



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA MUSHROOM CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 11, Issue 4

October/November 2011

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The newsletter of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is published five times a year: April/May, June/July, Aug./Sept., Oct./Nov., and Dec. Articles, photos, news items and other submissions should be sent to the editor at least 6-8 weeks prior to targeted distribution for the best chance of inclusion.

The editor cannot guarantee that submissions will be included in the next newsletter. The editor reserves the right to make spelling or grammatical corrections and may suggest content changes to the author.

Material published in our newsletters may be used in other non-profit publications only with expressed permission and with appropriate acknowledgements.

Club officers

President — Dick Dougall
Vice President — John Tadler

On the web:

www.wpamushroomclub.org

President's Corner

BY DICK DOUGALL

I am writing this a few days after our 2011 Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray on September 17th. It was another great event for over 100 people who attended. The weather cooperated with a lovely fall day, and the mushrooms definitely cooperated too. Tons of mushrooms were found on all the guided morning walks.

At this point, we believe that our list of mushroom species found will be over 140. Our identifiers and guest mycologists worked very hard to sort through them. Attendees were able to see many great edibles as well as a number of poisonous species. We will have more specific information on what was found in our next Newsletter.

An afternoon surprise was John Plischke presenting the club with a check for slightly over \$25,000 as the WPMC's share of the profits of the 2011 NAMA Richard Homola Memorial Foray in August, 2011 at Clarion University, hosted by the WPMC. Our club expresses their great thanks for the Plischke family who worked so hard to make this such a successful event. We are truly amazed about the profit the club has received.

A Life Membership in the WPMC was awarded to Gary Lincoff as a small token of the club's appreciation for Gary's continuing participation in

this foray. As always, Gary's talk, this time on the role of polypores in various cultures through the ages, was stimulating, enlightening, and entertaining. His table walk at the end of the day, where he discussed some of the mushrooms found, was another highlight. I wish to thank our other guest mycologists, David Fischer and Gary Emberger, for giving great talks and actively participating in other foray events. Foray attendees appreciated the sharing of their knowledge with us. These mycologists expressed to me how much they appreciated the warm and friendly reception of them by those attending.

Don't forget our monthly meeting on October 18th. We will have election of next year's officers at that meeting. Share your thoughts on potential candidates with the Nominating Committee named in another article in this Newsletter. This meeting is also our **Open Forum**. We welcome members sharing their significant mushroom experiences then. It could be a story, a memorable mushroom picture, or even a question you have about some mushroom. It does not have to be a professional presentation.

Finally, remember that fall is a great mushroom season. Check out the list of upcoming club walks.

Nominating Committee Formed

At the last Executive Committee Meeting, a Nominating Committee was formed to select club officers for next year. The election will be held at the October 18, 2011 meeting. This committee is Barbara DeRiso, John Tadler, and Jim Wasik. They would

appreciate any suggestions of possible candidates, and even better, people volunteering to be considered for one of the officer positions. Contact information of the nominating committee members is listed on the last page of the newsletter.

WPMC Meetings

October 18—Title: Election of Officers & Open Forum

Summary: Officers for next year will be elected. Club members will be encouraged to share mushroom stories, experiences and slides. Results of the club's photography contest might also be presented.

November 15—Title: Cooking with Wild Mushrooms

Speaker: Jeff Berkowitz, Health Coach & former Executive Chef

Summary: Jeff has been an executive chef for 2 years with experience in restaurants, coun-

try clubs, and food manufacturing. After studying nutrition at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in New York, Jeff uses his knowledge of food to improve the health of his clients as a Certified Holistic Health Coach.

Always curious about the world of food, Jeff developed his love of wild mushrooms when he discovered morels growing in his back yard. He will talk about a few of his favorite recipes that feature wild mushrooms as well as give some pointers on the best way to get the most flavor from them.

Chapter Meetings

Indiana County Chapter

October 12 — This will be the final meeting of the year and will include a Blewit hunt, pot-luck dinner and a season wrap-up for 2011

ICC meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month, April through October, at 6 p.m. at Blue Spruce Lodge, Blue Spruce Park, near Ernest. For more information call Bob or Ginny Sleigh at 724-349-9173 or e-mail them at ICCWPMC@comcast.net.

