

webwatch

The Beginnings of Mycology on the World Wide Web

by Michael Wood

The “World Wide Web” and the “Internet,” two terms that are often mistakenly used as synonyms, are not the same. The World Wide Web (“Web” or “WWW”) is made up of the documents and other information made available over the Internet, which consists of the computers, routers, wires, and cables that make this information available. In other words, the WWW is the info and the Internet is the infrastructure.

The World Wide Web was invented in 1990 by Tim Berners-Lee at the CERN labs in Switzerland. Although it became publicly accessible in 1991, the early Web was text-based until the first widely available graphical browser, Mozilla, was released in 1993. The Web did not really start to take off until the release of Netscape Navigator version 1 in November 1994 and especially version 1.1 in March of 1995.

This is also the time when we see the first mycology-oriented Web sites. The earliest mycological Web presence of which I am aware is the images that Tom Volk had on a Gopher server starting in July 1994. Unless you are a real geek, you probably don't remember Gopher servers, an early Web technology that allowed files to be transferred over the Internet. The first actual mycological related Web sites appeared in 1995. One of the very first sites was my own website, MykoWeb (www.mykoweb.com), which went online on 27 September 1995. Another early site was Tom Volk's (<http://tomvolkfungi.net>) on 25 November 1995.

Tom Volk's Fungi
Department of Biology and Microbiology
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse



Greetings from Wisconsin! I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology and Microbiology at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, where I teach a course on General Mycology and another on Medical Mycology, as well as some Plant Biology. La Crosse is located in western Wisconsin on the Mississippi River in the beautiful driftless (unglaciated) area, between the river and spectacular 500-600 ft. bluffs. I was previously at the Center for Forest Mycology Research at the Forest Products Lab in Madison, Wisconsin.

This page received its 19,000th hit during the month of May! Many thanks to all of you from all over the world who have taken a few minutes to write and say hello or to send your compliments or criticism in the past 19 months that this page has been online. If you write, please let me know from what city and country you're writing from, or what state if you're in the USA. I've started a personal collection of countries and states where my pages have been read! — So I'd especially like to hear from you if you're reading this from outside the USA

This page was last updated on June 3, 1997, and contains information on:

- Images of Fungi, including a link to my gopher site containing over one thousand JPEG images of fungi in all taxonomic groups
- New! Fungus of the month for June 1997. Which one will it be?
- Fungus of the month for May 1997: *Phanerochaete chrysosporium*
- Fungus of the month for April 1997. It's the lovely *Marasmius* species.
- Fungus of the month for March 1997: *Flammulina velutipes*
- Fungus of the month for February 1997: *Aspergillus*

June 1997

Beginning in 1996 a number of new mycology-related Web sites began to appear. Many of these early site are long gone: “Clamp Connexions,” “Mushroom Heaven,” and “Wild Mushrooms: How to Find, Cook, and Eat Them—and Survive!” are examples. Some sites started with promise, but have remained totally stagnant since the beginning: “mycoElectronica” (<http://tinyurl.com/2p3d5v>) and “Finest Fungi Fancier File” (<http://tinyurl.com/2jtw8l>) are good examples.



April 1999

Fungi Perfecti® is a cutting-edge, environmentally friendly company specializing in cultures, tools and technologies for the cultivation of gourmet and medicinal mushrooms. We hope you find our Page to be both entertaining and educational. If you have any questions concerning our products, a catalog request or input for us concerning our Hoe Page, drop us a line at mycomedia@aol.com

This page is updated often, so stay in touch!

Some of the other early mycology sites have grown and improved. The best example is the early, rudimentary web work of Nathan Wilson, which has morphed into one of the best mycology information sites on the Web: MushroomObserver.org (www.mushroomobserver.org). Other examples are “Dave Fischer's Marvelous Mushroom Homepage,” which is still around with the new name of “American Mushrooms” (<http://americanmushrooms.com>), Paul Stamets's “Fungi Perfecti” (www.fungi.com), and Taylor Lockwood's “Treasures from the Kingdom of Fungi” (www.kingdomoffungi.com).

Also around 1995–96, North American amateur mushroom clubs began having a presence on the World Wide Web. The first that I am aware of is the website of the Mycological Society of San Francisco (www.mssf.org), which began on 10 October 1995.

As the World Wide Web has grown, so has the presence of Web mycology. Most mushroom clubs now have a Web presence. Most mycologists have Web pages. There is a plethora of excellent mycological information available to all with a computer and an Internet connection. All of this was not true a decade ago. If you do a Google search of “mushrooms,” or “fungi” or “mycology,” you will have more “hits” than you could explore in a lifetime. The purpose of this column is to help you find some of the better information available.

In future issues, I will cover some of the best mycology Web sites (MykoWeb, MushroomObserver, MushroomExpert, TomVolk'sFungi, etc.), some of the best mushroom photography sites, the best mycology reference sites, and the most interesting

of the professional mycologists' lab pages. And a lot more!

November 1999

