

twenty-five inches. Mr. Orr's specimen was an exceptionally fine one, and had a diameter of about sixteen inches. Dr. Curtis calls it the "Southdown of Mushrooms," and states that it has a delicacy of flavor that makes it superior to any omelette he ever tasted. He also claims that it is so easily digested as to adapt itself to the most

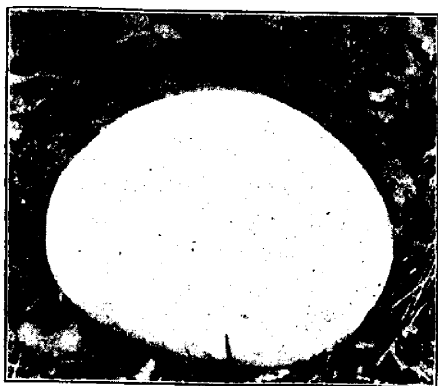


FIG. 1938. A GIANT PUFF BALL.

delicate stomach. I can corroborate this opinion by personal experience. Mrs. Hussey, of England, gives the following recipe for cooking: First remove the outer skin; cut in slices half an inch thick; have ready some chopped herbs, pepper and salt; dip the slices in the yolk of an egg and sprinkle the herbs upon them; fry in fresh butter and eat immediately.

Some mycologists have recommended cutting off a slice horizontally every day, using great care not to disturb the growth or induce decay. In this way it may last for a week.

*Lycoperdon cyatheforme*, or Cup Shaped Puff Ball. This is the next largest of the puff balls. Its diameter is ordinarily from three to six inches. It gets the name, *cyatheforme*, or cup-shaped, because the upper part of the peridium falls away when

mature, leaving a cup-shaped base with ragged margin, which may continue through the winter.

*Lycoperdon pyriforme*—Pear Shaped Puff Ball. This has a short stem-like base and is often found in dense clusters on the trunks of fallen trees.

*Lycoperdon gemmatum*—Warted Puff Ball. This is nearly spherical in shape, usually the basal portion is narrower than the upper. The surface is covered with small, irregular warts. When these fall off the peridium presents a dotted or reticulated appearance. This species is quite common in our college lawn. Sometimes several appear crowded together on the ground. The height is from one and a half to two inches.

*Lycoperdon saccatum* is smaller than preceding and without any semblance of stem.

The only species of the genus *Bovista* that I have time to describe is the little lead-colored *Bovista*, known as *Bovista plumbea*. This is quite common. It differs from the *Lycoperdon* in its more perfectly globular shape and in the more tough and smooth rind in the mature plant. The peridium opens by a small aperture at the top for the dissemination of the spores. When squeezed the spores will escape from the opening and appear like a little puff of smoke.

In conclusion I would say that the larger puff balls are much finer in quality than the smaller, and that no puff ball is fit to eat when it shows yellowish or brownish streaks through it or has become watery in the interior. It may be added that the dusty spores of the mature puff ball are often used to arrest hemorrhage from wounds.

J. J. HARE,

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