Washington/Greene County Chapter

October 25 — End of season wrap up, next year's plans, and mushroom feast

The Washington/Greene chapter of the WPMC holds its meetings from 6 to 8 p.m. every 4th Tuesday, March through November, at the Peters Township Library, 616 E. McMurray Road in McMurray, phone 724-941-9430.

For more information about the Washington/Greene County Chapter, call Brian and Bonnie Davis at 412-334-4069.

Mushroom Program at Jennings Environmental Education Center

Like fruits and vegetables, many of Pennsylvania's mushrooms emerge and grow seasonally. WPMC Club member, Ron Donlan, is giving a mushroom program for the Jennings Environmental Ed Center on Sunday, October 16th at 2:00PM.

He will start with a brief indoor introduction followed by an outdoor walk to search for and identify favorite fall mushrooms.

Beginners or veterans of past programs

(ages 12 and up) are welcome. There is no fee for this program, but participation will be limited in order to keep the group to a manageable size.

Pre-registration is requested by Wednesday, October 12, by calling 724-794-6011 or online at <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/Calendar/list.asp>.

The Jennings Environmental Education Center is located at 2951 Prospect Road, Slippery Rock, PA 16057.

Catch Us on YouTube

Watch a live performance of the WPMC Theme Song by going to YouTube (www.youtube.com) and typing in "Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club."

To see the lyrics, just click on "Show More." It's sure to go viral!

2010 Photography Contest Winners Mycologists in Action



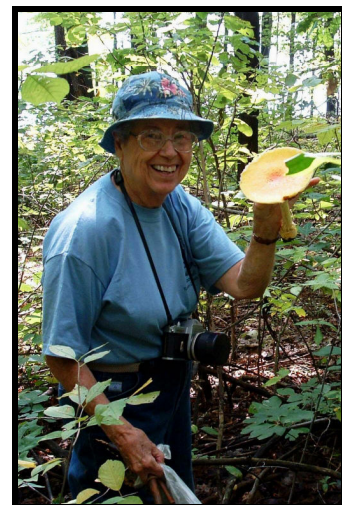
1st place — Christine Breakstone — sulfur shelf harvest



2nd place — Cecily Franklin — sporulating puffballs



2nd place — Jim Wasik — fuzzy foot



1st place — Judy Stark — Esther Allen and a big fly agaric

2011 WPMC Photo Contest

Each year the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club holds a photo contest for members of the club.

All members are encouraged to submit their favorite photos for consideration.

For more information and the guidelines for the contest, or to submit your photos, contact Photography Chairperson Rebecca Miller at rmtreesplease@gmail.com

WPMC Walks & Forays

October 1 – 10:00-12:00 Harrison Hills Park, Allegheny County. Meet **Joyce and George Gross**. Pick up PA Route 28 towards Natrona Heights (Allegheny Co. Belt System [red, green, yellow or blue], PA Route 910, Route 356, PA Turnpike [Exit 5 - Allegheny Valley], or Interstate 270-Route 422). Get off Rt. 28 at Exit 16 (Millerstown/Freeport) and turn right if you've been traveling northbound, or left if traveling southbound, onto Route 908 for approximately 0.8 mile. You will come to a flashing red light at an intersection of a four-lane highway. Turn right (Freeport Rd.) and get into the left-hand lane. The entrance to Harrison Hills Park is 0.8 miles on the left, just beyond the Harrison Hills Fire Dept. and Harrison Hills Chiropractic on the right.

October 1-2 (Sat. Sun.) Join the **Ohio Mushroom Society** for their Fall Foray, at the **Wilderness Center, Wilmot, OH**. For more information go to <http://www.ohiomushroom.org/oms/Events.htm>

October 8, 10 a.m. - noon: Raccoon Creek State Park, Beaver County. Meet **Dick Dougall & P.A. Danus**, Meet in the Parking Lot by the Park Office. The entrance to Raccoon Creek State Park is located on the southwest side of Route 30 in Beaver County. Go to their website by Googling "Raccoon Creek State Park" for directions. Directions from Pittsburgh: Take I-376 W. Get off Exit 60A to merge onto US-22 W/U.S. 30 W toward Weirton. Then take the PA-18 exit toward Florence/Burgettstown. Turn left onto PA-18 N. PA-18 passes directly through the park.

