



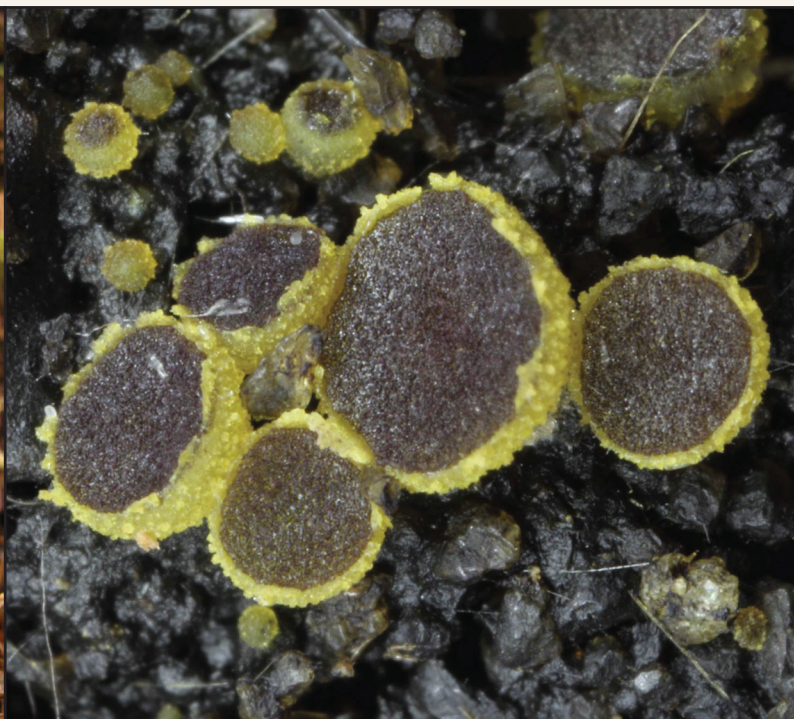
Introduction to Ascomycota and Independent Studies

September 6–12, 2026

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This seminar suits both beginners and those with advanced knowledge of Fungi. It introduces phylum Ascomycota, the “sac-fungi,” a group that includes yeasts and filamentous fungi, and whose ecological roles spans parasites, pathogens, mycorrhizals, saprobes, and most lichen-forming fungi. Short lectures cover aspects of the biology, taxonomy, ecology, and human uses of Ascomycota. Field research is emphasized, and participants will learn how to collect and preserve fruit-bodies of Ascomycota. Laboratory work will focus on studying and documenting fresh and dried specimens using microscopic examination under dissecting and compound microscopes. Participants will learn how to identify specimens using books and keys. Participants are encouraged to bring their own specimens to study if they have them. Dried, preserved specimens and prepared microscope slides from a range of Ascomycota species will be available to supplement field-collected material. Participants wishing to propose an individual project on a topic relating to Ascomycota are encouraged to contact the instructor at least a few weeks prior to the start of the seminar.

Jason Karakehian (jasonkarakehian@gmail.com [he/him]) is a Massachusetts native and has studied New England ascomycetes for nearly two decades. He is a long-time member of the Boston Mycological Club and an alumnus of Eagle Hill, having taken several courses on botany, plant anatomy, crustose lichens, and mycology. This is his second year as an instructor. Jason earned a master’s degree under the advisement of Dr. Donald Pfister at Harvard University Extension School in 2019 and his doctoral degree under Andrew Miller at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2024. He is currently a post-doc at the USDA Agricultural Resource Service, Northeast Area in Beltsville, Maryland. His research is in the diversity of a group of wood-inhabiting discomycetes. He is also interested in fungaria and mycological history and illustration. He has written extensively on the mycological work of Lewis David von Schweinitz, the “father” of North American mycology.