

food

Scarletina bolete

(*Boletus luridiformis*)

Easily identified, delicious boletes are one of our wild autumn delicacies. On your bike to the nearest beech woods and get hunting! **Mark Williams** points the way



Photo: Mark Williams © GallowayWildFoods.com

Fungi play a crucial role in forests and soils yet all too often suffer from being categorised as either edible (often picked to destruction) or poisonous (kicked and trampled). The key to a safe and mindful enjoyment of wild fungi is to take an interest in the full range of species and only harvest a few of each of a wide range of edible varieties.

The Scarletina bolete is a red-pored mushroom with flesh that turns from bright yellow to deep blue within a few seconds of being cut. It is not what most people expect of a tasty mushroom, but its very oddness makes it easy to identify. The blue discolouration fades on cooking.

The texture and flavour of firm young specimens is excellent, though older spongier specimens are best dried. Either way, they are delicious in risottos, stews and fricassees, but shouldn't be eaten raw.

Look for Scarletina boletes from July to November beneath deciduous and occasionally coniferous trees. 90% of my finds come from beneath beech. They are 4–12cm in diameter; have a velvety tan to deep brown cap; a fat stem, thicker at the base, which is yellow with many tiny red dots making it look red. The underside of the cap consists of pores (not gills). These are red, but the tubes above (when cut) are yellow, as is the flesh throughout.

Be aware of the Lurid bolete (*boletus luridus*) which has a paler cap colour and a net pattern (reticulum) on the stipe. Lurid bolete is also edible, but has more reports of adverse reactions in a small proportion of people. It should not be eaten within 24 hours of drinking alcohol.

IMPORTANT: Never eat a wild mushroom or plant unless you are 100% sure of its identity and that it is an edible species.

Mark Williams (@markwildfood) is a foraging tutor who teaches plant/fungi ID and mindful foraging. www.gallowaywildfoods.com

Happy foragers with basket of wood blewits; Scarletina Bolete showing widening yellow base with tiny red dots making it look red.



Photo: Jaroslav Malý

"We combine teaching people about the wellbeing benefits of eating certain foods alongside the environmental ones"