October 7-9 Meet the **New Jersey Mycological Association** for their Annual Victor Gambino Foray at **King's Gap Environmental Center**, Carlisle, PA. John Plischke III will be their guest mycologist. Registration is required. See their website for more information. Contact Margaret Papai papai@rci.rutgers.edu
For all walks and forays, bring

water and lunch. Dress for the weather. Bring basket, wax or paper bags (no plastic) to keep mushrooms separated, whistle, compass, chair, hand lens, insect repellent, cell phone, and books for identification. Also bring a knife to dig up mushrooms for identification or to cut edibles off to keep them clean.

Try to dig up three of the same species at different stages of development. Don't pick old mushrooms; leave them to drop their spores. You are responsible for not getting lost. If you have that tendency stick like glue to others. We won't wait for you, and we won't come look for you.

Don't accept the identification of the person standing next to you. They might not know as much as you do. The Walk Leader will tell you when to be back at the walk starting place where the mushrooms will be put on paper plates and the Walk Identifier or Club Mycologist will put names on only the mushrooms that they know well.

Whether you decide to eat a mushroom, is ultimately only your decision.

Indiana County Chapter Walks

October 1 — S.B. Elliot State Park, near Penfield, PA. This will be the ICCWPMC's first Sheephead Roundup at one of the state's premier areas for this delicious edible. Bob and Ginny will be spending the weekend at one of the park's cabins and celebrating Bob's birthday. At last check there were still cabins available, so come and join us as

we explore literally thousands of acres of prime Sheephead habitat.

All Indiana County Chapter walks begin at 9 a.m., unless otherwise noted. For more information or directions call 724-349-9173 or email at iccwpmc@comcast.net.

Newsletter submissions welcome

As the current editor of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club newsletter, I encourage and welcome submissions, ideas, requests, suggestions and photos from any and all of our members.

All submissions, etc., for the newsletter should be emailed to me at iccwpmc@comcast.net. By doing so you give the WPMC permission to publish your submission.

11th Annual Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray



President Dick Dougall presented Gary Lincoff with a lifetime membership to the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club in appreciation for his years of participation in the annual foray. *More photos of the foray on pages 6 and 7.*

Club Cooks Create Mushroom Feast

As Cooking Co-Chair of the Gary Lincoff Foray on Sept. 17th, Valerie Baker reports that a very successful and remarkable day occurred in the kitchen of the Parish Hill bldg. at North Park. Before the Foray, she was worried there would not be enough food for the 100+ attendees, but once the 16 cooks began bringing in their mushroom dishes all her worries were over.

The cooks included Val, Sharon Wilson (Co-Chair), Cynthia Henry, Charlotte Tunney, Tom Chulick, Todd Kaufmann, Ryan and Yan Tomazin, Barbara De-Riso, Don Newman, Cecily Franklin, Mary Ellen Dougall, Denise and Russell Poole, Shirley Caseman, Richard Franklin and Ginny Sleigh.

The great variety of mushroom dishes included polenta with vegetable-wild mushroom stir fry, hot and sour soup, Bolete/Shitake soup with chestnuts and lentils, Black Trumpet dip, Chicken of the

Woods snack, wild forest mix lasagna, chicken liver and Crimini pate, risotto with mushrooms, mushroom-barley-rice casserole, Polish Bigos, Puffball Parmesan, Chicken cacciatore, Asian noodles with mushrooms, chicken rollups, mushroom-cheese-curry dish, mushroom frittata, mushroom and nut pies, green beans with Chicken mushrooms, a most-attractive Morel-zucchini pizza, mushroom balls, mushrooms with Burgundy, Stromboli, marinated Sheepshead and Agaricus mushrooms, pork-Chanterelle dumplings, 2 different Candy Cap mushroom sheet cakes, an apple sheet cake and a chocolate sheet cake, and lastly, a most delicious red Reishi ale.

