



# WESTERN PA



# MUSHROOM CLUB

Volume 4, Issue 5

Editor: Becky Plischke

December 2003

President: Dick Dougall

V Pres: Glenn Carr

Sec: Joyce Gross

C Sec: Valerie Baker

Treas: George Gross

## ARTICLES WANTED

We are out of articles, recipes, jokes, puzzles, stories and cartoons for the newsletter. Send yours in today. Mail or email them to Becky Plischke today. [morelbp@aol.com](mailto:morelbp@aol.com) or mail to 129 Grant St, Greensburg, PA 15601.

## TAKE US FOR A WALK

If you want to lead a mushroom walk in your area, we would be glad to come. Find a place to have a walk and scout it out. If it is a park or nature area, please make sure we have permission to collect mushrooms there. Call our Walk & Foray Chairman, John Plischke III at 724-832-0271 or email [fungi01@aol.com](mailto:fungi01@aol.com) Do it today. He will put the walk on our schedule. Club Identifiers will help with the identification.

## WILD MUSHROOM COOKBOOK

### Volume 2

Have you adapted a recipe that you have tried or created some of your own? We know you tried some of those edible mushrooms you positively identified this year and have used a recipe or two that were very good. Send them in! We cannot use copywrited material. We have received many compliments on Volume 1; let's make Volume 2 even better.

Send your recipes to Becky Plischke at [morelbp@aol.com](mailto:morelbp@aol.com) or mail to 129 Grant St, Greensburg, PA 15601.

## GET INVOLVED

If you would like to get even more involved with our mushroom club, Club President, Dick Dougall is looking for a few good men and women to be committee members or chairmen. Call Dick at 412-486-7504 or email him at [rsdme@imap.pitt.edu](mailto:rsdme@imap.pitt.edu) Let him know what your interest is. There are so many talented people in our club; we have a place for you!

## DUES ARE DUE

This is the last WPMC newsletter issue for 2003. That also means, unless you have already renewed your membership for 2004 that **your membership in the club is about to expire**. It is time to sign up for the year 2004.

In our first year, the WPMC grew from zero members to 170. Year 2, 250 members, year 3 we grew to 325 members. We now have 420 members. We had 34 walks and forays and some tremendous programs at our meetings.

Mark Spear and Rebecca Miller gave us lessons in how to grow shiitake mushrooms and sent everyone home with a shiitake mushroom kit. If we had to buy the kit, it would cost more than twice the amount of a club membership. They have already committed to have another cultivation class in 2004.

Elizabeth Barrow is the webmaster of our club website. It has a wonderful fresh new look and home at [www.wpamushroomclub.org](http://www.wpamushroomclub.org) Bob Lucas's Species List on our website has been updated and is outstanding. You will want to view it often.

The Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray had 188 people coming from 6 states. It was a tremendous success. Gary will come back again next year for more mushroom fun.

We have had five outstanding newsletters.

Thanks to our club mycologists and identifiers, our club members have been learning edible and non-edible mushrooms at a tremendous rate. That's a lot of bang for the buck. There is no place to get a better bargain for such a low cost.

**Now is the time to fill in the membership form for the year 2004** and send it in along with your check so your membership continues. You don't want to miss out on Fungi, Fun, and Friends! **Don't delay, the time to do it is today.**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dick Dougall

The last Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray is now history. It was a great success. We had over 188 people attend. John Plischke and all the volunteers who helped in many ways are to be congratulated. In putting it in perspective, the words "old" and "new" came to mind. It took place at a new location, the Econolodge near the PA Turnpike. Many old friends were present, but many new members also enjoyed the activities. We had walks at some old locations, but added many new walks. North Park, one of our old locations, produced the greatest supply of Hen's of the Woods (*Grifola frondosa*). Our chefs produced some great mushroom recipes to sample, some old and some new.

