



WESTERN PA



MUSHROOM CLUB

Volume 2, Issue 1

President: John Plischke

Editor: Becky Plischke

V, Pres: Dick Dougall

Sec: Valerie Baker

April May 2001

Treas: Jack Baker

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By John Plischke

This past year has been a tremendous success for our mushroom club. We have grown faster, bigger and stronger than any new mushroom club in the history of the North American Mycological Association. Starting with our original 12 founding members, we grew to a very strong club of 180.

There are a number of reasons for this exceptional growth. One reason is you! Everyone has pitched in and helped with anything they have been asked to do. Thank you! Another reason is our Executive Board and our founding members that have worked tireless hours so the club would have the organizational structure to pull off the number of projects that we have been able to do. Yet another reason is the skill, dedication and expertise of our walk leaders, club identifiers and program presenters.

Finally there is Mary Woehrel, who served as our club's first president. She was the perfect first president for our club. Mary came to us knowing mushrooms and knowing how to lead a walk, but she brought us so much more. She made it all jell. Most of all she was our cheerleader who energized us all.

Although Mary is no longer president, she is not gone. She will be taking a very active role in club walks and as our publicity chairwoman. We can find her almost any day at her new job at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve.

MORE PROGRAM, LESS TALK

In an effort to have more program and less talk, this year a new rule will be instituted. If you want to present something at a meeting that is not on the agenda, please forward your request to club president, John Plischke, at least ten days before the meeting date.

BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER

Double the Walks

This year we are doubling the number of mushroom walks and forays from nine to eighteen. At least seven of those walks will be in Allegheny Co. We will also have walks in Indiana, Washington, Westmoreland, and Butler Counties along with other counties in Western PA. We are attempting to set up a walk or two in West Virginia.

We will be presenting a two-day event in cooperation with Pymatuning State Park (Crawford County) and a two-day event in cooperation with Cook's Forest State Park (Jefferson County).

Programs

We will be announcing club meetings/programs in the newsletter. We have a great line up of interesting and informative programs. Please check the enclosed flyer for dates, times, and events.

Executive Board Size Doubles

The size of the Executive Board has been doubled to be able to better serve our club members and offer you more programs. Many mushroom clubs fail because they are small or lack leadership participation. This expanded board will go far in making sure the WPMC is around for a long time.

DUES ARE DUE

If you have not yet sent in your dues for 2001, **your club membership has expired.** Please fill in, sign, and date the enclosed application and send it in with your completed interest form and a check made out to the Western PA Mushroom Club. Send your dues in today to Jack Baker at: 1413 Parkmont Road, Allison Park, PA 15101.

This will be the last newsletter you will receive until your dues are paid.

CLUB OFFICERS

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WILD MUSHROOM COOKBOOK FOR SALE

The Mushroom Cookbook of the WPMC is completed and ready for sale. This 40-page soft cover book is 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches in size. It is packed full of 50 great wild mushroom recipes. Thanks to everyone who submitted recipes to make this project a success.

The first section covers baskets, knives, walking sticks and field cleaning mushrooms.

The second section is on preparing, home cleaning, freezing, drying, marinating and canning.

The third section contains 50 wild mushroom recipes. Some of the recipes are: Morels Stuffed with Crabmeat, Black Trumpet Dip, Stuffed Horse Mushrooms, Unfried Breaded Oyster Mushrooms, Pleurotus Ostreatus Won Ton, Sparassis Roast of Beef, and Puffball Lasagna.

You can have your Mushroom Cookbook for \$6, tax included, plus shipping and handling of \$1.50. Club member's cost is \$5, tax included, plus shipping and handling of \$1.50. Please send a check payable to the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club to Kim Plischke, 129 Grant Street, Greensburg, PA 15601.

You can save the shipping and handling charges by picking up a copy of the cookbook at one of our club meetings or at some of our club walks or events.

The cookbook can also be purchased at the Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve at their wonderful nature store.

MONT ALTO WEEKEND

Gary Emberger, president of the Eastern PA Mushroomers, has invited us to attend their Mont Alto Mushroom Weekend, July 13, 14, 15. Last year they found tons of mushrooms. We believe all costs are included and the price is going to be about \$140. Email Helen Miknis at Hmiknis@juno.com for info.