I want to sincerely thank all the cooks and kitchen helpers for volunteering their delicious mushroom dishes, their hard work, and their precious time to this cooperative joint effort.

Many thanks to all who made the 11th Annual Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Foray a great success

- ▶ The cooks who prepared 31 amazing mushroom dishes. (See list in story at left)
- ▶ Barb DeRiso and Don Newman, Mary Jo Smiley, Liz Barrow and Bob Lucas, for housing the guest mycologists.
- ▶ Dick Dougall and Jim Wilson for Co-Chairing the Lincoff Foray
- ▶ Guest Mycologists Gary Lincoff, David Fischer and Gary Emberger for their wonderful presentations and help with identifications
- ▶ Club Mycologists & Identifiers who worked so diligently at the ID Tables
- ▶ Walk Leaders and Identifiers
- ▶ Tom Chulick, award-winning chef from the Back Door Cafe in Johnstown, PA, who demonstrated "Chanterelles and Hen of the Woods Braised with Corn, Summer Squash and Carrots," and to Jim Tunney for donating the Chanterelles for this recipe
- ▶ P.A. Danus and Suzanne Kendig for their work on the Chinese Auction
- ▶ The Sales Team - Mary Ellen Dougall, Christina Nowak, and Denise & Russell Poole
- ▶ Shirley Caseman for preparing & printing the Foray Program
- ▶ All other helpers whose names were accidentally omitted from this list.

Fun Photos From Gary Lincoff Foray



It takes a lot of hard work and cooperation to make the annual Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Foray a success.

At left are a few of the people whose hard work and dedication made for a great day for all attendees.



Above: Gary Lincoff, left, and La Monte Yarroll, identified some of the mushrooms found during the morning walks.

Right: Bob Sleigh of Ernest, left, and Joe Yohman of New Bedford checked out Joe's haul of sheep-head (*Grifola frondosa*). This was Joe's first time hunting mushrooms!



Two vendors set up sales tables this year at the Lincoff Foray. At left, are creations by Joyce Gross. Above is Mary Jo Smiley looking over one of Bob Sleigh's wooden mushrooms.

Foray Dishes to Please Every Palate



Above and at left: A wide range of mushroom dishes were prepared by various club cooks, as well as Chef Tom Chulick.

Cake iced with candy cap mushroom frosting



Morel and zucchini pizza

40 Common Mushrooms for Ten Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Forays

Mushrooms found all 10 Years

Daedaleopsis confragosa (Thin-maze Flat Polypore)
Ganoderma applanatum (Artist's Conk)
Grifola frondosa (Hen of the Woods)
Scleroderma citrinum (Pigskin Poison Puffball)
Stereum ostrea (False Turkey-tail)
Trametes versicolor (Turkey-tail)
Trichaptum bifforme (Violet Toothed-Polypore)
Xylaria polymorpha (Dead Man's Fingers)

Mushrooms found 9 out of First 10 Years

Armillaria mellea (Honey Mushroom)
Daedalea quercina (Thick-maze Oak Polypore)
Entoloma abortivum (Aborted Entoloma)
Hypomyces chrysospermus (Bolete Mold, Golden Hypomyces{L})
Laetiporus sulphureus (Chicken Mushroom; Sulfur Shelf)
Lentinellus ursinus (Bear Lentinus)
Lepiota (Macrolepiota) procera (Parasol Lepiota, Parasol{L})
Mycena haematopus (Bleeding Mycena)
Mycena luteopallens (Walnut Mycena)
Omphalotus olearius or *O. illudens* (Jack O'Lantern)
Panellus stipticus (Luminescent Panellus)
Polyporus squamosus (Pheasant Polypore)
Stereum complicatum (Crowded Parchment)
Tyromyces chioneus (White Cheese Polypore)

