

TREE TIME

THE NEWSLETTER OF MOUNT PISGAH ARBORETUM



Eye of Newt, Ear of Bat

by Susie Holmes and August Jackson

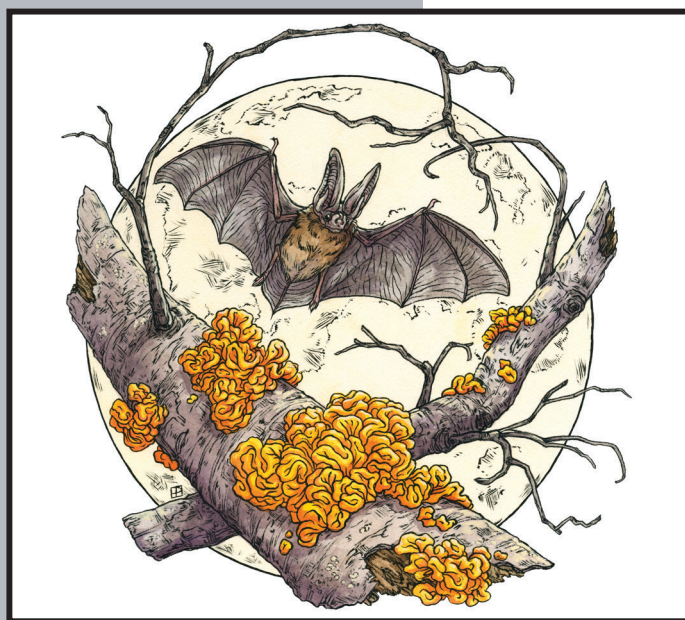


Illustration by Emily Poole

Eye of newt, ear of bat

Witches butter in a vat

Plan ahead to make the scene

Celebrate fungi with MPA on Halloween!

The annual Mushroom Festival scheduled on Sunday, October 31, 2021 celebrates two local species paired in the spirit of Halloween. *Tremella mesenterica*, known as witches' butter, is a widespread cosmopolitan jelly fungus that grows out of decaying wood. The Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) can be found throughout the American West and into Central America, in a wide variety of habitats. Both species occur commonly in the Arboretum, the fungus fruiting conspicuously in the spring and fall, and the bat foraging in the air during warmer months that support large populations of favored moth prey.

Let's begin with our celebrated fungus. Where does a common name like witches' butter come from? The fruiting bodies do resemble the golden color of butter, but there are also Eastern European legends that the mushroom is used by witches for hexing. According to folklore, if one finds a branch infected with this species at their doorstep, they have been targeted by a witch! Thankfully, apparently a pin prick to the gelatinous fruiting body is enough to release oneself from any spell cast against them. In a more scientific spirit, this species can be recognized by the golf ball-sized mass of bright orange, jelly-like tissue that grows from dead hardwoods. The species belongs to the Tremellales, or jelly fungi group, and is part of Basidiomycete clade of fungi that also include gilled agarics and polypores.

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Continuing with our spooky Halloween theme, the witches' butter fungus is quite the body snatcher, growing as a parasite upon another living fungus that is already growing from the dead tissue of the wood. *Tremella* fruiting bodies grow from species of the wood-decaying fungus *Peniophora*, an easily overlooked crust fungus that is busy decaying the hardwood of its dead host. It is no wonder that witches have tapped into *Tremella mesenterica*'s eerie vibe for casting spells! Research into the biochemistry of this fungus reveals some special chemical characteristics, including one of the longest proteins known among all organisms. Well known as edible, although benign in taste, its robust gelatinous consistency can be used as a thickening agent, sweetened or flavored to fit a recipe.

In European mythology, bats too are associated with witches and demons, owing in part to their nocturnal habits. Though not always portrayed so negatively, the peculiarity of bats makes them a common subject of folklore across many cultures. The Townsend's big-eared bat is one of the most recognizable of Oregon's fifteen bat species. With extremely long ears, and small lumps on each side of the nose, they have a striking and unforgettable appearance for any lucky enough to encounter them. Townsend's big-eared bats are listed as a Sensitive Species in the state of Oregon, with their population having declined notably over the past several decades. These charismatic bats are found widely throughout the state, but they are exceedingly discriminate about where they will roost, and reportedly highly sensitive to disturbance. Closures of abandoned mine shafts and demolitions of old structures appear to have contributed to loss of roosting habitat and species decline.