As usual, Gary Lincoff and Bill Roody gave great talks. However, the mushrooms collected presented their own stories. Many were common, but the variety found still overwhelms my identifying skills. Having a hurricane come through western Pennsylvania one day before the foray added to the excitement, but luckily we only had to deal with a little muddy ground on the walks.

One of the highlights for me was Gary Lincoff's table walk and a one-page handout called: "Keys to the Kingdom of the Fungi." The handout broke four genera, *Amanita*, *Cortinarius*, *Lactarius*, and *Russula*, into subgroups. This makes life a little simpler.

Instead of 500 species in *Cortinarius* for example, we only have to break them down into members of only seven groups. That's a great simplification. During his table walk, I was motivated to really try hard to learn the *Lactarius* genus. One reason for this is that Lincoff recommends *L. volemus* (Voluminous-latex Milky) as one of the best edible mushrooms he knows. There were some on the table showing we have some in this area. Now, I just have to learn to find them next year!

### BYLAWS/OFFICERS

New bylaws were voted on and passed at the last meeting. Thanks to Mike Lloyd.

The officers for 2004 remain the same. Dick Dougall, President, Glenn Carr, Vice President, George Gross, Treasurer, Joyce Gross, Secretary and Valerie Baker, Corresponding Secretary.

## MUSHROOM CULTIVATION COMMITTEE

Mark Spear and his wife, Rebecca Miller, head our Mushroom Cultivation Committee.

They studied mycology at the University of Maine under the late Dick Homola and at Penn State University. Currently they both work at Sylvan Inc., the largest producer of mushroom spawn in the country.

Three years ago they did their first program on mushroom cultivation for the club and sent everyone home with an oyster mushroom kit as pictured below.



Mark & Rebecca's Oyster Mushroom Kit

In addition, Mark and Rebecca and Sylvan, Inc., gave us a tour of Sylvan's mushroom farm and factory. The factory is where the spawn is produced. The farm is where they test the spawn, then the spawn is shipped to mushroom farms across the country.



Shittake Mushroom Kit

Rebecca Miller is sitting on the stage and Mark Spear is addressing the group. This was the second oyster mushroom kit, only this time club members were given a bag of cottonseed hulls, a bag of spawn and directions. We had to take the cottonseed hulls home and sterilize them, add the spawn and then reap the rewards. Because of the amount of spawn in the kit, some people were getting flushes of oyster mushrooms for over a year. What you see on the table are just a few of the many mushroom kits.



We don't know exactly how many mushroom kits Mark and Rebecca made in their home lab to share with club members. Our guess would be well over a hundred. All the members at the meeting went home with big smiles on their faces.



Under the leadership of Mark and Rebecca, the Cultivation Committee keeps growing. Pictured below are Mark and some of the group who are collectively buying petri dishes, agar, and other supplies, so as to purchase them in volume at a much reduced rate. This is a special group, it is a mushroom club within a mushroom club. We don't think there are many mushroom clubs in the country fortunate enough to have people like Mark and Rebecca. By the way, the second picture on the first page, the shittake mushroom kit, is the kit that was given to club members this year. Almost everyone took home 2 kits. If shittakes are medicinal, like it has been reported, we must have one of the healthiest clubs in the country!



These mushroom kits would cost at least \$50 a piece. The cost of membership in the Western PA Mushroom Club is \$20 family, \$15 individual, \$10 full time student. Think about it, that is more than twice a club membership. That is more than 3 times an individual club membership and since a family gets two kits that is 5 times the cost of a family membership.

Sign up for your 2004 membership today!

# Keys to the Kingdom of the Fungi

Gary Lincoff, 2003

If you know the name of the genus of the mushroom you collect, but not the species, here's something you can do.

Simple field keys to the sections of 4 genera of gilled mushrooms that comprise more than 500 reorganized "species" in our area. Examples chosen below can be found in "The Audubon Field Guide to North American Mushrooms."

**AMANITA**...spore print white; gills free to nearly free; universal veil present, leaving either a saclike covering at stem base or easily removable patches on cap; partial veil present on most species, leaving a membranous ring on the stem; terrestrial, associated with trees. [Note: Although some are eaten, to be safe, avoid all Amanitas.]

