ones found for DNA sequencing (hint hint!)

iNaturalist occurrence map of *Porpolomopsis calyptriformis*, showing just a few observations of this species in the Northeast.



Oyster & Oyster

Anna Seitz

There are days when I feel too tired to cook anything elaborate. This was one of those days. Something simple, easy, but must be enticingly edible. I opened the refrigerator. Chicken, that should make a quick stir fry. What shall I combine it with? Don't feel like the usual vegetables. Where are the mushrooms? I always have mushrooms tucked away somewhere in the refrigerator.

The oyster mushrooms sitting on the refrigerator door waved at me. "Here I am." "Yes, but I want something tasty, and you are just too mild" I talked back. The cremini mushrooms sat quietly next to the oyster mushrooms. They gave up trying to get my attention. Always the last mushroom to be picked. Just a backup when there are no other mushrooms.

I checked; there were no other mushrooms. There are not enough oyster mushrooms, so I must use the cremini mushroom also. Both mushrooms need some embellishment for my taste that day. Butter? Butter adds richness, but not savory enough. Garlic? I cook the chicken with garlic and ginger. I need something different. I look through my condiment collection of spices and sauces, and I spy a bottle of oyster sauce. Why not oyster sauce with oyster mushroom. Worth a try!
It was good, as a matter of fact, very good.

Chicken and Oyster Mushroom in Oyster Sauce

1 lb. chicken, breast or thigh, boneless

4 oz oyster mushrooms

6 oz cremini mushrooms

3 cloves garlic, smashed

3 slices ginger, smashed

1 Tbsp light soy sauce

3 Tbsp + 1 tsp oyster sauce

½ cup chicken broth

Oil

Velvet the chicken

Slice the chicken into bite sized pieces

Flavor the chicken with 1 Tbsp oyster sauce. Add 1 egg white and 1 Tbsp cornstarch to the chicken, mix well. Marinate for 15 or more minutes.

Prepare the mushrooms

Shred the oyster mushrooms by hand into thin strips.

Cut the cremini mushrooms into small pieces.

Cook the oyster mushrooms

Mix two teaspoons of oyster sauce with 2 tablespoons of chicken broth.

Sauté the oyster mushrooms in oil. Add the oyster sauce mixture and sauté till dry. Set aside.

Cook the cremini mushrooms

Mix two teaspoons of oyster sauce and one teaspoon of light soy sauce with 2 tablespoons of chicken broth. Sauté the cremini mushrooms in oil.

Add the oyster sauce mixture and sauté till dry.

Cook the chicken

Mix ¼ cup chicken broth, 1 tablespoon of oyster sauce and 2 teaspoons of light soy sauce together.

Shortly before serving, combine mushrooms and vegetables in a bowl, Add the dressing and toss to coat the ingredients.

Cook the garlic and ginger in a little oil, till fragrant. Add the chicken, sear and brown the chicken. Add the chicken broth mixture and cook till the chicken is done, about a few minutes. Add both cooked mushrooms to the chicken and toss together. Ready to eat!

A note on Oyster sauce. Yes, it is made with oyster extracts. It does not taste like oysters, because of the way it is processed. It is a sweet, mild sauce that adds a lot of umami / savory flavor. I like Lee Kum Kee's Premium Oyster Sauce best. However, Lee Kum Kee also makes Panda Brand Oyster Sauce, which tastes like the premium, just less intense. It is available in supermarkets, including Market Basket.

Members' Summer Mushroom Sightings

©Peter Russell



Mystery species from Fitzgerald Lake, Northampton.

©Jeff Mazur



Cortinarius iodes, spotted by member Jeff Mazur.

©Jess Evans



Amanita subcokeri, from Mt. Toby in Sunderland

Members' Summer Mushroom Sightings

©Mike Ostrowski



Typhrasia gossypina, the “wrinkled Psathyrella.” This used to be called *Psathyrella gossypina*.

©Jess Evans



Laetiporus sulphureus, “Chicken of the Woods.”

