Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science

Volume 49 | Annual Issue Article 20

1942

Some Notes on the Fungi of Henry County

Marvin Tulk

SOME NOTES ON THE FUNGI OF HENRY COUNTY

MARVIN TULK

For more than a year the writer has been giving special attention to the species of fleshy fungi that could be found on the frequent collecting trips. There is no thought of posing as an expert, but it is hoped that some of these field observations will prove of interest and value.

Our region includes a widely diverse habitat, Skunk River and Big Creek are both within easy reach and furnish deep damp woods, rough hillsides and occasional small water soaked areas. In many parts level farm land predominates.

The writer's collecting was restricted to the vicinity of Mt. Pleasant, Oakland Mills State Park and Richwoods.

Two species of stinkhorn fungi were collected. One, *Simblum rubescens,* was found to be definitely restricted to a small area of cultivated upland soil. This reddish-orange species seemed to be rather abundant during the early part of October. About these scattered plants a good number of carrion flies swarmed, ready to feed and incidentally "to disseminate the spores." Abundant rain fell during this period, making ideal conditions for growth of these plants. The other stinkhorn (*Phallus impudicus*) seemed to be restricted to lawns. This plant in its various stages of development was collected during the entire month of October.

The Inky Coprinus (*Coprinus atramentarius*) was found growing in horse dung. The records for this plant extend from September to freezing weather late in October. This particular species seemed to be well adapted to the needs of the fungus gnats (Mycetophilidæ) for shortly after bringing it into the laboratory, the plant became a wriggling mass of larvæ. Many fleshy fungi, of course, are regularly attacked by fungus gnats. A closely related species, the Glistening Coprinus (*Coprinus micaceus*) was observed growing at numerous spots around the roots of a recently cut cottonwood tree. On October 5th these mushrooms were in their prime, melting into an inky mass within a few hours. The Shaggy-mane (*Coprinus commatus*) was also noted for this area on October 19th, growing among partly decomposed wood.

On the campus of Iowa Wesleyan many brilliantly colored Emetic Russulas (*Russula emetica*) were collected at varied intervals during October.

During the early part of October the common mushroom (*Ag-*

aricus campestris) was abundant in a meadow and a pasture that at one time had been under cultivation. Observation of this particular species was in the Richwoods vicinity.

Throughout the fall puffballs were unusually numerous. They could be found in widely varied localities; the bed of a well-decomposed straw stack supported an unusual number of specimens. Most pastures were well supplied as was also the state park. The most interesting specimen to be collected was the brain-shaped puffball (*Calvatia craniformis*). This unusual-shaped puffball was collected on October 12th. It measured three inches in diameter and was found growing in a pasture. In the discussion of the puffballs, mention should be made of the interesting little earth-stars, as they never fail to attract attention. The Water-measuring Earthstar (*Geaster hygrometricus*) has been reported in various localities. Three were found in the early part of October, later another group was brought in, many of which still were unopened. One was collected from a lawn, the remainder from separate heavy wooded areas.

Many polypores were found, ranging from three-fourths inch to five inches in diameter. There is one polypore which is quite abundant, *Polyporus versicolor,* and one large clump of *Polyporus sulphureus* was found on a Northern Red Oak tree in early October. The first is rather leathery and can be found most any time of the year. On this same tree were widely scattered clusters of the Bear's head Hydnum (*Hydnum caput-ursi*). The collecting of this particular species was confined entirely to the Northern Red Oak.

Two distinct species of coral fungi were collected, the first belonging to the genus *Clavaria,* the other to *Hydnum.* The *Clavaria* is rather stiff and may be collected during the winter in its rigid condition.

Three other groups are represented in the county, each with one species. The first is the Golden Peziza (*Peziza aurantia*) which was found in the state park, both in the early spring and late in October. This bright red cup-fungus was found growing on twigs and in humus on the ground. The second group is represented by the Jew's Ear (*Hirneola auricula-judae*). This strange fungus has been collected several times during the fall and winter, it being found only on horizontal logs. During the winter this fungus retains its moisture making it feel as though it were growing. One specimen of *Helvella lacunosa* was collected during the latter part of October.

MT. PLEASANT, IOWA