1. Mushrooms with universal veil leaving a saclike volva (or remnants) about unswollen stem base; cap margin distinctly striate to sulcate (pleated).
  - a. Partial veil present, leaving ring on stem: *A. caesarea* (= *A. jacksonii*), *A. "calyptroderma," A. spreta*
  - b. Partial veil absent: *A. farinosa*, *A. fulva*, *A. inaurata* (= *A. ceciliae*), *A. parvolvata*, *A. vaginata*, *A. velosa*.
2. Mushrooms with universal veil leaving conspicuous patches on cap surface and often only a marginate cup at base of stem; partial veil present, leaving a ring on stem.  
*A. cothurnata*, *A. gemmata* (= *A. crenulata*), *A. muscaria*, *A. pantherina*, *A. wellsii*
3. Mushrooms with universal veil leaving a tough, membranous saclike volva at base of stem; partial veil absent; cap margin striate or smooth.  
*A. volvata* complex
4. Mushrooms with universal veil leaving a membranous saclike volva at swollen stem base; partial veil leaving membranous ring on stem; cap margin smooth. [deadly]  
*A. phalloides*, *A. virosa* (= *A. bisporigera*.)
5. Mushrooms with universal veil leaving patches on the cap and remnants about distinctly swollen stem base; partial veil leaving membranous ring on stem; cap margin smooth.  
*A. aspera* (= *A. francheti*), *A. brunnescens*, *A. citrina*, *A. flavoconia*, *A. flavorubescens*, *A. porphyria*, *A. rubescens*
6. Mushrooms with universal veil leaving distinctive pyramid-like warts on cap; stem base often rooting; partial veil often leaving ragged remains along cap margin; smell often chlorine-like.  
*A. cinereopannosa*, *A. cokeri*, *A. silvicola*, *A. smithiana*

**CORTINARIUS** ... spore print rusty brown; gills attached; partial veil present as a cobwebby covering over the gills, leaving at most only a ring-like band of brown hairs on upper stem; terrestrial, associated with trees.

1. Mushrooms with slimy (or shiny) cap and slimy stem.  
*C. collinitus*, *C. iodes*
2. Mushrooms with slimy cap and dry stem; stem often marginate-bulbed.  
*C. glaucopus*, *C. multiformis*
3. Mushrooms dry, with silvery gray-blue colors; often strongly aromatic.  
*C. alboviolaceus*, *C. traganus* (= *C. camphoratus*)



2004



# 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Interests: \_\_\_\_\_ Learning Mushrooms \_\_\_\_\_ Mushroom Walks \_\_\_\_\_ Club Committees  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Eating Wild Mushroom \_\_\_\_\_ Toxicology \_\_\_\_\_ Cultivating Mushrooms  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Dyeing With Mushrooms \_\_\_\_\_ Mushroom Art \_\_\_\_\_ Mushroom Photography  
 How many wild mushrooms do you think you know? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How many wild mushrooms do you think you know well? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**WE NEED YOUR HELP! 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. Please check 3 boxes below.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scout for walk locations-lead walks       | <input type="checkbox"/> Compile meeting & walk sign in sheets   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help organize forays                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach-speak to clubs & organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Print club materials, flyers, etc.        | <input type="checkbox"/> Call or e-mail members                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work on newsletter committee              | <input type="checkbox"/> Give a program at Club monthly meeting  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute articles, photos to newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Produce or acquire teaching materials   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with webpage & e-group moderator     | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome and orient new members          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Line up speakers for meetings             | <input type="checkbox"/> Work on hospitality committee           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Host guest speakers and mycologists       | <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in special projects         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Record meetings, discussions, events      | <input type="checkbox"/> Record mushrooms that are found         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sell club items, tee shirts, cookbooks    | <input type="checkbox"/> Door prize committee                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicize meetings, forays, events        | <input type="checkbox"/> Present or assist with a club workshop  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Club Historian                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with sign in at walks and meetings |

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

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

George Gross, 58 Seventh St. Ext, New Kensington, PA 15068

6/03

**Signing and dating the release is an absolute requirement for membership. If you don't, your membership application will be returned.**

**(over)**

**Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club  
2004 Release and Indemnification Agreement**

This Release and Indemnification Agreement (the "Agreement") is entered into by and between the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, as it is presently organized and may be later structured ("WPMC") and the undersigned Member (the "Member") on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2004.