NEXT ISSUE

Feature articles in our next newsletter issue will include a major article on mushroom cultivation by club member Mark Spear, who is a professional mushroom culturist. Mary Woehrel will write on medicinal mushrooms. Valerie Baker will have a wonderful Mushroom Word Sleuth.

ARTICLES WANTED

Mail or email them to Becky Plischke today. morelbp@aol.com or mail to 129 Grant St, Greensburg, PA 15601.

Your article, recipe, joke, puzzle, story or cartoon for the newsletter will be welcomed.

MORELS & LOOK ALIKES

By
John
Plischke III

Introduction

There is much confusion on how many species of morels exists and more work needs to be done on them. Just try asking a few mycologists how many true morels there are and you will get several different answers. Anywhere from 3 up to 30 Wow!!! And that doesn't include the false ones.

Other mushrooms, which can resemble morels but appear in a different season, are Stinkhorns such as Ravenel's Stinkhorn (*Phallus ravenelii*), which grow on wood, have a sticky and extremely stinky cap. It somewhat resembles a morel when the covering is removed from its cap by insects but it grows in the fall and has a sac at the base of the stalk. (*Helvella* sp.) that come up in a different season August to September and that look like a wrinkled brain and lack the sponge like holes. Their stalks are usually ribbed and often have ovalish indentations running up and down the stalk.

Morels and their look alike are found singly to scattered or in small groups but where one is found there are usually others nearby. Stop and look in a ten-foot circle around it but make sure to pick it first so you don't lose it. I usually find them in the same spot for many years and one spot our family has hunted for over 50 years. Other people report their spots often disappear and the morels are not present the next year. Remember that this is one of the most hunted mushrooms and spots are and should be a well-kept secret.

Morels can grow in bare soil; they can be growing up from under leaf litter. Often they are found growing under may apple or garlic mustard. Sometimes they are found under privet hedge, wild black berries or jack in the pulpit but many plants can grow near them.

Yellow or Common Morel (Group)

Key Features



The cap and stalk are hollow

The yellow colored cap resembles a sponge

Cap is connected to base of stalk and comes out similar to the branches on base of Christmas tree

(*Morchella esculenta*)

FAMILY: Morchellaceae

DESCRIPTION: Its height is usually 2 1/4 to 6 inches tall. It is often seen with whitish ribs and darker pits, some say it is an immature yellow morel and others call it *Morchella deliciosa*.

Cap: From 1 to 3 1/2 inches tall and 3/4 to 2 inches wide. It is light tan to yellow brown and can sometimes be grayish and darker in color than the stem. Its shape is like a conical bullet with a rounded tip. The cap is about twice as tall as it is wide. The pits are taller than they are wide and roundish. The ridges are very irregular even in the same specimen and they are not almost straight as in the black morel. The base of the sides of the cap is attached to the stem and there is a slight ring like mote where the stem goes into the cap. The cap can be somewhat brittle. It can be bent over the stalk with age and moisture.

Stalk: 1 1/4 to 2 1/4 inches tall and 1/2 to 1 1/8 inch wide. It is fragile and not as wide as the cap where they connect. The wall of the stem is not very thick. It is white to cream in color. It is about half the height of the mushroom. It often looks lighter in color than the cap. It can be granular.

WHERE TO LOOK: On the ground under apple trees, old apple orchards, ash, burned areas, dead and dying elms that are infected by the Dutch Elm Disease, under tulip poplar trees and occasionally hawthorns, and fruit trees such as pear, beech and oak. In some parts of the U.S. they can be found under evergreens.

WHEN TO LOOK: The middle of April to early June, May being the best month. In warm weather and after rains when the soil is damp. They appear after the black morels.

LOOK ALIKES: This mushroom has also been split into these other varieties (*Morchella esculenta* var. *rigida*), (*Morchella esculenta* var. *rotunda*), (*Morchella esculenta* var. *umbrina*), (*Morchella esculenta* var. *vulgaris*). The edible Giant Morel (*Morchella crassipes*) is taller and has a thicker foot. The Tulip Morel whose cap is not as distinct and its stem gradually connects to the cap. The smaller edible White Morel (*Morchella deliciosa*) who differs by having whitish colored ridges. The edible Black Morel group (*Morchella elata angusticeps, conica, etc.*) which have a black cap. The edible Half Free Morel (*Morchella semilibra*) who differs by having a cap that is only half attached to the stalk. The poisonous false morels (*Gyromitra* sp.) that looks like a wrinkled brain and lack the sponge like holes. The two species of poisonous Thimble Cap Morels (*Verpa* sp.) differ by having caps without holes and caps that are only attached to the stalk at the tip of the caps.

