

Date and time: Sunday November 6 2016 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Weather: Pr 14 mm; RH 87%; BP 102.8 kPa; clear; calm; T 18°C.

Contents: A fabulous fall fungus foray.

Officially, it's the Annual Fungus Workshop under the aegis of the Thames Talbot Land Trust and featuring mycologist Dr. Greg Thorn. Today we had a record turnout of some 25 participants, some of whom can be seen standing expectantly behind Dr Thorn prior to plunging into the Blind Creek Forest. Inside the woods, we divided into two groups, each to walk the Thames River Trail in opposite directions.



In the image above, Greg Thorn pauses at the head of the workshop participants. He carries a collecting case for fungi, while the participants carry baskets or cardboard boxes, both good ways to avoid damaging specimens. In the background, one can see that most trees are now bare of leaves.

I followed the walkers in their halting progress along the main trail; someone would spot a fungus sprouting beside the trail and Greg would hold it up for the walkers. “Here’s a fine example of an Anise Polypore, *Trametes suaveolens*. If you take a whiff, you should just catch the scent of anise or licorice.” People sniffing it widened their eyes. At the fork in the trail, we divided the participants into two groups, each to go its own way. Greg led the group that headed to the river, while Steward Erin Carroll led the second group along the Blind Creek Trail.

Accompanied by our friend Heather Greenwood I made my way to the River Landing to change the sd card on the trail cam stationed there. On the way back, Heather suggested that we forage along the bed of Blind Creek. Much to her delight we found a very large troop of Inky Cap mushrooms which found their way to Greg's specimen table (See IMAGES) when the walkers had all returned to camp an hour or so later.

We do not know what adventures the Workshop participants had on their trek along the Thames River Trail, but enthusiastic accounts were plentiful on their return. They handed in their baskets and Greg arranged some 73 specimens on a card table set up in the Nook. That averages out to about three specimens per walker. These boiled down to some 55 species, according to Greg's assessment. There were crusts, mushrooms, brackets, jellies, slimes, corals, boletes, and puffballs, all forming a mosaic of browns, yellows, whites and blacks, oranges and reds. They rivalled the colours of recently fallen leaves.

I got the opportunity to tune in to Greg's demonstration as he displayed a large, thick bracket of the Elegant Polypore (*Trametes elegans*), a surprise for anyone who thought that *Trametes* fungi were always thin. He then held up another bracket with the unappetizing common name of Sheepskin Jelly Oyster (*Hohenbuehelia mastrucata*), this one supplied with gills instead of pores, not to mention a wooly upper surface that gives the fungus its name. Greg noted that the walkers had collected no less than four species of *Polyporus*, all the locally common ones. He discussed two jelly fungi, a red one (*Ascocoryne sarcoides*) and a yellow one (*Bisporella citrina*), then held up the edible Inky Cap mushroom for all to see, with a warning about consumption with alcohol. The presentation went on until everyone had seen their "own" fungus discussed, as well as everyone else's.

As all this was going on, a constant stream of hot cider and coffee accompanied dozens of hermit cookies and tim-bits as they disappeared into hungry walkers. The sun was lowering in the sky and I was anxiously consulting my watch when an Eastern Screech Owl began to call from the Fleming Creek Forest behind the Nook. This was answered by another call from the Blind Creek Forest in front of the Nook. What were they talking about? "Okay, night is coming. Isn't it time you wingless bipeds cleared out?" It was.

Birds: (9 - with thanks to David and Winnie Wake.)

American Crow (1); American Robin (1); American Woodcock (2); Blue Jay (1); Downy Woodpecker (1); Eastern Screech-Owl (2); Northern Flicker (1); Red-bellied Woodpecker (2); White-breasted Nuthatch (1).

Phenology: Leaf-fall complete.

New Species: (9)

Alder Bracket	<i>Inonotus radiatus</i>	Loc GT Nv06/16
Crown-tipped Coral	<i>Artomyces pyxidatus</i>	Loc GT Nv06/16
Entoloma Mushroom	<i>Entoloma</i> sp.*	Loc GT Nv06/16
Carbon Cushion	<i>Ustulina deusta</i>	Loc GT Nv06/16
Acryria Slime	<i>Acryria</i> sp.	Loc GT Nv06/16
Rough Speckled Shield	<i>Punctelia rudecta</i>	Loc GT Nv06/16
Hammered Shield	<i>Parmelia sulcata</i>	Loc GT Nv06/16
Oak moss Lichen	<i>Evernia mesomorpha</i>	HB/N GT Nv06/16
American Hoverfly	<i>Eupeodes americanus</i>	GF KD Nv01/16

* "omphalinoid on rotting wood" GT

Species Notes:

The list above is the longest list of new fungi ever! We include three shield lichens among them, along with a new Hoverfly. Another one or two species may arrive, once Greg has had the time to examine a more difficult specimen or two. The footnote on the *Entoloma* species was added to narrow down the possibilities for future users of the ATBI list. Meanwhile we must revise our annual new species count from 91, the last figure, to 103. The more final count includes three species that were collected last visit, plus today's nine new ones. The new counts follow:

Springtails	1	Sowbugs	1	Spiders	10
Mayflies	1	Dragonflies	1	Grasshoppers	1
Bugs	6	Plant Hoppers	2	Aphids	1
Beetles	19	Caddisflies	1	Moths	18
Flies	14	Wasps	3	Ants	3
Mussels	1	Birds	2	Fungi	10
Plants	9				

Readers Write:

Suzanne Sutherland, a local nature lover, writes, "Thank you again for organizing the Fungus Workshop. It was wonderful to get out in the woods, look closely all around for interesting specimens and then have Greg identify each and every different kind including the slime molds. It was good to work in pairs too in order to discover the seemingly invisible world near our feet.

Sandra Eadie, a nature lover from Toronto, writes her appreciation: "I am so glad that I was able to take part in the Fungus workshop. What wonderful weather,

mushrooms, company and hospitality. I just loved the walk. Though I was there once before, this gave me a so much more complete vision of the Newport Forest. Now I can read your newsletter with so much better understanding.”

IMAGES:



How many different growth forms can you spot on the table? We can make out mushrooms, lots of bracket fungi, a puffball, several crusts, and a coral fungus on the lower right. At the upper left are two Inky Cap mushrooms collected by Heather Greenwood, one partly opened, the other fully expanded. In the middle of the table is a long slab of wood decorated with a raft of *Trametes* brackets and a greenish lichen.



Greg examines a specimen for fungus forager Sandra Eadie, who drove all the way down from Toronto for the event. Greg also showed off a few lichens collected by walkers. He explained how lichens [plural] are really just fungi that have algal cells sequestered among their cells. The algae supply sugar to their fungal partner and it provides nutrients and shelter to them, a classic symbiotic relationship.



Artist's Conk (*Ganoderma applanatum*) is a fairly common bracket fungus that turns up occasionally at Newport Forest. The upper surface is brown, with a woody texture and radial wrinkles. The lower surface has a surprising property, however. (See next page.)



The pores on the lower surface bruise easily and turn dark when even slightly damaged, making for a handy drawing surface. Thorn demonstrated the “artistic” potential of the fungus by writing his initials there. (Other marks may be squirrel graffiti.)