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The October BioMystery Answer



This BioMystery resolved itself quite naturally when, about a month after I first saw the fleshy nodules, they started to dry out and reveal themselves as puffballs. As seen in the bottom photo on the left, a nudge from a small stick encouraged the puffballs to expel their spores in a yellowish cloud.



These fungi are *Lycoperdon pyriforme*, one of the few puffballs that grow on wood, making them relatively easy to identify. Other interesting features include the tiny fine spines on the outer surface and the inverted pear shape ("pyriform") of the puffball itself that gives the species its name. In nature, the spores are liberated by rain drops and the wind.

All photographs taken by W.F. McComas in Fayetteville, AR, in October 2019