

# Unusual Sightings

## *Mitrula elegans*, the Swamp Beacon

Friend of FUNGI, Hiromi Karagiannis, recently came upon this beautiful patch of tiny mushrooms that appeared to glow in the dark water-logged woods of the Northeast. This fungus is uncommonly seen—who goes looking for mushrooms in standing water? *Mitrula elegans* is found on decaying leaves, conifer needles, and fallen catkins in temporary pools, swamps, and sphagnum bogs, across North America and especially the northern latitudes, spring through summer. The Mykoweb site points out that this pint-sized mushroom also is known as the Matchstick Fungus which “aptly describes this diminutive ascomycete with a yellow-orange cap and slender, translucent stipe. Its fruiting preference, along the edges of marshes, and brightly-colored cap are distinctive, and differentiates it from other western *Mitrulas*. *Mitrula paludosa* of Europe is very similar, but probably does not occur in North America.”