©Jess Evans



Pulveroboletus ravenelii- “Powdery sulfur Bolete.” This striking Bolete has a beautiful partial veil. It can be mycorrhizal with conifers (pines and eastern hemlock) as well as hardwoods (oaks).

©Mike Ostrowski



Clitocybe odora, the “Aniseed Funnel.” This smells strongly of anise or licorice.

Highlights from the NEMF and COMA Forays

Karen Hidalgo

The Sam Ristich Foray, the annual foray of the North East Mycological Federation, was held this year July 30th to August 2nd, in Mont Alto, Pennsylvania. The location was Penn State Mont Alto, which is a very small college that is closing after this academic year. There was also camping nearby at Caledonia State Park. The foray included many delightful activities including lectures, workshops, and of course, walks! The foray was held near Michaux State Forest, which includes more than 85,500 acres of land in three different counties. When I describe multi-day forays to regular, non-mushroom type people, I tell them. "It's like summer camp for adults. You get to spend three days looking for mushrooms and learning about mushrooms with other people who love mushrooms." They say it sounds like fun. "It is!" I say. "It's so fun!"

Of special interest to me at this year's NEMF foray was a nearby fire-impacted area in Michaux. While it was not an official guided walk, there was an optional walk with some coordinates. My friend and I explored that on Thursday morning. We ventured along the "improved" dirt roads. (Improved=gravel.) We saw a lot of burnt landscape, and stopped a few places, but saw very few mushrooms, and sadly, no pyrophilous fungi. We speculated this might have to do with the ecosystem, which consisted of few mature trees and lots of blueberry bushes. It turns out, the Michaux State Forest is a "working forest," meaning that it is logged, and perhaps the management of the land impacts the fungi that might otherwise inhabit it. Also though, it might have been dry. There had been some rain in the area, but some spots seemed almost parched.

We tried again a few days later, trying to determine which part of the burned area might have more mature trees and perhaps more fungi. We did find more fungi there, although still not a ton, and found a few specimens one of which was likely *Laccaria trichodermophora* and another few that were probably *Pholiota highlandensis*. I was insecure about my identification, even though I have seen thousands of each of them at Fitzgerald Lake, because I was afraid that I was seeing them because I wanted to see them. I don't think they ended up getting sequenced, though many fungi did. Highlights for me from

NEMF included the giant Amanitas such as *Amanita daucipes* and *Amanita rhopalopus*, pillow shopping with my friend who always forgets his pillow, and arriving back to the bus last, but on time by the skin of our teeth.

You can see the NEMF iNaturalist project here: [NEMF 2026 on iNat](#).



Amanita rhopalopus



Tables of identified mushrooms at the NEMF foray

Highlights from the NEMF and COMA Forays

The Connecticut Mycological Association Clark Rogerson Foray was held over Labor Day weekend at Camp Eisenberg in Copake, New York, which I refer to in my head as “the place with the turtles” and also “the place where I got sucked into the swamp almost to my hips,” referring to the foray that happened in 2024 at the same location. I did see the turtles in 2026 but steered clear of the swamp.