EDIBILITY: Edible and choice.

WHITE MOREL

Key Features



The cap, which resembles a sponge, has grayish pits and whitish colored ridges

The interior is hollow

It is much smaller than the other yellow morels

(*Morchella deliciosa*)

The Tulip Morel

Key Features



- The cap is narrower than the other yellow morels
- The interior is hollow
- The cap is connected to base of stalk and goes up like a ski slope
- The cap resembles a sponge

(*Morchella esculenta*) - probably different because of cap attachment

DESCRIPTION: Its height is from 2 ¼ to 5 inches tall.

Cap: From 1 to 2 inches high and ½ to 1 1/16 inch wide. It starts off being yellow and becomes darker such as tan or brown with age and drying and with that the pits will become darker than the ridges. It is shaped like a bullet with a rounded tip and it gets wider near the base with the exception of where it connects to the stalk. The roundish pits are 1/16 to ¼ inch wide and 1/8 to ¼ inch tall and the pith depth is from 1/16 to ¼ inch. The ridges are very irregular. The cap is attached to the stalk & does not overlap it. It's not much wider than the stem, which gradually connects to the cap unlike the other yellow morel where there is a definite lip.

Stalk: 1 ¼ to 3 inches high and ½ to 1 inch wide. It is narrower than the cap where it connects but the stalk gradually goes into the cap unlike the other morels whose cap where connected to the stalk sticks out like the lower branches of a Christmas tree from the trunk. The granular stalk is basically the same width slightly wider at the base and the top where it is connected to the cap. The interior is very granular with slight white particles and wavy ridges which run across the stalk- they do not show on the outside of the stalk.

WHERE TO LOOK: On soil under tulip poplar trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and occasionally hickory. When looking for the tulip trees in early spring they are easy to spot because they get their leaves before oak so you can spot them while driving down back roads looking at the hillsides.

WHEN TO LOOK: The middle of April to the end of May.

EDIBILITY: Edible and Choice but it crumbles more than the other morels with the exception of the Half Free Morel.

COOKING MORELS



Cut the morels in half along the stem and soak in salt water for 10 minutes to check for and to remove any bugs. Morels have a mild flavor that is easily overpowered by strong seasonings so be careful. They can be fried in butter or they can be dipped in flour and egg then fried. Garlic may be added. When cooked they will shrink to about half their original size and have an excellent flavor. They are good in a vegetable broth or cream soup. Some people stuff them. They can be cooked with chicken in a cream sauce over noodles. They can be dried or frozen for later use. Don't eat Black Morels with alcohol or you can get sick.

Giant or Fat Footed Morel



Key Features	Can grow to enormous size and resembles a sponge	Cap can have orange at places when mature	Enlarged foot at base	The interior is hollow
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(*Morchella crassipes*)

FAMILY: Morchellaceae

DESCRIPTION: Its height is from 5 to 6 ¼ inches tall.

Cap: From 3 to 4 inches high and 2 ¼ to 2 ¾ inches wide. It is yellowish in color. Its shape is like a giant conical bullet with a rounded tip. The cap is about twice as tall as it is wide. It is narrower at the top and gets wider with the middle and cap base being about the same width. The pits are 1/8 to ½ inch wide and 1/8 to ¼ inch tall and 1/8 to ½ inch deep. The ridges are very irregular even in the same specimen. The cap does not overlap the stem

Stalk: Whitish, 2 ¾ inches high and 1 ¼ to 1 ½ inches wide. It is narrower than the cap where they connect. It often has a big foot at the base of the stem. The stem wall is not very thick. The stem has irregular ridges and indentations with granular particles in the indentations. It often gets a little orange in it with age. The interior is hollow and has irregular indentations and is granular on the inside of the stalk.

WHERE TO LOOK: On the ground under old apple trees and orchards ash, dead and dying elm that are infected by the Dutch elm disease. They have also been reported under cherry, beech and oak but we have never found them there.