Mushrooms found 8 out of First 10 Years

Boletinellus (Gyrodon) merulioides (Ash-tree Bolete)
Crucibulum laeve (White-egg Bird's-nest Fungus)
Ganoderma lucidum (Ling Chih)
Irpex lacteus (Milk-white Toothed Polypore)
Lycoperdon perlatum (Gem-studded Puffball)
Mycena leiana (Orange Mycena)
Phellinus gilvus (Mustard-yellow Polypore)
Pleurotus ostreatus (Oyster Mushroom)
Pluteus cervinus (Fawn (Deer) Mushroom)
Polyporus mori or *Favolus alveolaris* (Hexagonal-pored Polypore)
Pycnoporus cinnabarinus (Cinnabar-red Polypore)
Russula mariae (Purple-bloom Russula)
Schizophyllum commune (Split Gill)

Mushrooms found 7 out of First 10 Years

Agaricus arvensis (Horse mushroom)
Amanita fulva (Tawny Grisette)
Boletus bicolor (Two-colored Bolete)
Russula compacta (Firm Russula)
Scutellinia scutellata (Eyelash Cup)



Mushroom Tracks



Mushroom People

By Bonnie and Brian Davis

Who are those folks who attend mushroom meetings and walks or buying books about chanterelles? Where do they come from and why the interest in mycelium? Are these mushroom people or just folks casually interested in stuff?

Mushroom people are big, small, short, tall, old, young, blond haired, red head, blue eyed, green eyed, brown eyed; they come in all varieties and shapes. Some are born in the North and some come from the South.

Many have PHD's, some have limited or no "formal" schooling at all, while others graduated from "Hard Knocks Academy." The one thing they have in common is wandering through woods, trails, parks, yes even neighborhoods searching for umbrella shaped plants growing in the ground, pots, mulch or on logs.

Mushroom people cultivate, forage, photograph, and identify fungi. They all read books, periodicals, and scour the worldwide web for any insight into the world of mushrooms.

Mushroom people blog, tweet, and they converse and share their knowledge of the wild mushroom world. True mushroom people scoff at the Giant Iggle offering of "wild mushrooms." If they didn't forage and find, it's just not the same.

A mushroom cultivator grows his or her own mushrooms. These mushroom people are intrigued with the daunting task of growing mushrooms at home. They are fascinated knowing how a single mushroom can be turned into a bunch of fruiting bodies. Their primary interest in fungi is understanding how mushrooms reproduce and which can be propagated.

A mushroom forager finds a few purple wine caps in the neighbor's mulch pile. This means the dog gets a longer walk and his "business bag" will be used for a temporary dinner bag.

Yes, we know, mushrooms don't store well in plastic Giant Iggle bags, but they are quickly stashed in the refrigerator in a vented plastic container for the coming nite's dinner. Find a few hundred morels today (very common for a true forager)? Go to the super market or local upscale restaurant to sell our bounty? Heck no!!

It's about the passion of the hunt and the rewarding pot of gold at the end of the day. Teaching and showing novice enthusiasts is also part of the reward, although the true forager always keeps a few "sacred spots" to themselves. These spots may possibly be handed down to the next generation as they exit this earth, but not likely.



Mushroom cultivators in training — *Matt, Isic and Gavinn Sleigh watched as Pap Pap (Bob Sleigh) inoculated a log with mushroom spawn.*

For the forager it is time to get out the dryer and call over a few friends (after sharing the harvest with the walkers in attendance) and enjoy the day's bounty. Find, feast, dry the excess to enjoy another day, and share with impressed friends and fellow foragers is what a forager is all about.

A mushroom photographer is different from a studio photographer. They look for the perfect light and thrive on interesting angles. They get down in the dirt and take pictures of mushrooms rather than harvesting or eating them. They may enter their artwork in a local contest as they thrive on taking the perfect shot.

The mushroom identifier wants to know the genus/species of every mushroom they find. They are all consumed with how this mushroom came to be, its history, and family tree.

They comb books and the internet seeking knowledge and understanding. The names of mushrooms roll off their tongues such as *lepista*, *pluteus*, *gomphidius*, *pholiata*, and *cortinarius*. They speak a language that most of us hope to understand.

True mushroom enthusiasts do it for the love of fungi. They share their knowledge, gladly teach the interested new comers, and pave the way for the continuation of a lifestyle with fresh MUSHROOM TRACKS!