Leotia lubrica



Above: *Helvella crispa*

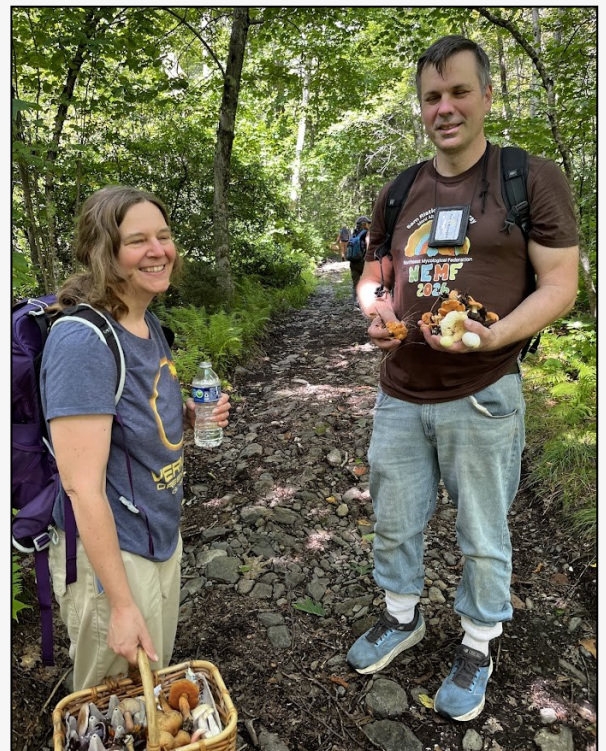
The walk that Jess Evans and our friend Adam and I chose on Saturday was amazing. First, on the way to the walk site my car started making a funny noise. We pulled over to see what was going on and right there was a *Helvella crispa* or White Elf Saddle, not a mushroom any of us find often. And my car was fine. Once we got to the site, we found millions of mushrooms. Okay maybe just thousands but lots! We also somehow managed to walk the mile or two to the summit of Brace Mountain and were rewarded with a fabulous view. Highlights from the foray included the silent and live auctions Saturday night, emceed by father son duo Joe and Adam Brandt. Joe modeled many of the clothing items and both described the items with humor and flair. I laughed and laughed. Can't wait for next year!



Snappy and friend!



Mushroomers (and baskets) atop Brace Mountain



Karen and Adam hiking Brace Mountain

Book Review

The Way Through the Woods: On Mushrooms and Mourning By Long Litt Woon

Jenn Kalmansson

Each of us (as least I assume since we've joined a mycological club) has felt the companionship of mushrooms along a wooded way. This felt like stepping on to both familiar and foreign ground. *The Way Through the Woods* is part memoir, part foraging adventure, and part reminder that the forest and its fungi have a way of holding us steady when life tilts off its axis.

After the sudden death of her husband in his mid-fifties, anthropologist Long Litt Woon finds herself adrift. What begins as a simple mushroom-identification class she had signed up for prior to her husband Eiof's death becomes an unexpected lifeline. Through learning to forage, Long reconnects with curiosity, community, and the rhythms of the natural world while coping with the loss of her partner.

This isn't a field guide or a scientific text — it's a story about how mushrooms helped someone rebuild a life. For hobbyists like us, it's a refreshing blend of personal narrative and approachable mycology.

Long includes something for everyone:

- **Engaging foraging stories** — from beginner missteps to triumphant finds
- **Accessible mushroom lore** — Norwegian cultural traditions, quirky facts, and historical tidbits for the perpetually curious.
- **A peek into European mushroom clubs** — surprisingly similar to ours
- **Humor** — especially around the trials of learning to identify safely
- **Reflections on grief and healing** — woven naturally into the forest wanderings

The book moves between personal chapters and mushroom-centric ones, making it easy to read in short bursts — perfect for cozy evenings or as a sidekick to morning coffee or

What I Loved:

- **Warm, relatable tone** — Long writes like a friend telling you about her latest walk and you can't wait to hear what she's found next.
- **Beginner-friendly mushroom content** — she captures the excitement and anxiety of early foraging.
- **Beautiful descriptions of the forest** — you can practically smell the leaf litter, decay and rebirth of the forest trails.
- **A celebration of mushroom clubs** — the camaraderie, the shared discoveries, the potlucks, the weird and wonderful of it all.

For me, the blend of personal story and mushroom enthusiasm was perfect. To be honest, I have read this book more than once and the audio version one can borrow through Libby is excellent.

What Left Me Wanting More:

- The mushroom information is **not** comprehensive — seasoned foragers may find some sections basic, but Long never claims or aims for this to be an identification-heavy read.
- The pacing occasionally slows during deeper grief reflections, but that is really what this book is about — trying to find your footing after a traumatic event by learning about the earthiest of subjects.

For a narrative-driven mushroom read, these are minor notes. Well, and I'm a bit of an impatient nerd who likes a deep dive.