WHEN TO LOOK: April to May. They can be usually found a week or so after the yellow morels begin to fruit.

LOOK ALIKES: The other true morels such as the larger edible Common Morel (*Morchella esculenta*) but smaller. The edible Tulip Morel whose cap is not as distinct and its stem gradually connects to the cap. The smaller edible White Morel (*Morchella deliciosa*) who differs by having whitish colored ridges. The edible Black Morel group (*Morchella elata, angusticeps, conica, etc.*) which have black caps. The edible Half Free Morel (*Morchella semilibra*) who differs by having holes in the cap and overhanging sides. And the poisonous false morels (*Gyromitra sp.*), which look like a wrinkled brain and lack the sponge like holes. The two species of poisonous Thimble Cap Morels (*Verpa sp.*) which differ by having caps without holes and caps that are only attached to the stem at the tip of the caps.

EDIBILITY: Edible and Choice.

Half Free or Dog Pecker Morel

Key Features



The cap, which resembles a sponge, is much smaller in proportion to the stalk than the other morels.

The stalk is attached to about 1/2 the cap about here

The interior is hollow and is often very granular

It fruits a week earlier than the yellow morels

The outer surface of the stalk has little granular particles on it

Its flesh is more brittle than the other morels

(*Morchella semilibera*)

(*Mitrophora semilibera*) (*Morchella hybrida*)

FAMILY: Morchellaceae

DESCRIPTION: Its height is from 1 1/4 to 5 1/4 inches tall.

Cap: From 3/4 to 1-1/4 inches high and 3/4 to 1 1/4 inches wide. It is tan becoming brown in color with age. It is even in color. The cap shrivels up with age and the ridges can become blackened and the stalk seems too large for the cap. The roundish pits are 1/16 to 1/4 inch wide and 1/8 to 1/4 inch tall and 1/16 to 1/4 inch deep. The wavy ridges run from the top to the bottom with irregular connections. The cone shaped cap overlaps the stem from 1/4 to 1/2 of an inch. Its outer margin often becomes cracked with age.

Stalk: It is 1 1/4 to 4 inches high and 1/4 to 1 1/4 inches wide. Stem may be regular in width or wider near the base. Is narrower than the cap where they connect but sometimes not a lot with the exception of when the cap is all shriveled up. The stem wall is not very thick. On older specimens, the stems may have slight ridges near the cap. There whitish to cream color.

WHERE TO LOOK: Typically under tulip poplar trees and occasionally wild black cherry, ash, beech, oak, and hickory.

WHEN TO LOOK: April to May.

LOOK ALIKES: The other morels (*Morchella* sp.), all the others differ by having the base of their caps attached to the stalk. The poisonous false morels (*Gyromitra* sp.), which look like a wrinkled brain and lack the sponge like holes. The 2 species of poisonous Thimble Cap Morels (*Verpa* sp.) differ by having caps without holes and caps that are only attached to the stalk at the tip of the caps.

EDIBILITY: Edible and Good, but not as good as the other Morels.

BLACK MOREL (Group)



Key Features

The interior is hollow and smooth

Black morels can be up during snowmelts

The cap is black to smoke colored and resembles a sponge

(*Morchella elata*)

FAMILY: Morchellaceae

DESCRIPTION: Its height is from 1 1/2 to 6 inches tall.

Cap: It is from 3/4 to 3 inches tall and 1/2 to 2 1/2 inches wide at the base.

It's smoky gray becoming brownish black in color with age. Its shape is like a conical or cylindrical bullet with a rounded tip. The roundish pits are 1/16 to 1/4 inch wide and 1/16 to 1/4 inch high. The pit depth varies from 1/8 to 1/4 of an inch. They do not go the whole way through the cap and are elongated. The wavy ridges or ribs are very irregular even in the same specimen. The ridges are usually darker on the edges and can be lighter or darker than the pits but the whole cap turns dark with age. The ridges are (parallel) run from the top to the bottom with uneven side connecting ones (cross ribs). Its margin is sharply bent up and inward where attached to the stalk but the cap overlaps the stem about 1/8 inch.

Stalk: 1 to 4 inches tall and 1/2 to 1 1/4 inch wide. It is narrower than the cap where they connect. The stems on the smaller ones are wider near the base and the larger ones stems are usually wider near the top but this is not always the case. The stem wall is not very thick. As the mushrooms get taller the stems develop slight ridges or wrinkles. It pulled out it is slightly lighter in color on the underground part where the mycelium connects. It is whitish to cream to orange.

