

2012 Annual Duff Sale, Movie Draws Packed House

By David Babik

Upon entering the Harvard Herbarium Seminar room, one couldn't help but be overwhelmed by the aroma of lots of fresh fungi in a small space. This inevitably resulted in a line of members heading straight for the table run by Ben Maleson and his wife, Mei-Ching Maleson-Shen. The table was filled with trays of Black Trumpets, Candy Caps, Chantarelles, Hedgehogs, Shitakes and even some Matsutake and Truffles.

In addition to the bounty of fresh mushrooms, bags of dried fungus and infused oils were also offered up for sale. Tables of rare and unusual books from the archives, in both English and a number of other languages, were sold to benefit the club. A number of beautiful works of art and 2013 Taylor Lockwood mushroom calendars were available too.

One of the highlights of this year's meeting was the opportunity to meet and talk with two local nature writers. Both Kay Fairweather, author of "Who's Who in the Natural World", and Larry Millman, author of "Fascinating Fungi of New England", were selling and autographing copies of their wonderful books.

The main event was an opportunity to watch an award-winning new independent film by Jason Cortlund and Julia Halperin. Jason is a member of the New York Mycological Society, an active forager, and also plays the lead role in the film. "Now, Forager-A Film about Love and Fungi" follows the relationship of a young couple, struggling to make a living foraging and the some of the hurdles they face. Starting with the opening scene, involving the discovery of a massive clump of "Hens of the Woods", each new find elicited an excited gasp from the audience. Everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy the film, which featured some truly breathtaking nature photography, and was a perfect finish to a night of socializing, snacks and fungi!