When All is Said and Done:

This book captures something we all know well: mushrooms have a way of pulling you back into the world. Whether you're a seasoned forager or someone who simply loves spotting fungi on a walk, Woon's journey feels familiar.

Her descriptions of mushroom-club culture — the shared excitement, the friendly debates over IDs, the joy of learning together — mirror our own experiences here in Massachusetts. It's a reminder of why we gather, why we explore, and why mushrooms



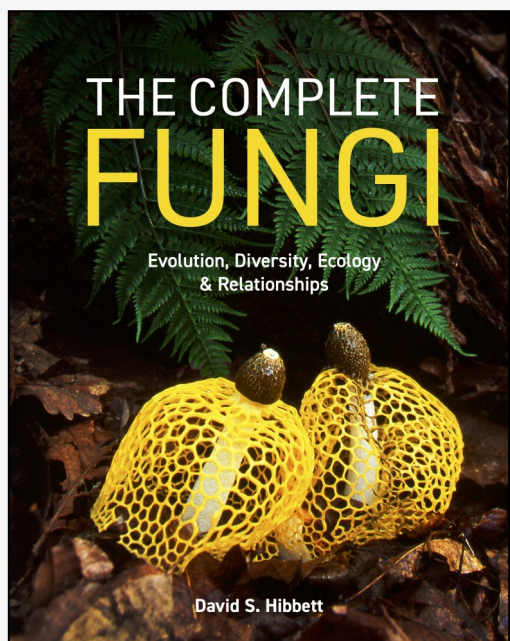
matter beyond the basket.

The Way Through the Woods is a lovely, heartfelt read for anyone who enjoys the quieter, more reflective side of mushrooming. It's perfect for:

- New foragers
- Readers who enjoy nature memoirs
- Anyone who finds comfort in the woods
- Those who appreciate the emotional side of outdoor hobbies

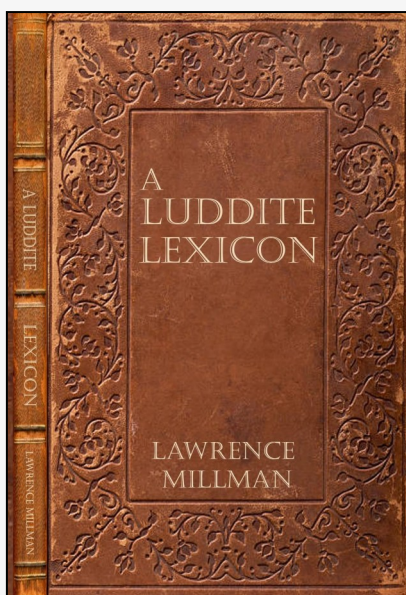
It's not a technical manual — it's a companion for the soul. A book to enjoy with a cup of tea, perhaps after a long walk in the Quabbin or the Berkshires.

Newly Published



Clark University Mycologist and friend to PVMA David Hibbett has written an incredible new book on fungi. Available now from Princeton University Press or your local bookseller!

“Occupying an entire kingdom of their own, fungi comprise over 155,000 species that include yeasts, rusts, and molds as well as the more familiar mushrooms and toadstools that we see in the wild and on our plates. Found widely across the globe, they represent a diverse group of organisms, some living freely in soil and water, and others forming parasitic or symbiotic relationships with plants, algae, and animals. This book presents a broad and accessible overview of fungal diversity, evolution, and ecology. It describes the various forms of fungi and covers topics ranging from fungal origins and reproduction to the historical and cultural significance of fungi for humankind. Blending stunning illustrations with a lively and engaging text, *The Complete Fungi* is a must for fungi enthusiasts and armchair naturalists alike.”



Mycologist Lawrence Millman, who has led walks for PVMA in the past, has recently published his latest book, “A Luddite Lexicon.”

From the Amazon blurb: “*A Luddite Lexicon* is a dictionary of words and phrases that speak out against the technological matrix currently enveloping our planet. Inside that matrix, a mobile phone is a religious object, and a television is an addictive toy. Almost everywhere you go, automotive vehicles follow each other like a conga line of dogs in heat — whatever happened to feet? The book will offer you a healthy, often amusing alternative to that matrix in the form of a connection to the natural world.”