WHERE TO LOOK: Under wild cherry and tulip poplar. When looking in the same woods I find them twice as often under larger trees with huge trunks than the trees with smaller trunks. People often harvest them in burned areas such as logging burns but that species is called the Burnsight Morel (*Morchella atrotomentosa*). It has been reported to grow under conifers such as pine and spruce, ash, aspen, and elm but in Michigan. They have been reported under aspen-birch woods but we have not found them there. I find more of them in rocky areas than other types of terrain.

WHEN TO LOOK: April and May. This is the first morel to fruit.

LOOK ALIKES: The other black morels such as the edible (*Morchella elata*) who has a rounded head and whose cap margin goes right into the stalk. (*Morchella angusticeps*) The edible Yellow Morel & Tulip Morel (*Morchella esculenta*), the edible Giant Morel (*Morchella crassipes*), and the edible White Morel (*Morchella deliciosa*) all of who differ by having lighter colored caps that are not black. The edible Half Free Morel (*Morchella semilibera*) who differs by having holes in their cap and overhanging sides. And the poisonous false morels (*Gyromitra* sp.), which look like a wrinkled brain and lack the sponge like holes. The two species of poisonous Thimble Cap Morels (*Verpa* sp.) who differs by having caps with out holes and caps that are only attached to the stem at the tip of the caps. NOTE: Last year there were huge black morels brought into the clubs spring meeting that were as big as the giant morels.

EDIBILITY: Edible and Choice. I think this is the most flavorful of all the morels.

BLACK MOREL Key



The top of the cap is rounded

The interior is hollow

The cap margin goes into the stalk

BLACK MOREL Key



Has a somewhat pointed cap unlike the other Black Morels

The interior is hollow

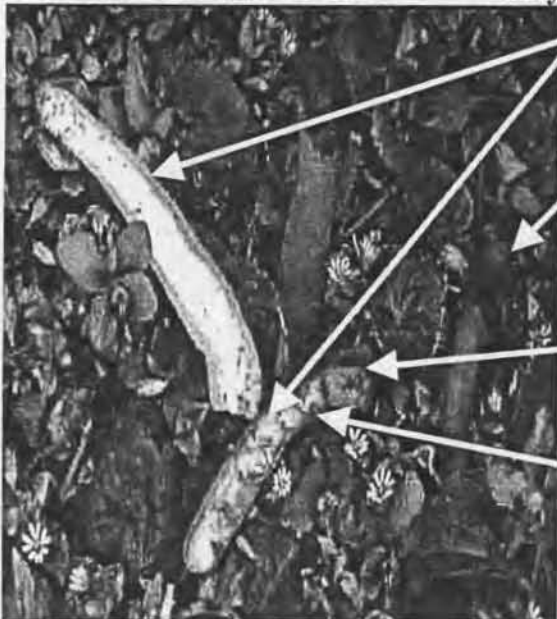
Unlike in this photo the cap can be the same width as the stem and not as tall

(*Morchella conica*)

(*Morchella angusticeps*)

SMOOTH THIMBLE CAP

Key Features



The interior can have chambers and/or be cottony

The thimble becoming bell shaped cap is smooth and can be very lightly wavy

The cap is only attached at the very top of the stalk

Stalk can have internal cross ridges

(*Verpa conica*)

(*Verpa digitaliformis*)

FAMILY: Morchellaceae

DESCRIPTION: It is smooth and thimble shaped hence the common name. It is also called the bell morel.

Cap: 3/8 to 1 1/4 inch tall and 3/8 to 1 1/8 inch wide. It is attached to the stalk at the very top not in the middle or base. Its smooth but can be somewhat wavy or folded but not wrinkled and is from light to dark brownish colored on the outside but the part of the cap that is near the stalk when turned inside out is cream to tan colored.

Stalk: 1 5/8 to 2 1/2 inch tall and 1/4 to 5/8 inch wide. It is stuffed with whitish cottony fibers and can have chambers but becoming hollow with age (its variable). It is somewhat brittle and smooth but slightly granular. It is white to yellowish orche. It is wider near the base and gets narrower going up towards the cap.

