

Thomas Roehl

Thomas Roehl's mycological journey began in August 2011, when as an undergraduate at the University of Virginia he randomly took a class on fungal biology. The first mushroom he found for that class was *Craterellus fallax*, which could partially explain why it was so easy to get sucked into the science of mycology. In the years following that class, Thomas struggled through identifying things on his own, such as a *Pleurotus ostreatus* and *Fistulina hepatica* with disguised ecologies. During this time, he also found his first morel and graduated in 2013. To continue his mycological education, Thomas started a blog (www.fungusfactfriday.com), joined the Mycological Association of Washington, DC (MAW), and of course continued finding and identifying mushrooms, including the nearly one-meter wide *Laetiporus persicinus* outside his front door. In late 2015, he finally got on the club's email list and made it to a foray, where he found his first *Radulomyces copelandii* and agreed to be MAW's Newsletter Editor. By 2019, he was regularly leading forays and became certified as a MAW identifier and separately as a Virginia Master Naturalist. His pursuit of mycology then took him to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L), where he found *Verpa bohemica*, *Paragyrodon sphaerosporus* and a sporeless *Oudemansiella furfuracea*, among others. At UW-L, Thomas also had the pleasure of studying under Todd Osmundson and Tom Volk – the former helped grow his research skills while the latter gave him a more complete understanding of the Kingdom Fungi. In Dr. Osmundson's lab, Thomas developed a project to extract and sequence mRNA from *Flammulina velutipes* mushrooms as they grew. After suffering through a pandemic and keeping his apartment at 60 °F during the Wisconsin winter, Thomas graduated in 2022 and in January of that same year moved back to the East Coast to continue his studies at Clark University as a Ph.D. candidate. There, he is continuing to research mushroom development, but has switched model organisms to *Lentinus tigrinus*. This research is just beginning, but Thomas looks forward to untangling the interactions between developmental changes and the genetics, ecology, and evolution of that species.