7

WHEREAS, WPMC is a non-profit educational organization that has as its principal purpose the sharing of mushroom related information among its members; and

WHEREAS, all officers, directors, identifiers and members serve WPMC in a voluntary capacity and receive no remuneration for their services; and

WHEREAS, in cases where WPMC charges a fee for its forays, walks, lectures and other events (collectively "WPMC Events"), it is doing so only to cover its direct costs and does not operate in a for-profit capacity; and

WHEREAS, the Member understands that there is inherent and unavoidable risk in outdoor activities relating to hunting and consuming wild mushrooms. These risks include but are not limited to the dangers of hiking in difficult terrain, the possibility of misidentifying a wild mushroom, and the possible allergic or toxic reaction that some individuals may have to otherwise edible mushrooms.

NOW THEREFORE, the Member hereby agrees to the following:

1. The Member assumes all risks associated with WPMC Events. The Member expressly acknowledges that it is the Member's sole responsibility to hike safely and to determine whether a wild mushroom may be consumed.
2. The Member releases, holds harmless, and indemnifies the WPMC, its officers, directors, identifiers and representatives from any and all liability relating to any injury or illness incurred by the Member or the Member's family members as a result of participation in a WPMC Event.

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. If any portion of the Agreement is declared for any reason to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity shall not affect any other provision of the Agreement. **This Agreement shall apply to all WPMC events for the calendar year 2004.**

MEMBERS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(If Member is under age 21, Parent's signature)

4. Mushrooms dry, scaly capped, dark purple.[only known harmless species]  
C. violaceus
5. Mushrooms dry or hygrophanous, often dull brownish, often small.  
C. armillatus
6. Mushrooms dry or hygrophanous, gills typically bright orange, red, or yellow.  
C. cinnabarinus, C. croceifolius, C. sanguineus, C. semisanguineus
7. Mushrooms dry or hygrophanous, often colored greenish orange.  
C. gentiles

**LACTARIUS** ... spore print white; gills attached; no veils present, latex present on cut surfaces; terrestrial, associated with trees.

1. Mushrooms with saffron, orange, red or indigo latex (cut gills). [edible]  
L. deliciosus, L. indigo, L. paradoxus, L. subpurpureus
2. Mushrooms with abundant white, mild latex; cap & stem typ. orange; distinctive odor of fish in some species. [edible]  
L. corrugis, L. hygrophoroides, L. luteolus, L. volemus
3. Mushroom with white, sometimes acrid, latex; cap & stem orange, red to grayish; gills often aromatic.  
L. aquifluus, L. camhoratus, L. peckii, L. rufus
4. Mushrooms with white, typically acrid latex; whole mushroom white  
L. deceptivus, L. piperatus
5. Mushrooms with white latex, often staining flesh pinkish; cap brownish.  
L. gerardii, L. lignyotus
6. Mushrooms with white latex often becoming yellow or purplish on exposure; cap in some species with lace-like marginal fringe.  
L. controversus, L. mucidus, L. representaneus, L. scrobiculatus,  
L. sordidus, L. torminosus (=L. pubescens), L. uvidus, L. vinaceorufescens

**RUSSULA** ... spore print white to creamy yellow; gills attached and brittle (easily flaked off); no veils present; no latex present on cut surfaces; terrestrial, associated with trees.

