

# MUSHROOM NEWSLETTER

November 1 2009



*There is a new flush of fly agaric to raise the pulse of every mushroom hunter (25/10/09)*

As the abnormally warm weather continues, so the mushroom harvest has got me bamboozled yet again. Last weekend we were struggling to find many specimens, but there was still a good range of edible species (we still found about 16 – 20), but better still, one or two types are having a particularly good season. I have never had such a good cauliflower crop, hen of the woods is there in numbers, the deceivers are starting to come up in force and – most encouraging of all – there are a lot of lovely young fly agarics coming up.



*Deceivers, cauliflowers and hen of the woods are having a good late season*

The fly agaric is of course particularly exciting: although it took a choice discovery on Sunday (25 October) to convince Nick, an avid collector from Essex, who was both intrigued by – and deeply sceptical of – the link between fly agaric and cepes/porcini. He quoted an adage which I'd never heard:

*Where there's a queen [fly agaric], look for the king [cepe].*

Now I might not have heard this particular saying before, but I'm certain there is more than a little truth to it. Fly agaric is highly visible and extremely visible and usually grows in the same settings as the cepe. I would go so far as to say that when you see this distinct red and white spotted mushroom, more often than not there is a cepe nearby (although often the 'king' emerges a few days later). I maintained this was definitely true, but Nick remained sceptical until the Sunday morning when we found a classic example of the two growing side by side.



*This cepe might look more prominent, but it was the fly agaric (to the rear) which first caught the eye*

Regular readers will know I am an irrepressible optimist, so you may want to take this with a pinch of salt, but I have just received an e-mail from Lou, a reader from Exeter:

*A belated thank you for a fabulous weekend at the beginning of October. We all really enjoyed the course, the valley, and the cottage (may well go stay there again actually, liked it so much!)*

*We're all feeling suitably armed with knowledge to go foraging back in Devon. Seems like the season is just starting here . . . there were notably more fungi in the woods this weekend than last. [We] found hedgehogs*

*and a great big Cauliflower fungus yesterday (not quite as huge as the one you found, but a good kilo and a half). Even better, there was another baby one growing from the same tree - we'll be back! (also found lots of deathcaps...but we knew they were!)*

*Anita and James found one very very big and immaculate Cep quite by chance . . . Ben and Miranda found yet more chanterelles, hedgehogs, and a cauliflower . . . my Mum found lots and lots of parasols on the coast path near Polperro - interesting as we've still seen no meadow / grass fungus here yet.*



*False (left) and true chanterelles - notice the much more substantial gill structure in the real McCoy*

One other bright point was the discovery of both false and true chanterelles. These cause a great deal of confusion for beginners, but actually once you have seen both species, there should be no problem. Unfortunately, in this case the false chanterelle is very 'washed out' - it's normally much more 'day-glo' orange - but hopefully you can see the distinction between the false and true chanterelle.

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