

Plant Pathology Seminar Series

Wood Decay Fungi:

Ethnomycology and New Insights on Decomposition

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My research on forest fungi and wood decomposition began at Washington State University during PhD studies in Plant Pathology. Investigations of wood decay in the forests of Northern Idaho and on historic wood from the Hoko River archaeological site (near the Ozette Village site on the coast of Washington) set the stage for a career working on how microorganisms degrade wood. This work also led to many ethnomycological studies on how Indigenous People used forest fungi. Today's seminar will discuss several fungi that were considered sacred for their use in traditional medicine by Indigenous People of the Pacific Northwest and other regions of the world. It will also explore the action that takes place behind the polypores and degradative processes of some fungi that cause soft rot in wood. A few examples from some very recent investigations of unusual fungi attacking wood in extreme environments will also be discussed.



Biography

Bob Blanchette received his doctoral degree from Washington State University in Plant Pathology followed by a two-year post-doctoral research and teaching position in the department. This experience, which included teaching a general plant pathology course and a course in forest pathology while Professor Jack Rogers was on a sabbatical, provided key experience for him to obtain a position at the University of Minnesota. Bob is currently a professor in the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Minnesota where he teaches classes and carries out research on the biology and ecology of fungi that grow on and attack trees and wood. His research focuses on elucidating the mechanisms of wood decay and interdisciplinary studies of microorganisms degrading archaeological, historic, and modern woods. He also has been involved with ethnomycological investigations to better understand how Indigenous People from different parts of the world used forest fungi. Current projects also include studies of fungi associated with the emerald ash borer, wood decay fungi from the Amazon rainforests and studies of the extraordinary fungi in extreme environments of the High Arctic, dry deserts of Egypt and underground Sudan iron ore mine in Minnesota. He has been recognized for his work with several awards including Fellow of the AAAS, Fellow of the American Phytopathological Society and Fellow of the International Academy of Wood Science and other distinguished service awards.

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Zoom Link: <https://wsu.zoom.us/j/93395333254>
Meeting ID: 933 9533 3254
Passcode: 305936
Call in number: 1 253 215 8782



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