While this book isn't predominantly about mushrooms, Larry is sure to bring his love of fungi into it somewhere, along with his characteristic sense of humor.

Rosecomb Mutations

Jess Evans

Several times this season, I've come upon a mushroom in the woods and known immediately that something wasn't quite right. Not in a bad way, of course, but in a "woah, what happened to that guy?" kind of way. For some reason, this was a summer of weird mutations of cap-and-stem fungi, also known as "rosecomb" mutations.

A rosecomb mutation is a mutation that causes a mushroom to develop abnormal features, generally involving the growth of additional gills on the top of the cap. Theories for what causes this include mostly environmental factors such as low airflow when forming, temperature fluctuations, or chemical contamination such as from pesticides. All of the mutations I found this summer were deep in the woods, however, so I'm not sure if chemical contamination makes sense in the cases I saw.

Of the included images, all except the *Cortinarius armillatus* were found here in Shutesbury. To be honest, I love finding these. It's a great reminder that as Bill Yule says, "Mushrooms don't read the guide books."



Clockwise from upper right: Two different specimens of *Laccaria ochropurpurea*, found on different dates.

A *Lactarius* sp. Another view of *C. Armillatus*.



Remaining Walks this Season

Saturday, September 26th, 10.30 a.m. Joint Walk with Smith College at Macleish Field Centre in Whately

Foray with students of Smith College in the woods around their field centre followed by a table walk. Attendees should be willing to share their expertise with the students. Directions: 80 Poplar Hill Rd., Whately, Massachusetts; park in car park at gated entrance: https://beanumber.github.io/sds192/handouts/Directions_to_Macleish.pdf

Sunday October 4, 10.00 am., Fitzgerald Lake, Northampton, MA with Karen Hildago/Peter Russell

Joint meeting with Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Alliance. As part of the Autumn continental BioBlitz the intent is to break up into groups, foray different parts of Fitzgerald Lake and collect as many interesting specimens as possible for DNA sequencing and recording purposes. Meet at 10.00 am at Laurel Park's Normal Hall to assign groups and foray sites, followed by collecting then a table walkthrough at Laurel Park afterwards. Laurel Park is located off route 5 in Northampton.

Saturday, October 10, 10:00 a.m., Houston-Gage Trail, Shutesbury with Jess Evans

Mandatory carpooling from Shutesbury Elementary School, 23 West Pelham Road in Shutesbury. Pre registration required; this will be a walk focusing on documenting/collecting specimens for the Mycoblitz. Email jessicabensonevans@gmail.com to register. Trail description: The Houston-Gage Trail on the 252-acre Houston and Gage complex off Sand Hill Road in Shutesbury is a 1.7-mile loop above Dean Brook beginning on Sand Hill Road 2.0 miles uphill from the intersection with Pratt Corner Road. A fair amount of elevation gain, with multiple streams crossing the trail. Mixed woods; eastern white pine, oak, birch, beech.

Saturday, October 17, 10:00 a.m., Mt. Tom, MA with Jess Evans

Directions: Mount Tom, 125 Reservation Road. Park by Lake Bray and meet by the bathrooms. State parking pass is not needed after October 15th. Mount Tom State Reservation. Easy walk along low-elevation trails that can be muddy.

Sunday, October 25, 10:00 a.m., Federated Women's State Forest in Petersham, MA with Jonathan Kranz

Wide well-trodden mostly flat trails with deep leaf litter in a predominately oak and conifer forest. A wonderful home for fungi! Directions: From Rte. 202 turn onto Rte. 122, go 3.6 miles, turn right onto State Forest Rd, follow for 1.7 miles to gated entrance and pull-ins for parking. We will meet at the parking area in front of the gate. See www.mass.gov/dcr/massparks/region-central for directions from other parts of the state.



Mike teaches a new member in the rain



Spike Mikulski leads an *Amanita* walk earlier this season