

## THE BMC WINTER PROGRAMS 2013

**Sunday, January 27th: Self-guided tour of the recently opened New England Forest Exhibit at Harvard's Museum of Natural History.** Suggested starting time: 10:30 AM. Although the Museum normally charges \$12 admission, it's free to Massachusetts residents (proof required) between 9 and noon on Sundays, and you can stay as long as you want. You can enter the Museum most easily from 26 Oxford St. It's a fascinating place and the new Forest exhibit is the first one we've seen that gives fungi their due (largely thanks to Anne Pringle, one of Harvard's mycologists). While you're there, visit Harvard's amazing and unique glass flowers. Indeed, the Museum is full of treasures and if you can't make this Sunday, the same free admission applies every Sunday morning. We just thought it would be fun to do it together.

**Monday, February 11th** (snow date, Feb. 18th): Prof. **David Hibbett** (Clark University) will talk about his recent research. Because fungi have a practically nonexistent fossil record, David's lab uses the genetic relationships among different groups of fungi to explore the evolution of their shapes and functions. Most recently, he was part of a group charting the evolution of white rot fungi; the organisms that ended the Carboniferous Era. This research is really hot stuff. And amazing. If anyone can help us to understand why DNA analysis is useful, and why rot fungi are key players in our world, it's David.

**Monday, March 4th** (snow date: March 11th): **Danny Haelewaters** will explain the **Laboulbeniales**, one of the most bizarre groups of fungi, with obligate associations with living arthropods. (And the only group that has a pet name: Laboules.) There's a strong Harvard connection since the Farlow's Roland Thaxter was the first to clarify their taxonomy. Danny's a grad student at Harvard and a man of many faces, having studied veterinary science in his native Belgium, and being well known as the prolific author of popular science articles on diverse subjects. This makes him uniquely well suited to bring an obscure group to the fore in a clear and enjoyable fashion.

**Monday, March 25th:** The Club's President, **Susan Goldhor** will give a presentation on **The Fungi in the Forest**. Although everyone can recognize mushrooms, most folks are unaware of the unseen majority of fungi that support 95% of all plants on earth. There are networks of fungi underground, handing over fertilizer and water to their plant partners. There are microscopic fungi in the cells of plants, protecting them from diseases and herbivores. (There are also microscopic fungi causing death and disease in plants, animals and other fungi) There are uncounted numbers of rot fungi, each of which has a role in breaking down dead matter. For those who want to see the (mostly invisible) forest with new eyes, and gain a better understanding of the power and variety of the Fifth Kingdom, here's your chance.

**Saturday and Sunday, April 13 - 14:** Expert mycologist and natural dye expert, **Sue Hopkins** will offer an all-weekend workshop (9 AM to 4 PM on both days) on **Mushroom Dyeing**. This is a very special one-time event, limited to 15 participants (BMC members only), **advance registration required**. **If you can't attend all day**

**both days, please don't register.** Many mushrooms and polypores are wonderful dye sources, offering a rainbow of colors to those who know how to identify them, extract the pigments, and treat the fibers and fabrics. What's especially magical about these natural dyes is that one species can give different colors, as you change the acidity or alkalinity of the solution. Sue will cover all of these topics. Register with Nicki at [xx.com](http://xx.com). There is no charge for this workshop -- a major gift from the Club and Harvard's Herbaria. After March 31st, registration will be opened to the public (for a fee) for any places still available. The workshop will be held in the Herbaria labs.

**Sunday, April 28th** (2 PM and on): Please join us for the BMC's **118th Annual Business Meeting** (generally short and painless, and rendered even more so by wine & cheese) followed by a talk on **The Fungal-Plant Partnership Reconsidered**. The Business Meeting offers you a chance to play a role in Club governance, learn more about how we operate, and express your thoughts about what we're doing right (or wrong) and how we might do better. Following the meeting, grab a glass of wine and listen to a talk by **Professor John Klironomos** from the U. of British Columbia at Okanagan Soil Microbial Ecology Group. John has been a pioneer in the study of underground ecology and the role of mycorrhizal fungi on the plants we see above ground. He'll discuss a new theory; namely, that the fungal partnership has evolved as an insurance policy for plants, who pay out to their fungi under good conditions, but benefit when times are hard. We've arranged for a Sunday event so that there will be time for a far-ranging discussion with a wide-ranging scientist. (And free parking on Cambridge streets.)

**Sunday, May 19th** for our annual **Potluck Culinary Event** at Drumlin Farm, with a walk and talk by **Michael Wojtech**, author of "**Know Your Trees**". This event will start at 4:00 PM with a walk around the farm with Michael, who will teach us how to identify trees by their bark (and perhaps a few other characteristics), then hors d'oeuvres and wine at 5, followed by dinner at 5:45, and a power point presentation by Michael afterwards on tree identification, in case the walk details didn't hit velcro. This is a pretty elaborate event, and we'll send out a detailed instruction/registration sheet in advance. Registration is limited both in total number and to two people per membership. There is a \$10 charge per person (which covers a bartender and wine). Detailed instructions will arrive by email later but -- if you're interested -- mark the date!

**Sunday, June 2nd: A Graveyard Lichen Walk** with **Michaela Schull** and **Judy Jacob**. We wanted to have this on Halloween eve, but we didn't even make Beltane. Sorry, Wiccans. Still, we have two terrific experts who'll use the stones in an old graveyard to talk about lichens. Michaela is the Herbaria's lichenologist, and Judy is a Park Service specialist in building conservation. This should be both fun and educational. We haven't picked our graveyard yet (it can't be in the city, because of pollution's effects on our chosen organisms, but we will make sure that wherever we meet is accessible by public transportation.), and suggestions are welcome!