WHERE TO LOOK: On the soil in deciduous woods. Under old dying abandoned apple orchards, often when they are in bloom.

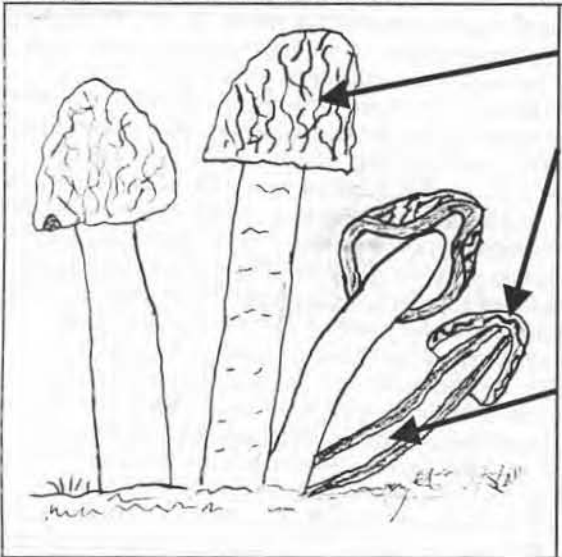
WHEN TO LOOK: April - May.

LOOK ALIKES: the only other type of *Verpa*, which is the Wrinkled Thimble Cap (*Verpa bohemica*) that has a wrinkled cap. (*Morchella semilibra*) cap is halfway attached to the stalk. Other morel caps are attached at the base. (*Gyromitra sp.*) have wrinkle caps that are connected to the base of the stalk.

EDIBILITY: Not recommended.

WRINKLED THIMBLE CAP

Key Features



The thimble-becoming bell shaped cap is wrinkled

The cap is only attached at the very top of the stalk

Stalk can have internal cross ridges

The interior can have chambers and/or be cottony or hollow

(*Verpa bohemica*)

Korf's Gyromitra Or Elephant Ears



Key Features

The cap is wrinkled and looks like a brain

The white to cream colored stalk is short

The white interior can have lots of irregular or wavy chambers

(*Gyromitra korfii*)

FAMILY: Helvellaceae

DESCRIPTION: **Cap:** 1 1/2 to 4 inches tall and 3/4 to 4 1/4 inches wide. It is wavy and lacks the sponge like holes of a morel. It is yellowish brown too beige to reddish brown and often lighter and can be colored like the stalk on the underside.

Stalk: 1/2 to 2 3/4 inches tall and 1 to 3 inches wide. The stalk is unusual since it is often wider than tall. It is usually wider near the base. When cut it can bruise very slightly pinkish after a period of time. It can be very wavy with wrinkles that tend to run up and down.

WHERE TO LOOK: On the soil in deciduous or mixed woods. Often in morel woods that have been logged a few years back with lots of stumps and near stumps or trees.

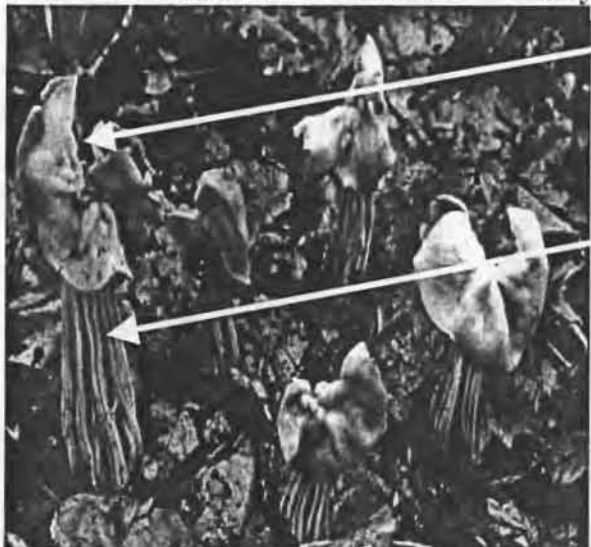
WHEN TO LOOK: April to June 15

LOOK ALIKES: The Conifer False Morel (*Gyromitra esculenta*) has a darker cap and only grows under conifers. The Snowbank False Morel (*Gyromitra gigas*). (*G. infula*) is saddle shaped. And others including (*G. ambigua*) (*G. caroliniana*) (*G. fastigiata*)

EDIBILITY: Unknown.

