

November 2, 2015

Scientific American (www.scientificamerican.com) published a Special Collector's Edition (Summer 2015) about "The Science of Food". In it you can find an excellent article: "The Hidden Life of Truffles". Written by James M. Trappe and Andrew W. Claridge. Dr. Trappe is scientist emeritus at the U. S. Forest Service and a professor of forest science at Oregon State University; he has discovered more than 200 new truffle species on five continents. Dr. Claridge is a senior research scientist with the New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage and a visiting fellow at the University of New South Wales in Australia. He has studies for more than 20 years inter-relationships among mammals and the fungi they eat.

The abstract of the article cited is the following: *Not just for gourmands, truffles play essential roles in the health of ecosystems. The truffles that appear on restaurant menus and on the shelves of luxury food purveyors represent only a small fraction of the world's truffle species. Truffles figure importantly in ecosystems, sustain both plants and animals. Recognition of the ecological significance of truffles is aiding efforts to conserve threatened species that depend on them. One popular variety of truffle has been successfully cultivated, but agriculture has yet to tame other prized species.*