At the Arboretum, Townsend's big-eared bats roost in a maternal colony in our historic barn from May through early fall. The location of the barn amidst an oak savanna and adjacent to the Coast Fork of the Willamette River provides excellent hunting grounds. While these bats will eat a variety of flying insects, they are considered to be moth specialists. Riparian plants like alders and willows are larval food plants for a number of moth species, but it is the Oregon white oaks which provide most of their food, hosting dozens of moth caterpillars in their canopies. Among these are Erebid moths in the genus *Catocala*, which appear to be a favored prey item locally. Their orange and black hindwings can be found littering the ground underneath the bats' roosting sites.

Though neither the witches' butter nor the Townsend's big-eared bat relies entirely on the Oregon white oak, both are united in our area by the food which it provides them, and by a bit of spooky mysticism around them, making them a perfect pairing for this year's beautiful halloween-themed art by Emily Poole.

iNaturalist Mycoblitz

October 21st-October 30th



As an addition to this year's Mushroom Show, you can upload your photo observations of mushrooms in Lane County to iNaturalist where your photos will be identified by experts! Find more info on our website!

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Mount Pishgah Arboretum is a nonprofit organization with a mission to engage people with nature through interactive learning and stewardship.

Mount Pishgah Arboretum is located on the traditional homelands of the Kalapuya people. The Kalapuya people were forcibly dispossessed of their homeland and moved to reservations in western Oregon by the United States government following treaties in the 1850's. Today the Kalapuya people are largely citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. We acknowledge that the Arboretum is on occupied lands, and express our respect for the Kalapuya. We humbly honor their past, present, and future, and are committed to finding meaningful ways to recognize their enduring legacy in the region.

2nd Annual Arboretum Auction!

We'll be kicking off our 2nd online auction on Thursday, October 28th. The auction will feature goods from local restaurants and stores as well as Arboretum experiences and memorabilia. Get some of your holiday shopping done early! This is a great way to support local businesses and the Arboretum at the same time! More information will be posted on our website and social media soon.



Photo by August Jackson



Mount Pisgah Arboretum

Cascade Mycological Society
& Lane Community College Present:

2021 Mushroom Show

A limited-attendance live event

Sunday, October 31st, 10am-5pm

Advance Tickets ONLY!

Tickets and more info here: bit.ly/3hI4Ws8
Current members check email for promo code

- A huge mushroom exhibit
- Edible and poisonous display
- Live music
- Guided nature walks
- Mushroom vendors

COVID-19 Regulations:

- Masks required
- Proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test required

Remembering Phoebe Staples

By Brad van Appel, Executive Director

The Arboretum we all enjoy today owes its existence to passionate and dedicated community members who came together with a vision in the early 1970s, and to all those who have nurtured this beautiful place for nearly 50 years since. Phoebe Staples was among the Arboretum's first volunteers and board members. She had a gift



Photo by Fran Rosenthal

for plants and used it to help launch and manage the plant sales that became a major part of the Arboretum's two annual Festivals. Phoebe passed away in August at the age of 101. We thank her for her decades of service to the Arboretum and the community. She will be dearly missed by many.

Site Report

By Patrick Wegner, Habitat & Trails Manager

These past few months here at the Arboretum we accomplished many of the tasks we set out to do. We were able to complete improvements on the White Oak Pavilion and further our mission by helping with the education program. The extremely dry and hot conditions we experienced forced us to make some tough decisions on how to manage the site vegetation.

As you may have noticed, the Pavilion has undergone a bit of a face lift lately. During late spring/early summer we were able to stain the upper window dormers to match the rest of the building. During a lull in planned events, Josh and Connor were able to put a new sealant on the floor to give it more of a pop. Lastly, with the help of Lane County Audubon Society members Jim Maloney and Bryan Ribelin, we were able to put up new and enhanced bird deterrents to further reduce bird collisions with the pavilion windows. The other ongoing infrastructure project on site has been repairing and refinishing a number of benches, including the Kovach and Forrestel benches.

We had the privilege of being able to further the Arboretum's mission of connecting people with nature by helping with the kids' programs in the spring and summer. We were able to teach them about all sorts of subjects such as bugs, hydrology, and my favorite--animal scat. We also brought on eight high school interns. This group was an awesome bunch to work with. They were willing to tackle any tasks we presented them with, from exhibit maintenance to invasive species removal. We look forward to having a similar program next summer.

