

HEALTH HAZARD!

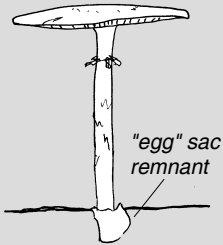
For every edible mushroom, there are look-alikes that may be deadly. Many mushroom compounds cause allergic reactions. Some people develop severe reactions to mushrooms over time. The three mushrooms shown below are poisonous to humans. There are other types of mushrooms not shown here that may be poisonous as well.

Remember, "when it doubt, throw it out."



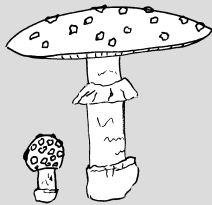
Amanita

Appearing a ghostly white in color, members of this mushroom family are seen alone or in small groups on the woodland floor. Remnants of the egg-like sac at the base of the stipe (stalk) identify them as members of the poisonous amanita group.



Fly Agaric

Also from the poisonous amanita family, this fungus has a reddish or yellow-orange cap with white patches. The patches are remnants of the egg-like sac in which it develops.



Jack O'Lantern

This brightly colored but poisonous fungus is the same orange-yellow as its namesake. This fungus possesses one odd characteristic. When it is gathered fresh and taken into a dark room, the gills under the cap will often emit an eerie, greenish glow.



Good or Bad?

Mushrooms have a long history, both in folklore and in the kitchen. Some mushrooms, or "toadstools," have a dim reputation with humans, but many forest animals eat even the poisonous varieties. Much of a mushroom is water, but many have some nutritional value.

The many different forms result in many uses by people. Humans use mushrooms for medicine, food-and-beverage preparation, biological pest control and dye.

Mushroom? Fungus?

Mushrooms are just one type of fungus. They are non-flowering and can grow in a variety of habitats. Chitin, a support protein usually found in insects and other animals, gives fungus its shape. Mushrooms and other fungi reproduce by small dust-like particles called spores. Fungi lack chlorophyll, and survive by absorbing moisture and nutrients through an underground mass of filaments.

Can I Hunt Mushrooms at State Parks and Reservoirs?

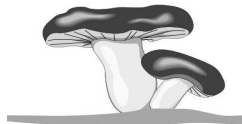
Mushroom hunting for individual use is permitted on state park and reservoir properties, and no license is required to do so. Picking mushrooms for sale/commercial use at a state park or reservoir is NOT permitted.

Regulations require the use of marked trails on state park properties unless an activity is licensed or exempted from a license. Mushroom hunting and berry-picking are exempt from licensing, so it is OK to leave marked trails to look for mushrooms in both state parks and reservoirs. Use caution and move carefully so you don't disturb wildlife or native plants as you search.

Some restrictions may apply in some seasons when hunting or other management activities are underway at reservoirs; check at the property office before you venture out.

Restrictions may vary at state forest and state fish & wildlife areas. Contact the property office before you go afield.

If you plan to mushroom hunt on private property, it is important to obtain landowner permission first.

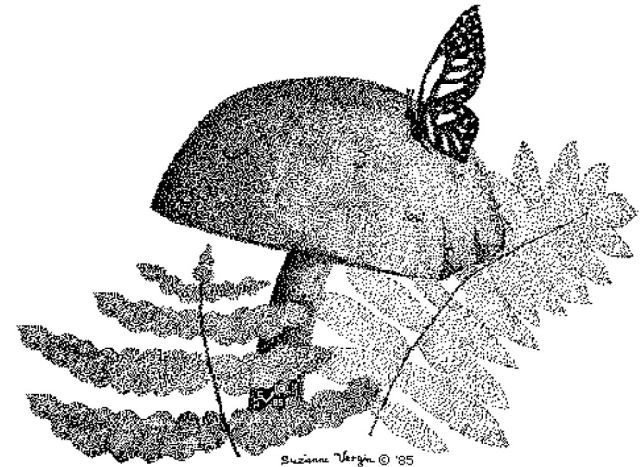


Want to know more?

