



A brilliant-orange cluster of a *Hygrophorus* mushroom. [Photo courtesy of David Work/*Fungi Magazine*]

FESTIVALS

The spiritual powers, amazing flavors, bizarre forms of fungus

29th Annual Telluride Mushroom Festival, all weekend

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In some pockets of the world, people are so ardent about mushrooms that they dress up like fly agarics and inky caps and boletes, carry drums and paper mâché mushrooms and other regalia, and parade down the street in a mob-like expression of love for all things fungus.

What is Mushroom Festival?

The 29th Annual Mushroom Festival will fill the Telluride valley with forays, presentations, movies, mycologists, workshops and more. Visit www.tellurideinstitute.org

A-hem. Welcome to Telluride. The Telluride Mushroom Festival — a 29-year celebration of the remarkable world of fungi — hits town this weekend. The festival features forays and identification workshops, presentations by renowned mycologists and authors, hands-on demonstrations and the world-famous Telluride Mushroom Festival Parade.

“It’s always fun. Don’t miss,” said Art Goodtimes, festival organizer and perennial leader of the parade, about the procession.

One notable quality of Telluride’s Mushroom Festival is that it is a celebration of every aspect of mushrooms. And there are dozens.

Mushrooms are the great

recyclers of forests, the source of medicines that have been used for centuries, the centerpiece of exquisite culinary creations, a drug for people who want to bend their minds. They can be used to dye clothing, treat coughs, control pests, amend the soil, even enhance athletic performance.

And the festival is tailored to touch on a little bit of everything, from straight science to out-there spiritualism. Topics will run from mushrooms as spiritual aids to the delights of edible mushrooms to the Mayan underworld. There will be t-shirts, poetry and signing of books.

Local farmer Kris Holstrom will lead a workshop on growing
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oyster mushrooms on straw. John Winslow will speak about the relationships between mushrooms and cows, and how there may be a link between that and cows becoming sacred. Renowned author and mushroom expert Gary Lincoff will help participants identify mushrooms. Forays throughout the weekend will take participants to the meadows and forests of the San Juans to seek out specimens. There will be a screening of Ron Mann’s movie “Know Your Mushrooms.” David Rose will talk about the history of amateur mycology in the United States. Larry Evans will be talking about forest restoration with mush-

rooms. And, of course, there will be the parade.

Due to the downturn in the economy, the festival has cut out the food portion of the programming this year, which in recent years has brought culinary demonstrations and meals.

Britt Bunyard, a mycologist and editor of *Fungi* magazine, will be giving a talk about the spiritualistic and ethnological uses of mushrooms around the world on Saturday morning.

Bunyard said for him, the fascination with mushrooms comes from how they are so intricately tied into so many other living things on the planet.

“It’s just really fascinating,” Bunyard said. “How they are tied

in with the environment and have co-evolved with pretty much every living organism on earth.”

Bunyard came to the *Planet* office on Wednesday after a day of foraging, toting with him a basket full of finds: honey mushrooms, a pretty purple cortinarius, a thick, heavy shelf mushroom.

This bodes well for the festival. A cool, rainy June combined with a dry August has prevented an abundance of mushroom clusters in the local forests. But rain this weekend and into Monday should help coax forth some fruiting bodies for the festival.

“We’ll get a flush from this rain for sure,” Goodtimes said.