The drought and heat has affected decisions we made on site including: stopping the irrigation of our lawns and landscape plants due to a drought emergency declaration, reducing the amount of new planting we did, and limiting the use of spark emitting equipment on site. All of these conditions have also affected our existing plant populations. In the coming years, as you walk through the Arboretum, you will start to notice more and more conifers and water-dependent species declining. Moving forward, we will be faced with tough decisions on how to go about managing the ecosystem within the Arboretum. If this is something that interests you, or if you would like to provide input, please consider joining our habitat committee. You can email habitat@mountpishgaharboretum.org for more information.



Photo by August Jackson

Bird deterrents on the Pavilion windows consist of vertical stretches of string so the window no longer appears like an open space a bird can fly through.



Photo by Jenny Laxton

*Staff and interns remove scattered patches of invasive Malta starthistle (*Centaurea melitensis*).*

Weekly Nature Blog



Photo by Karen Richards

Keep up with the amazing life that can be found at Mount Pisgah with weekly blog posts from local naturalists Karen Richards and Bryan Ribelin as they highlight some fascinating species and ecological interactions, year-round.

Check out the blog at mountpisgaharboretum.org/blog



Photo by Bryan Ribelin

Education Report

by Jenny Laxton, Education Manager



Photo by Jenny Laxton

This summer we continued our small group youth programs with our Arboretum Summer Club. This 3-hour program happened twice a week. Each week had a different fun theme such as a focus on forests, rivers, hiking, and survival skills. Through a generous grant from Oregon Community Foundation, we were able to offer this program for free to low-income families. We also hosted Whole Earth Nature School and Nearby Nature as the site for some of their summer day camp programs. All summer the Arboretum was full of kids learning and exploring.

Kids programs will continue this fall with a once per week after-school program for elementary aged kids and the return of our school field trip program. We'll be having just a few small group field trips this fall with the hope that we can increase our field trips closer to a normal amount in the spring. For now we are looking forward to having a few schools out again. It's been a long time!

We haven't forgotten all the adults out there with a love of learning. Our walks for adults continued during the summer and were quite popular, usually filling up. We had to cancel a few toward the end of the summer because of the smoke, but we felt lucky that the smoke was much more manageable this year than last summer. We will continue to ramp back up our walks program as the fall goes on.

Welcoming a New Team Member!

by Brad van Appel, Executive Director

This summer the Arboretum was pleased to welcome Mackenzie O'Connor as our new part-time office assistant. Mackenzie has enjoyed a lifelong connection with the Arboretum, including childhood memories of helping her grandfather, long-time volunteer Rob O'Connor as he worked on our trails and habitats. She comes to us with more than four years of office experience, a strong dedication to teamwork, and a firm commitment to the Arboretum's mission and values. Please help us make her feel welcome.



Contributions

Apr. 10, 2021 to Sept. 22, 2021

New Members

Abigail Onos
Alan Curtis
Alisha Roper
Allison Minch
Amanda Allen
Amanda Dewey
Amelia Delgado
Amy Wilson
Andre Smith
Andrew Allgauer
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In honor of our 31st wedding anniversary--Pete Ruby & Kim Davidson-Ruby
In honor of MPA staff--Rebecca Hazen, Scott Burgwin
In memory of Betty Alfsen who cared for all children--Robin and David Tiedeman
In memory of Andrew Piercy--Roz Stein & Paul Thompson
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Limited Attendance & Advance Tickets
Only!

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Student/Senior/Guide	\$40
Individual	\$50
Family	\$60
Sponsor	\$75
Supporting	\$100
Sustaining	\$250
Business	\$100-\$1,000 - call!

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Sponsor a Family Membership	\$60
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"In Honor of" or "In Memory of"	_____

Name of person receiving tribute _____

Please mail your membership and/or contributions to:

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All contributions and dues are tax-deductible. IRS #23-7345974

Sponsor Kids' Nature Field Trips!

We're excited to welcome kids back on field trips in the spring of 2022! Many schools can no longer afford these field trips, and the financial impact of the pandemic will make them depend even more on scholarships from people like you. A \$10 donation to Discovery Tours brings out one child. \$250 can bring out a whole classroom!

**I want to help children discover nature
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Name: _____

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Please keep my donation anonymous.