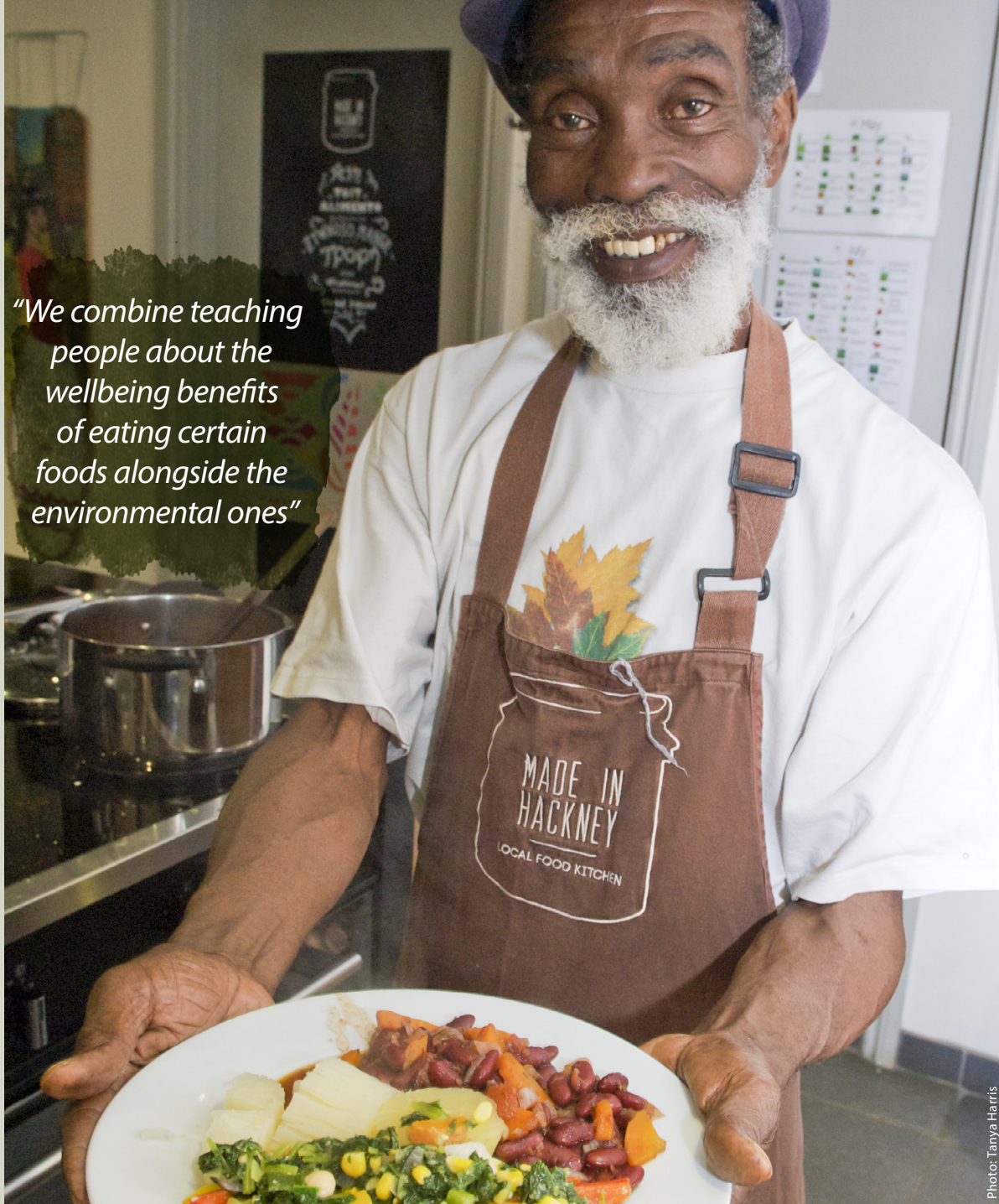


Photo: Tanya Harris

Bi-weekly, pay-by donation, two hour long Sunday afternoon workshops cover everything from making homemade cosmetics to baking sourdough bread to yogic cookery.

Local community kitchen puts people and planet first

Tess Riley heads to Made In Hackney's urban kitchen where everyone can discover how to make delicious, healthy, affordable meals using local, seasonal produce

Step off the bustling Stoke Newington High Street onto North-East London's Cazenove Road and it won't take you long to spot the welcoming bright green building. This is Food For All, a not-for-profit health food shop that's been serving the local community since 1976. In its basement lies my destination for the day, Made In Hackney, a pioneering community kitchen that's been teaching food growing, cooking and composting skills using local, seasonal, organic ingredients since October 2012.

Averting my eyes from Food For All's tempting shelves, I head down to Made In Hackney's eco-kitchen. Upcycled plates, bowls, chopping boards and weighing scales line shelves made from reclaimed scaffolding planks; comfortable stool cushions made from old hessian sacks pile up in the corner; and standing proud in the centre of it all is a black hob island made from melted-down coffee cups.

It's in this kitchen that Made In Hackney hosts both its pay-by-donation Sunday afternoon workshops - which teach everything

from vegetarian BBQs to making preserves - and its masterclasses. Led by expert guest foragers, nutritionists, herbalists and chefs, these hands-on sessions have covered raw food dinner parties, wild food cookery, edible cosmetics and vegan afternoon tea.

The masterclasses help fund both the Sunday workshops and the third type of Made In Hackney course - off-site food courses in partnership with community organisations, housing associations and support groups such as Action for Children, London Orchard Project and the Women's Environment Network. By working this way, Made in Hackney ensures that their courses reach those most in need, such as low income families, teen carers, and people suffering from diet-related health problems.

"We combine teaching people about the well-being benefits of eating certain foods alongside the environmental ones," says project co-ordinator and founder, Sarah Bentley. "The limited budget aspect is a key part of what we do. We

adhere to a rigorous local, seasonal, plant based and organic food policy. If people who attend our courses eat more meat-free meals cooked from scratch, start composting their food waste, begin growing some of their own food (even a few herbs on a balcony), and pay more attention to where they source their food then we've done a great job!"

Aware that my raw food detox class is about to start, I don one of the trademark brown aprons that I've seen so many others wearing in the smiling photographs adorning Made In Hackney's walls. New to green juice and kale chips I may be, but I'm ready to learn and couldn't be in a better place to do so. I may even stock up on a few ingredients upstairs on my way out...

Tess Riley is a freelance journalist writing about sustainable food and the environment, and is Food Co-Editor at Transition Free Press. For more information on upcoming courses and masterclasses at Made In Hackney, head to www.madeinhackney.org/whats-on