1. Mushrooms hard-fleshed, either white or buff or gray, some species on bruising staining pinkish on gills, or flesh turning red and then black, or just black.  
R. brevipes, R. compacta, R. dissimulans
2. Mushrooms yellowish to orange with a striate cap margin and distinctive odor of almond extract or marzipan (when young).  
R. laurocerasi
3. Mushrooms yellowish becoming ashy-gray on bruising or in age.  
R. claroflava
4. Mushrooms with matte (dull) finish on cap, sometimes with bloom on cap or sometimes tacky to the touch but not slimy; some green-capped, many mild tasting. [only group of good edibles in the genus, but not all species are known to be edible.]  
R. aeruginea, R. crustosa, R. mariae, R. variata, R. xerampelina
5. Mushrooms with slimy (or shiny) cap; many red, many acrid tasting.  
R. emetica, R. fragilis, R. krombolzii (=R. vinacea), R. rosacea

# HEN OF THE WOODS & THE BLACK STAINING POLYPORE

By  
John  
Plischke III

Hen of the woods is one of Pennsylvania's most sought after mushrooms. Hen of the Woods sort of resembles the feathers on the back end of a hen, hence the name. When looking for the Sheep head as it's often called in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia, only check on oak trees, since this is the tree it grows in association with 99% of the time. We prefer to look at the base of large mature oaks but they can occasionally be found on medium sized oaks. Typically bigger oak trees get bigger hens and the bigger trees increase the chance of a successful hunt. The larger trees also often get more than one hen. Once in a while they can be found growing on underground oak roots.

Occasionally I find them growing on top of the roots of an uprooted tree. They often appear next to the spot where the tree was struck by lightning creating an injury for the mushroom to enter. I saw this happen a year after a tree was struck in a friend's woods. Since the gypsy moth has hit and killed large numbers large oak trees and logging has increased, it is becoming less common and we have lost about 10% of our places to hunt grifola frondosa.

I usually look for these mushrooms in parks and on hillsides that are loaded with oak. A good way to find an oak woods is when driving around in November and all the leaves have already fallen, oak trees usually have some dried brown leaves still hanging on them. Use a pen and paper and record these spots for hunting the following year.

Now don't think you will find a Hen of the Woods on every oak tree that you check, you won't. It takes a lot of hard legwork to find one of them. On average, in a new spot, I have to check 100 to 200 large oak trees during its season to find one of them.

Besides the mushroom's great taste, it is also reported to have a lot of medicinal properties including anti-cancer properties. A small bottle of sheep head pills can cost \$25.00. According to some people who swear by this mushroom, the best thing to do is to drink the left over juice from when the mushroom was boiled. Although the possible health benefits sound great the taste of the juice is not.

Although I usually go hiking in the woods to find them my dad & his friend Larry usually go road hunting. Their favorite way to find them is at 55 MPH driving down back mountain roads. To do this, the driver just drives and the passenger looks for them. They only look at the bases of large oak trees and stumps. When they see one they slow down and check it, then after driving past they look out the back window to check the backside of the tree, which is where the mushroom is often hiding. Their favorite tools are a knife to cut the mushroom out with, since pulling it out "by the roots" reduces the chances of it coming back the next year, a pair of binoculars so they don't have to get out of the car to check, & a camouflage bag.



(Photo of the Hen of the Woods)

## \*HEN OF THE WOODS

(*Grifola frondosa*)

Formerly Called (*Polypilus frondosus*) (*Polyporus frondosus*)

**OTHER COMMON NAMES:** Dancing Mushroom in Japan, Maitake - when cultivated, Sheep Head, Sheep's Head

**FAMILY:** Polyporaceae

**Flesh:** It is white and meaty.

**Mushroom:** A large somewhat roundish bunch of overlapping caps. The mushroom can be 4 to 12 inches tall and 5 to 24 inches wide and weigh 1 to 50 pounds. The cap color typically gets lighter the further away from the outer edge.