Contact the property nearest you or:
Chief of Interpretation
Division of State Parks & Reservoirs
402 W. Washington Room W298
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 234-4926

Common Mushrooms

of Indiana State Parks & Reservoirs



Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of State Parks & Reservoirs
Interpretive Services

DNR

Indiana Department
of Natural Resources



Morel

The morel, found throughout North America, is probably the best known of the edible mushrooms. Ranging in color from black to blonde, these tasty fungi can grow to be a foot tall. Most of the time, however, these “sponge” or “honeycomb” mushrooms are 3 to 5 inches tall. The best time for morel hunting is April and May. Morel hunting requires a slow pace, an eye for detail and a lot of patience. Although morels are often found in association with dead elms, tulip trees and beech-maple forests, morels have been known to suddenly appear in front yards, too.



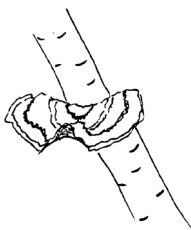
Shaggy/Mane/Coprinus

Often found pushing its way up and out of lawns, this species is also considered edible. It must be cooked and eaten quickly after gathering. If too much time passes, the cap will liquefy into a black, inky mess. That is the reason it’s also called “inky cap fungi.” A word of caution—you should not consume alcohol within a day or two of eating inky cap fungi. The mushrooms deactivate an enzyme in the human body that would otherwise detoxify the alcohol. Although this fungus is fragile, it has been seen pushing its way up through asphalt.



Turkey Tail Fungus

Look for this extremely common fungus on dead trees and decaying logs. As a type of “shelf” fungus, its various colored bands clearly reveal how it got its name.

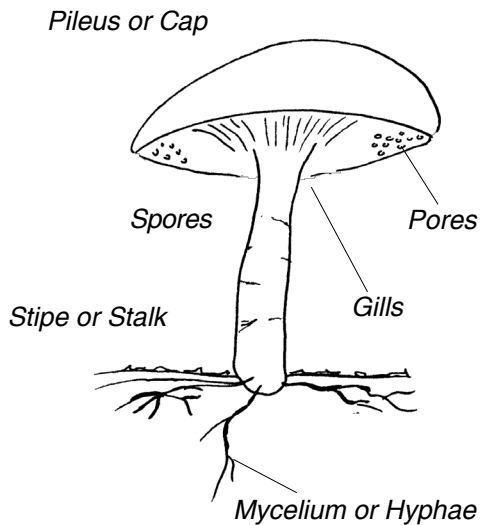


Bird’s Nest Splash Cups

These tiny fungi are aptly named. They resemble bird nests that contain little eggs. The “eggs” are actually small sacs that contain the spores. When raindrops fall and hit the cup or “nest,” the eggs are splashed out and dispersed. These fungi can be found growing on decaying twigs, sawdust or straw. Look carefully—they only reach about a half-inch in diameter.



Mushroom Vocabulary



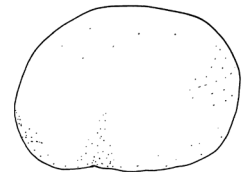
Earthstars

These are a small version of giant puffballs. The outer layer of earthstars splits into rays that arch back and lift the earthstar. This makes it easier for the wind to carry small puffs of spores to new habitats.



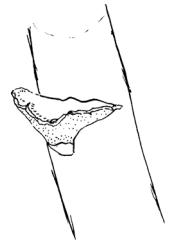
Giant Puffballs

One of the most spectacular members of the fungi family, this mushroom can grow to weigh 10 pounds and measure more than 20 inches across. When the flesh is firm and white throughout, puffballs are edible. However, when the puffball matures, the flesh turns brown. A drop of rain, a raccoon’s searching paw or another disturbance to a “ripe” puffball causes the release of countless spores.



Sulfur Shelf

Also called “chicken of the woods,” this fungus is unmistakable. Characterized by an extremely colorful orange top and bright yellow bottom, only the tender edges of the shelf are gathered for eating. This fungus becomes indigestible as it ages and is known to cause an allergic reaction, which may include causing swollen lips in some people. It is most often seen growing on dead tree trunks, logs and stumps in late summer.



Artist’s Conk

This is a famous fungus to some creative people. The white surface underneath bruises easily, changing to a dark brown. A drawing can be etched in this underside of the fungus and will, with drying and careful handling, remain visible for a long time. One old woodsman sketched his log cabin on a conk, and he claims the drawing lasted more than 40 years.

