

## Morel

The morel, found throughout North America, is probably the best known of the edible mushrooms. Ranging in colors 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 three to five inches tall. The best time for morel hunting is April and May, Morel hunting requires a slow pace, an eye for detail and much patience! Although they 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.



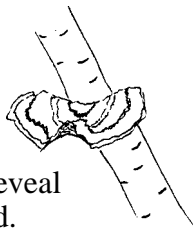
## Shaggy Mane/ Coprinus

Often found pushing its way up and out of lawns, this species too, is 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. (This mushroom is also called *inky cap fungi*!) A word of caution - no alcohol should be consumed within a day or two of eating inky cap fungi - the mushrooms deactivate an enzyme that would otherwise detoxify the alcohol. Although this fungus is very 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, the various colored bands clearly reveal just how this fungus was named.

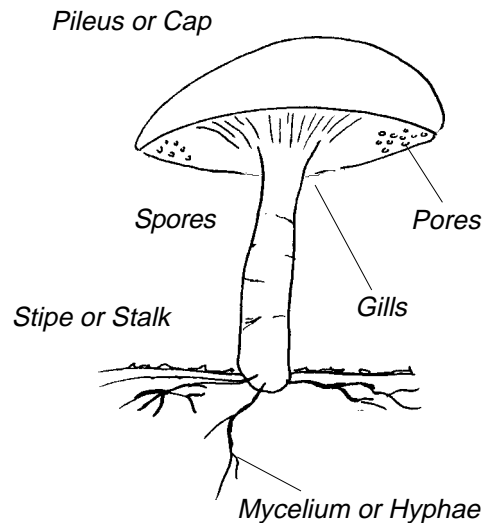


## Bird's Nest Splash Cups

These tiny fungi are aptly named. They really do resemble birds' nests that contain little eggs. The “eggs” are actually small sacs that contain the spores. When rain-drops 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 one-half inch in diameter!



## Mushroom Vocabulary



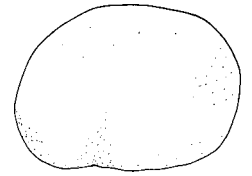
## Earthstars

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



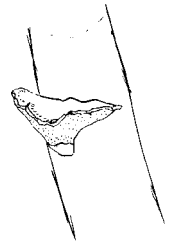
## Giant Puffballs

One of the more spectacular members of the fungi family, these can grow to weigh ten pounds and measure more than twenty inches across! When the flesh is firm and white throughout, puffballs are very 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.



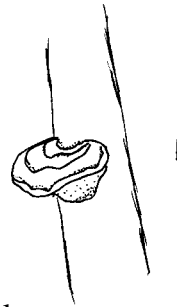
## Sulfur Shelf

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 to eat. The fungus becomes indigestible as it ages, and is known to cause an allergic reaction, which may include 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 those with a creative knack. The white surface underneath bruises very easily, changing to a dark brown. A drawing can be etched in this underside of the fungus and, with drying and careful handling, remain visible for a long time. One old woodsman sketched his log cabin on a conk that he claims lasted more than forty years.



## 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.

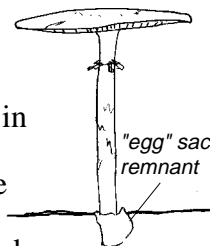
The three mushrooms shown below are poisonous to humans. There are other types of mushrooms not shown here than may be poisonous as well.

Remember, when in doubt, throw it out!"



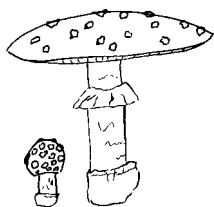
### Amanita

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 egglike 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 egglike 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 very 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 the mushroom is water, but many have some nutritional value.

The many different forms result in many uses by people including medicine, food and beverage preparation, biological pest control and dyes.

## 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 Mushroom Hunt Here?

Mushroom hunting is allowed on park and reservoir properties. Regulations require the use of marked trails only on state park properties. At reservoirs, foot travel is permitted in most resource management units. Some restrictions may apply in some seasons; check at the property office before you hunt. If you plan to mushroom hunt on private property, it is important to obtain landowner permission first.

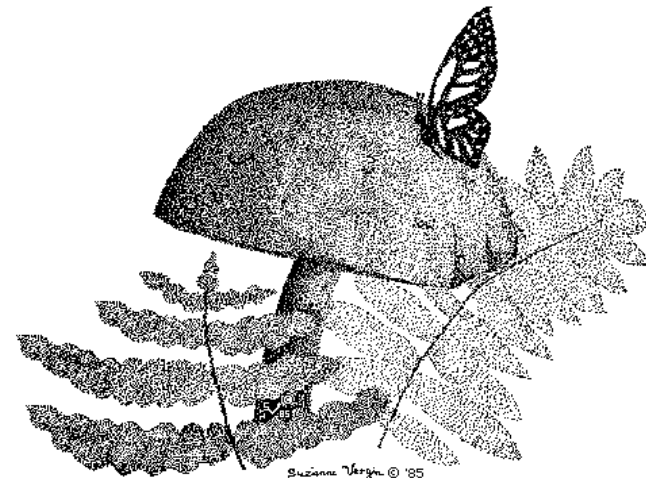


### Do you want to know more?

Contact the property nearest you or the  
Chief of Interpretation  
Division of State Parks and Reservoirs  
402 W. Washington Room W298  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317/232-4124

# Common Mushrooms

## of Indiana State Parks and Reservoirs



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## DNR

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