**Single Cap:** Each cap piece is 1/2 to 3 inches wide and 1/8 to 3/8 inch thick. They are grayish on top turning brownish with age and they are sometimes whitish around the top outside edges. The caplets grow in clusters that are irregular in size and they are circular except where connected. It can be lobed. It starts off thicker where it is connected and gets thinner going towards the outer edge. The stalk attaches to the side of it. It can be zoned.

**Pores:** White turning a little yellowish with age. They go part way down the stalk. They are on the underside of the caps.

**Spore Print:** White.

**Stalks:** From 1/2 to 1 5/8 inches long. They are white turning cream then yellowish with age. There are many of them with many branches. They are attached to the side of the cap. They are fused together at the base to form a single stalk there.

**Odor:** mild to unpleasant or like ammonia with age. **Taste:** Mild.

**RANGE:** North Eastern United States. Canada. PA, WV, OH, NY

**WHERE TO LOOK:** In semi open oak woods such as parks where there is some grass and that they mow every several weeks or mature shady oak woods. Very rarely it can grow on wild black cherry or yellow birch. This mushroom can be found on the same oak tree for many years since they are parasitic on it. About half the time others can be found in the same wooded area. They can also be found next to the base of oak stumps. Even though this is a common mushroom it is very easy to miss because it blends in with the brown leaves around it. If you find a young fist sized one it is often good to leave and come back in a couple of days to pick it when it matures. But you run the risk of some one else picking it if it is in a park or other well looked in area. In that case we often camouflage it by covering it with a pile of leaves since it needs no light to grow.

**HOW OFTEN THEY'RE FOUND:** It is common. I usually find at least a dozen a year, but I only go out looking for them one day a week. My dad has collected up to 60 of them in a season.

**HOW THEY'RE GROUPEd:** One or two are common but we have found up to 17 growing around a single well matured oak.

**SOCIAL PLANTS:** Grass, violets, dandelions, broadleaf plantain, narrow leaf plantain, moss, and ground ivy can sometimes be found growing beside it but usually there are not any social plants. I saw Tartarian honeysuckle growing beside it once.

**WHEN TO LOOK:** They can be found August to November but September and October are the best. On the larger trees that I have found them on I often go back and check two or three weeks later and I have occasionally collected an additional one growing there.

**LOOK ALIKES:** The edible Black-Staining Polypore (*Meripilus sumstinei*), which unlike the sheep head bruises black. The edible Umbrella Polypore (*Polyporus umbellatus*), which has circular caps, central stems, a lighter color, and usually grows on beech. The edible Berkeley's Polypore (*Bondarzewia berkeleyi*) who has much larger creamish colored pieces of the cap. The entire cap can be up to 3 feet wide. It also likes oak but it has a bitter taste. All three of these are edible.

**EDIBILITY:** Edible and Choice.

**MACROCHEMICAL REACTIONS:** Ammonia and Ammonium Hydroxide has no reaction.

**BLACK LIGHT:** All parts purple with the cap being the darkest shade.





### Pickled Hen of the Woods

This is very easy to make. The recipe is entitled *Marinated Mushrooms* and is in the club cookbook. This recipe has been served at Mushroom Mania. Hats off to our great chefs.

**COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:** When *Grifola* gets too old to eat it can develop the odor of ammonia or get a white mold on it and dry out and become hard. First the mushroom should be checked for beetles, centipedes, spiders and other insects, which might be hiding between the branches and they should be removed. Then the caps can be separated using a knife to do a final cleaning. The caps are fairly meaty and a brush can be used to scrub a piece here and there with out any problems of water absorption. The mushroom should be boiled to remove tannin. It does not lose much of its size when cooked. The caps are excellent pickled or breaded. They also are good put into spaghetti. The base can be cut into steak like pieces and fried in butter or olive oil and garlic. I have also eaten it in a mushroom spread dip with cream cheese and spices on crackers in cheese squares at Mushroom Mania. It dries well in a food dehydrator. Caution: break them into usable pieces before drying. If you dry them in large chunks and break after they are dried, breathing problems can occur. Any unused pieces can be put into Ziploc bags and frozen for later use.



