

Project Update

Mushrooms Guru Draws Attention on You Tube

Jamie Floyd has become a shiitake guru. Woodlot owners and fungi enthusiasts turn to the SNB Wood Co-op forester when they want to know the ins and outs of growing these mushrooms naturally on hardwood logs in their woodlots or backyards. He has been demonstrating production techniques and giving talks on the subject for almost five years. In the fall of 2011, a class from the Maritime College of Forest Technology visited his home in Springfield for a how-to-session on producing the gourmet, medicinal mushroom. He recently spoke to the Fredericton Fish and Game Association and will be speaking to the Petticodiac Sportsmen Club in May.

One of Floyd's early presentations took place at a Fundy Model Forest workshop to about 70 people from the province's woodlot sector. This talk is posted in two parts on You Tube. The two videos combined were played 854 times in March (2012) and more than 5600 times since the preceding March, with most of the viewers located in the United States.

The forest manager was surprised to receive a call from a woman in Ontario who had watched the videos and wanted to order spawn to inoculate logs to raise her own shiitakes. "I did let her know that there are several growers in Ontario. Shiitake production is quite well established there," he said.

His enthusiasm for the flavourful fungi is clear in his presentations. Floyd began growing mushrooms as an experiment about eight years ago. He and fellow foresters/technicians at SNB Wood Co-op were looking for new ways to earn extra income from woodlots. As he fine-tuned his hobby, it grew into a small commercial operation. Now, he is conducting trials with other varieties that can be produced on logs in natural surroundings.

While shiitakes are a relatively new crop in North America, they are the second most commonly produced mushrooms in the world, surpassed only by the small white button variety.

If you would like to know more, you can watch Floyd's presentations on YouTube by searching for shiitake mushrooms in New Brunswick.