FLUTED WHITE HELVELLA

Key Features



The white cap is wrinkled and looks like a brain or is saddle shaped

The stalk has ribs

This and other species including *Helvella lactea* & *H. lacunosa* appear in a different season

(*Helvella crispa*)



2001



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA MUSHROOM CLUB

The purpose of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is to promote the enjoyment, study, and exchange of information about wild mushrooms. Everyone who has an interest in wild mushrooms is welcome to become a WPMC member. Members are entitled to:

- The WPMC newsletter
- Nine monthly WPMC meetings
- Free participation in WPMC Walks
- Fee discount for WPMC Forays
- Fee discount on WPMC sponsored merchandise

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Interests: Learning Mushrooms Microscopy Club Committees
 Eating Wild Mushroom Toxicology Cultivating Mushrooms
 Mushroom Walks Books Dyeing With Mushrooms
 Mushroom Photography Taxonomy Mushroom Paper Making
 Other _____

Dues enclosed: \$ _____ (\$20 Family, \$15 Individual, \$10 Full time student)

RELEASE

I (We) realize that when engaged in wild mushroom activities, that serious physical injury and personal property damage may accidentally occur. I (We) further realize that there is always the possibility of having an allergic reaction to or being poisoned by the eating of wild mushrooms and that these adverse reactions to eating wild mushrooms range from mild indigestion to fatal illness. **Knowing the risks, I (we) agree to assume the risks, and agree to release, hold harmless, and to indemnify the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, and any officer or member thereof, from any and all legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred by myself or my family during or as a result of any mushroom identification, walk, foray, field trip, excursion, meeting or dining, sponsored by the club.**

Signature _____ Date: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

Return completed signed and dated form with check payable to W PA Mushroom Club to:

Jack Baker, 1413 Parkmont Rd, Allison Park, PA 15101

10/00

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club

Name: _____ Phone: _____ e-mail _____

Address: _____

WE NEED YOUR HELP

WHAT AREA WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP WITH?

PLEASE CHECK THREE POSSIBLE ITEMS OF INTEREST

- Scout for walk locations
- Help organize forays
- Lead walks
- Work on newsletter committee
- Contribute articles, photos, etc. to newsletter
- Assemble and mail newsletters
- Help with web page
- Line up speakers for meetings
- Collect membership dues and record them
- Record meetings, discussions, events
- Maintain contact with other mushroom clubs
- Publicize meetings, forays, events
- Club Historian
- Recruit members, maintain list of members
- Outreach-- speak to other clubs, nature centers
- Call or e-mail members
- Give a program at Club monthly meeting
- Produce or acquire teaching materials, resources, handouts for meetings
- Welcome and orient new members
- Coordinate coffee/refreshment
- Participate in special projects
- Record mushrooms that are found
- Conduct research on questionable mushrooms
- Help with mycophagy (mushroom cooking)
- Help with sign in at walks and meetings
- If you would rather have your newsletter by email instead of regular mail, please check this box, if not, don't.**
- _____

Find something you would like to do. Check the appropriate boxes. We can have a lot of Fungi, Fun, and Friends but it takes your participation to make it happen.

Return completed form to: Jack Baker, 1413 Parkmont Road, Allison Park, PA 15101

10/00

PENNSYLVANIA MORELS AND HOW TO PRESERVE THEM

By Valerie Baker

We hunt them, we find them, so now what do we do with them. Everyone has his or her own way of preserving morels. Here are some of the ways I learned to preserve them:

Freezing morels:

Cut off any bad parts of the mushrooms, slice in half lengthwise and soak in salt water for at least 15 minutes. Pack loosely in plastic pint cartons and fill with tap water to freezing line marker on carton. Fast freeze at once.

A half hour before you want to use these mushrooms for frying, beat an egg and crush some crackers. Remove mushrooms from freezer, run hot water over carton, and remove contents to a bowl. Continue with the hot water bath until the mushrooms can be peeled loose from the ice block. Drain on terry towel, dip in egg, roll in cracker crumbs, and fry quickly in a little butter.

Canning morels:

Prepare the same as for freezing, but blanch in boiling water 3 minutes. Mushrooms will shrink a lot so use half pint jars. Pack mushrooms loosely in jars. Process in boiling water bath for 3 hours. Or if you use a pressure cooker, process at 10 pounds pressure 25 minutes for pints; a touch less for half pints.