Photo of the Black Staining Polypore)

## \*BLACK STAINING POLYPORE

(*Meripilus sumstinei*)

Formerly Called (*Meripilus giganteus*) (*Polyporus giganteus*) (*Grifola gigantea*) (*Grifola sumstinei*)

**OTHER COMMON NAMES:** Giant Polypore

**FAMILY:** Polyporaceae

**DESCRIPTION:** I have seen them between 5 and 17 inches wide and from 4 to 12 inches tall. All Parts bruise black.

**Flesh:** Its flesh is white and meaty.

**Single Cap:** 2 to 7 inches wide and 1 to 4 inches long, and 1/8 to 5/8 inch thick. It is cream near the stalk then yellowish orange then tannish brown to brownish and can have some gray. Then it becomes black on the outer edges with age or bruising. When fresh the outer edge or margin can be lighter in color. The caplets grow in clusters that are irregular in size and they are circular except where connected. They are overlapping. They are connected to one main trunk sort of like a head of cauliflower. They are shaped like a fan and their outer edges are thinner than where it is connected to the stalk. They have wrinkles on the cap surface. It can be zoned. They can be wavy. **Pores:** 1/16 to 3/16 inch deep. They are white, slowly bruising black sometimes brownish black where injured. They are very small and are on the underside of the caps.

**Spore Print:** White.

**Stalk:** It is very small. It has a few tiny rust colored patches on it sometimes. When pulled out from the soil there is brown thread like mycelium attached to it.

**Odor:** Mild.

**Taste:** Mild.

**RANGE:** North Eastern United States. Canada. PA, WV, OH, NY

**WHERE TO LOOK:** On wood. The trees can be dead or living. We find them on oak and occasionally beech or cherry, where they can grow on the bases of trees and sometimes grow slightly up the tree. Occasionally they can be found on buried roots. They can also grow from stumps.

**HOW OFTEN THEY'RE FOUND:** occasional to common.

**HOW THEY'RE GROUPED:** I have seen up to 7 mushrooms growing around one stump but typically there is one present.

**SOCIAL PLANTS:** I have seen grass growing beside it occasionally but there are often no social plants.

**WHEN TO LOOK:** July to September. They typically end about the time the Hen of the Woods starts, but they can overlap.

**LOOK ALIKES:** The edible Umbrella Polypore (*Polyporus umbellatus*), which does not bruise black, has circular caps; central stems, a lighter color, and usually grows on beech. The edible Berkeley's Polypore (*Bondarzewia berkeleyi*), which does not bruise black, has much larger creamish colored pieces of the cap. The entire cap can be up to 3 feet wide. It also likes oak but it has a bitter taste. The edible Hen of the Woods (*Grifola frondosa*), which does not bruise black and has a later season. All three of these are edible and none of them stain black.

**EDIBILITY:** Edible and Good to Choice.

**COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:** Also see the cooking instructions for *Grifola frondosa* for more ideas. I like to boil them as I do for the Hen of the Woods to make them tenderer and to remove any tannin that they may have. It does not lose much of its size when cooked. It resembles the more popular Hen of the Woods in taste and texture. In my opinion it has slightly more flavor but is a little more tough and stringy except the tender cap edges. After boiling they can be fried in butter. They are also excellent pickled or breaded. They also are good put into spaghetti. The base can be cut into steak like pieces and fried in butter or olive oil and garlic. Any unused pieces can be put into Ziploc bags and frozen for later use.

**MACROCHEMICAL REACTIONS:** Ammonia and Ammonium Hydroxide has no reaction.

**BLACK LIGHT:** Turns mild yellow and purple in various places.

## "Largest Mushroom Club in the Ten-State Area"

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club  
58 Seventh St. Ext.  
New Kensington, PA 15068

### DUES ARE DUE HEN OF THE WOODS MUSHROOM CULTIVATION GARY LINCOFF KEYS

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