

MUSHROOM NEWSLETTER

6 October 2015

HIGHLIGHTS SO FAR

I should have kept my mouth shut last week. Readers will remember I predicted the arrival of the main crop at any moment. Now this was not entirely down to my instinctive optimism. A few days earlier I had found a lot of fairly small porcini in very good condition. Not unreasonably I thought this might be the beginning of the main flush – and my optimism was buoyed up by a foraging friend who keeps a diary pointing out that blackberries are almost exactly a month late compared with last year.



The weekend saw finds of small porcini, but not the bumper crops for which I'd been praying

That optimism was slightly misplaced in that unfortunately we didn't find huge amounts last weekend. There were reasonable numbers of relatively small porcini, bay boletes, yellow swamp russulas as well as plenty of blushers and fly agarics, but not the huge numbers I was hoping for.



Hedgehogs are a wonderfully tasty mushroom . . . and a great beginner's mushroom because their undersides are so distinctive

We did, however, stumble across a couple of very significant finds. The first was a huge outcrop of hedgehog fungus, discovered by a delighted Diane who e-mailed her reactions:

Just to say how much we enjoyed our walk with you on Sunday. The weather helped of course, but your informative and funny commentary, combined with the stunning landscape, really made our day. I am still feeling very proud of myself to have discovered the elusive cache of hedgehog mushrooms. They tasted brilliant on toast for breakfast yesterday. Lunch at your place was lovely too. We're feeling a lot more confident about searching out and picking mushrooms to eat, the cards you gave us are very helpful. I'm sure we'll be back for another session soon.

And from a gastronomic point of view, finding a new (and prolific) patch of saffron milk caps came as a second bonus. Many people – especially those of Eastern European heritage – rank these gorgeous, nutty, crunchy, mushrooms as one of the ultimates in the fungal world.



Saffron milk caps are ranked among the very best of edibles by those in the know

So, at the risk of doing the equivalent of a fungal rain dance for the coming weekend, I am going to say the best should yet be to come as the mercury slowly subsides and we see the first significant precipitation in weeks. There, you have to admit it's not often you hear someone from Wales delighted by the thought of rain.

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P.S. Just as I was finishing this newsletter I had a message from Inga who has just found her first chanterelles near Brecon:

We had the three tiny ones for breakfast (very tasty)(...there were lots more minute ones coming up so will go back and check out in a few days time.



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