Canned morels can be used on pizzas, in soups, and in any casserole calling for mushrooms.

Drying morels:

This is the cheapest of all methods and the least desirable. Prepare as for freezing, but drain very dry on terry towel. When dry as possible string on white thread and hang in a cool, well-ventilated place to dry.

Mushrooms can be dried at low heat in the oven, but they will turn black. They will also turn black if hung to dry in too hot a place. Even though they turn black, they retain their flavor but lose their appetite appeal.

To revive these mushrooms, soak in hot water. They will come back to two-thirds their original size. Use immediately.

Editor's Note: Check with your County Agricultural Extension Office for canning precautions.

CHICKEN BREASTS & MORELS

By Becky Plischke

4 chicken breasts	1/4 c beef broth
2 Tbs butter	1/4 c cream
2 Tbs oil	1-2 T lemon juice
3 Tbs butter	salt and pepper
2 dozen morels	

Flour chicken and sauté in butter and oil. Cook until no longer pink inside. Remove from pan and keep warm in oven. Add 3 Tbs butter and morels to the pan. Cook until morels are dry. Add beef broth and cream. Cook to a sauce. Add lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste. Thicken with cornstarch and cold water, if necessary. Serve Chicken smothered in Morel Sauce.

VENISON AND MORELS

By Barb Keeler

Mycological Association of Washington, D.C.

Take a loin of venison (or lamb or goat) split lengthwise as thinly as you can...you will roll this back up stuffed with:

two dozen or so fresh or re-hydrated morels
1/2 C. raisins (depending on the size of the loin)
1/2 C. walnuts or pecans (ditto)
a good sprig of rosemary, chopped finely
1T. juniper berries (optional)

Slosh with red wine mixed with current jam (red or black). Roll back up, cover with bacon slices and/or more morels. Tie up if you're dexterous.

Slosh with more wine/jam mix while baking at 325 until your meat thermometer says it's ready.

Serve with jam, rice (wild or tame), sweet potatoes and fresh salad made without a lot of lettuce. Goes well with candlelight and more red wine.

SAUTÉD MORELS

By Becky Plischke

When you bring your morels home it is important to prepare them well before you cook them. Cut the morels in half from top to bottom, to make sure there are no critters already enjoying your find. Trim off any dark spots on the stem and cap.

Small morels, I only cut in half. Larger morels need to be cut in manageable pieces.

Sauté in butter. The morels will release moisture as they cook. Continue cooking until they are almost dry.

"Largest Mushroom Club in the Tri-State Area"

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club
1413 Parkmont Road
Allison Park, PA 15101

MORELS DEMYSTIFIED 5 PAGES ON MORELS

TWICE THE WALKS & FORAYS PROGRAM LISTINGS

2001 DUES ARE DUE

BEECHWOOD FARMS NATURE RESERVE

We wish to thank Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve, its members, officers and executive board for another year of close relationship.

If you have not been to the reserve, we highly suggest that you do so. There are 5 miles of trails and 134 acres of sanctuary at Beechwood Farms, which is leased from the Western PA Conservancy.

Its facilities include a discovery room for children, an education building, Audubon Nature Store, Teacher Resource Center, a Natural History Library, and the Evans Nature Center Auditorium where we meet.

They also have a Native Plant Center and a brand new modern Raptor Center. Its purpose is to house birds that cannot be released into the wild. It is a great place to take a hike. While you are there, pick up some birdseed.

This is a first class facility. We are proud and grateful to be there. You can also visit them at their web site at <http://aswp.org/beechwood.html>

NEW WEB SITE AND GROUPS

The Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club has created an excellent new web site at:

<http://www.wpmc4.homestead.com/index.html>

We highly suggest you visit the site and put it on your favorites list. It has been greatly expanded. It also has a number of links to other sites that may be of interest to you.

The Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club also has a brand new Yahoo groups at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpamushroomclub>

This is an excellent place for club members to share information or to get up to the minute additions or cancellations of club activities. Sign up and check out the picture file that shows the morel photos from the newsletter in color. Report your mushroom findings. Tell other club members when you find your first morel, share a story, or ask questions about fungi. The official email for the club is wpamushroomclub@aol.com **These are the only two official club Internet sites.**