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SOLF Presents: Berkeley's Polypore

guest

~2 minutes

Above: SOLF invites you to take a look at a surprisingly beautiful parasite that grows in our local woods. (image cropped from photo contributed by SOLF)

[This post is part of a special guest series focused on appreciating nature in Southborough, contributed by the [Southborough Open Land Foundation](#) (SOLF), a non-profit dedicated to preserving and stewarding natural resources here in town.]

This mushroom, Berkeley's Polypore, is a "cousin" of the popular "Chicken of the Woods." It is a parasitic fungus that often grows at the base of oak trees causing "butt rot" or "root rot" and, after a long period of time, the tree dies and falls over.



Miles Joseph Berkeley for whom this mushroom was named, was a Vicar and British botanist of the 1800s. He was the leading authority on fungi with the identification and naming of approximately 6000 species.

Along with his job as Vicar and his avocation as botanist, he and his wife had 15 children. One of those, his daughter Ruth Ellen, became a scientific illustrator and illustrated the fungi he named after her. (Pleurotus ruthae)

Can you eat it? Yes, but unless harvested early on, it becomes very tough.

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Debbie Costine, is a SOLF Trustee, artist and curious naturalist
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