Zum Titelfoto von BREITENBACH erhielten wir von DEMOULIN folgenden Originaltext (vgl. die gekürzte Übersetzung auf der 2. Umschlagseite):

VINCENT DEMOULIN

Lycoperdon perlatum Pers.: Pers.

This is the most common puffball to be found in woods, deciduous as well as coniferous, all over the world. As other members of the genus Lycoperdon it is adapted to wind dispersal with the helps of a peculiar mechanism involving rain drops. The mature fruitbody is made up of dead dry filaments with thick walls which render elastic the peridium and especially the sterile hyphae (capillitium) that mixed with the spores fill the fertile part of the fruitbody (the gleba). Under this gleba is a sterile lacunose structure, the subgleba, which bears the fertile part some distance above the ground. When a rain drop falls on top of the fruitbody it depresses it and this allows a discharge of spores through the apical opening. This is what children enjoy to reproduce when squeezing the fruitbodies. The spores are sphaerical and very small (usually less than 4 µm in diam.) which makes them very well suited for wind dispersal. The small spores and thin comparatively strong pointed warts are good microscopical characters to recognise the species. With some practice it can usually be easily recognised in the field by the caducous conical spines surrounded by an areolatium of smaller warts that persist longer on the endoperidium. The pitted aspect of the mature specimen on the photograph is seldom encountered in other species but is not constant. With L. perlatum, have been confused in the past species with thinner more angular exoperidial spines and different spores, L. foetidum (cf. H. KREISEL, Feddes Repertorium **64** (2/3): 89—201, 1962) and L. norvegicum (cf. V. DEMOULIN, Norw. J. Bot. **18** (3/4): 161—167, 1971; Westf. Pilzbr. **9** (3/5): 60—64, 1973). L. foetidum which has spores usually bigger than 4 µm is very common on acid soils while L. norvegicum which has very small almost smooth spores is much rarer. Like other Lycoperdaceae L. perlatum is edible when young but as soon as a yellow colour appears inside the lysis of all cells except the spores quickly proceeds and they are unfit for eating. For taxonomical purposes it is however the fully ripe fruitbodies, dried and with their apical opening formed which must be collected for they are the only one to hold fully mature spore.

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