

Fungal Facts, Folklore and Foraging

Start date 4th November 2017 **Time** 10:00 – 16:45

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Dr Patrick Harding **Course code** 1718NDX003

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings

For further information on this course, please contact Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr
clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237

To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Patrick Harding has taught a wide range of courses at Madingley for nearly 30 years. As with this course he likes to link science (in the form of natural history) and the arts (in the form of history and folklore). In a former life he taught plant ecology, genetics and evolution to undergraduates before organising a large science extra-mural programme for Sheffield University. Patrick's lectures are well illustrated and often backed up with handouts plus a little humour; education can be fun. He has considerable media experience; both television and radio and has written eight books including four on mushrooms.

Course programme

09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	Session 1 The fungal kingdom. Mushrooms and toadstools: why they are not plants, ecology, habitats and food sources.
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	Session 2 How do we identify mushrooms? Important features and indicators of the major families and common species.
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Session 3 Poisonous and hallucinogenic fungi. A brief look at chemistry plus examples from folklore and history. From ergot to LSD, from fly agaric to Father Christmas.
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	Session 4 How to identify Britain's best edible mushrooms. Where to look for them and how best to prepare and cook them.
16:45	Day-school ends

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course aims to explain why fungi are not plants and to introduce students to the varied and fascinating world of the higher fungi.

The course will help students to get to grips with the identification of common species of higher fungi including the edible ones.

The course will show how chemicals in fungi have played a role in folklore, medicine and literature.

Content:

Introduction to the fungal kingdom. Structure of the higher fungi and their fruiting bodies. A review of the different habitats and micro-habitats where fungi are found including grassland, woodland, tree stumps, bonfire sites and Morris Travellers. Explanation and examples of saprophytic, parasitic and symbiotic fungi; from rotting to killing to helpful associations. Features of fungal fruit bodies that help with their identification. The importance of spore prints, habitat and gill attachment. A look at those poisonous and hallucinogenic species that have been used to kill but also to cure and have initiated folklore and stories from witchcraft to Father Christmas. The final session will examine some 20 of the best edible wild mushrooms to be found in Britain with aids to accurate identification and the best ways to cook and preserve them.

Presentation of the course:

Most of the sessions will include illustrated lectures backed up by handouts and specimens where appropriate. There will be time for questions and discussion. Hopefully there will be a brief excursion into the grounds to look for fungi and if health and safety permits a practical session on how best to cook edible fungi.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. Evaluate from both scientific and historical sources the importance of the fungal kingdom.
2. Show by discussion and action in the field session that they have acquired new skills to aid with the identification of the higher fungi

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Harding,P et al	<i>How to Identify Edible Mushrooms</i>	HarperCollins 1996
Harding,P	<i>Mushroom Miscellany</i>	HarperCollins 2008
Marren,P	<i>Mushrooms</i>	British Wildlife Pub. 2012
Sterry,P & Hughes,B	<i>Complete Guide to British Mushrooms and Toadstools</i>	HarperCollins 2009

Website addresses

British Mycological Society www.britmycolsoc.org.uk

Local fungal societies www.fungus.org.uk

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Students are encouraged to bring specimens of higher fungi (mushrooms and toadstools) to the class to add to those collected by the tutor. Note that once picked they keep better in the fridge!

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 14 July 2017

