

MUSHROOM NEWSLETTER

Great News!

28 October 2014

As I announced last week, the recent rain coupled with the very mild conditions has prompted a late flush. The woods and fields across Britain are currently bursting with the sort of fungal activity one would normally associate with late September. The first confirmation of the new flush came from Andrew from Gloucestershire:

Pulled into a service station on the M5 this morning, and bingo! Fresh crop of parasols: picked a kilo - on with the hunt!



Parasols are delicious fried in butter with black pepper and lemon juice – or as gujons fried in batter

This was rapidly followed by Rob from Monmouthshire who reports modestly encouraging finds (slippery jacks, amethyst deceivers, brown birch boletes and saffron milk caps), on a 15 minute walk around a golf course:

I have yet to go onto a golf course and NOT come away with a good haul. I also find most courses are very open to you going around, so long as you ask first. And because they maintain them so well it's very easy to spot our prey.



Owing to family commitments, I haven't been able to get out for almost a week, but yesterday I spotted scores of meadow waxcaps across the hillside behind the house. I couldn't harvest these because I was flying the hawk, but this morning, just as I was setting out on a foray 15 miles down the Wye Valley, I got this very encouraging e-mail from Tim in Devon:

As ever thanks for the newsletters, they really do help people keep their minds open to the possibilities.

The season here in Devon has several parallels to yours over in Wales. Early start to the ceps and chanterelles in Mid June then, from early August: nothing.

After several fruitless visits to some local spots I had more or less given up on the ceps and was just going to wait it out for the winter species to get going once it starts to get cold (if it ever does!) and then I got your newsletter heralding the second flush so I organised a very quick outing to a secret location in Devon for a quick look round.

Warnings were given that mushrooms were likely to be scarce etc etc. Then we made a start. Pictures speak louder than words so I will let them finish the tale....



Things are getting busy in Dorset . . .

Tim claims the three friends picked 45kg in two and a half hours and looking at his pictures I can well believe this could be true.

So I was fairly confident this morning that we would notch up some good finds – not least because Elizabeth (the person on whose patch we were searching), had been on a summer foray and had familiarised herself with the best types of habitat. Better still, she'd done some preliminary reconnaissance last weekend and come up with a wide range of edible and inedible fungi.



Porcini, slippery jacks and millers

We were not disappointed. In a mixed conifer shelter belt (with plenty of mature Scots pine) we found plenty of ceps, pine boletes, at least three species of Russula, millers and saffron milk caps. On the common there were plenty of meadow waxcaps and magic mushrooms, with a dusting of false fairy rings. Then when we moved across the river to a new mosaic of habitats, we found more saffron milk caps, brown birch boletes, parasols and lots of young fly agaric. It wasn't a monster haul in terms of quantity, but the variety was good and many specimens were encouragingly young. I stupidly forgot to take a picture of the baskets at the end of the morning, but I did get a shot of some lovely parasols.



A choice young parasol with four mature foragers in the background . . .

And to cap it all, when I got back I received a gratifying e-mail from the daughter who'd set up the foray as a gift:

Mum was so thrilled by the walk this morning – thank you MASSIVELY for this wonderful birthday present. Please put all her friends on your newsletter mailing list and I think we should pencil in another trip for autumn next year for a refresh. This mushroom hunting gig has been a great revelation for Mum who is now busy walking round all the local woods sniffing out mushrooms: so thank you!

I am still wrestling with the decision of whether or not to hold a brief foray this weekend (although the weather is so mild that the 8/9 November might still yield good results). Provided there is sufficient interest, the cost would be £20 per head for three hours in the woods - £40 for 'nuclear' families – and the aim is to gather as many edible mushrooms as possible for guests to take home.

Finally, Helen has found a couple of wood blewits in a local hedgerow. These are roughly on-time, but weather conditions would suggest they ought to be delayed by two or three weeks (they normally come up after the first frost).

Good hunting!
Daniel Butler

www.fungiforays.co.uk

01597 811168 / 07794 294221

P.S. As always, let me know if you want to be removed from the list and I will do it forthwith.