2011/2012 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. Anyone 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

Name: _____ **Date** _____

Address: _____
City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

(please print clearly or attach address label)

Annual dues: - \$15 Individual -- \$20 Family -- \$10 Full Time Student

Dues enclosed: \$ _____

Please return completed, signed and dated form (with check payable to *Western PA Mushroom Club*) and Release Form signed in 2011 will be in effect until termination of membership. (Please return with payment) to:

WPMC, c/o Jim Wasik, 70 Woodland Farms Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238
e-mail contact: WPMC.membership@gmail.com
or visit www.wpamushroomclub.org to pay using credit card.

Normal Meeting Location

Please indicate your preferences below:

Beechwood Farms: _____
Indiana County: _____
Washington County: _____

Beginning in 2011, the WPMC Newsletter will be available in full color electronically by e-mail or in black and white by US Postage. Please indicate your preferences below:

Newsletter Options:
Electronic (e-mail): _____
Hardcopy (US Postage) _____
Future WPMC Information:
Electronic (e-mail): _____
Hardcopy (US Postage) _____

Signing and dating the release is an absolute requirement for membership. Unsigned or undated membership applications will be returned.

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club 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 _____, 20__.

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 current and future WPMC events.

MEMBERS: Signature (if Participant is under age 21, signature of Parent or guardian); please print name.

Signature	Print Name
1 _____	1 _____
2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____
4 _____	4 _____

Wild Mushrooms Gaining in Popularity

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. -- Musky, dusky and risky for the uninitiated, wild mushrooms are gaining in popularity as American palates look for new taste treats. Although the Pacific Northwest is known as Mushroom Mecca, a mycologist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences says Pennsylvania should not be faulted in the fungus department.

"I don't think people from the Northeast should look to the Pacific coast as the North American haven of exotic wild mushrooms," says Elwin Stewart, professor of plant pathology. Pennsylvania is blessed with a diverse fungal flora that includes many of the most revered of edible species."

Indeed, Pennsylvania fields and forests are home to at least seven species of popular wild mushrooms. Bearing such exotic names as king bolete, morels, chicken of the woods, shaggy mane, horn of plenty and oyster mushrooms, you can find these fungi growing abundantly throughout the state -- if you know where to look. "Most of the edible wild mushrooms grow in forested areas, although there are several that thrive in open fields," Stewart says.

Despite Pennsylvania's rich bounty of wild species, Stewart sharply warns against picking any kind of mushroom unless accompanied by an expert. "You should either learn from a mycologist or join an amateur's club," Stewart says. Mushroom pickers should buy a good field guide as well.

Stewart recommends first learning what mushrooms not to pick. Most, but not all, deadly mushrooms in Pennsylvania are Amanita species. These mushrooms vary widely in appearance, but some common characteristics are white spores, a veil hanging from where the cap meets the stalk, and a cup-like or bulbous base.

"Poisonous mushrooms are very toxic and in most cases lethal," Stewart warns. "Although there are few deaths annually from mushroom poisoning, in this case, one mistake could be your last."

Once toxic mushroom recognition has been

mastered, Stewart suggests tackling edible wild mushrooms one species at a time.

"Learn its developmental stages and habitat, then branch off into other species. Learn three or four edible species in your area that have a fruiting season spanning from spring to mid- or late fall," he says.

Here are some of the better wild mushrooms available in the Northeast.

- ▶ *Boletus edulis*. Called "king bolete," these have a thick stalk and a nut-like cap. They are found near the roots of trees.
- ▶ *Laetiporus sulphureus*. Called "chicken of the woods," this fungus grows as a parasite on dead wood. The creamy yellow/orange mushroom forms a cascading series of shelves resembling a lava flow, and yes, it tastes like chicken.
- ▶ *Coprinus comatus*. Known as "shaggy mane," these are abundant in the fall. They have a large cap that looks somewhat like an artillery shell. These should be eaten shortly after picking or the cap will deteriorate into a gooey mass. This mushroom is found in grassy fields.
- ▶ *Langermannia gigantea*. Known to kids far and wide as a "giant puffball," this fungus must be eaten fresh, when its flesh is white. They are found in fields.
- ▶ *Craterellus cornucopioides*. The "horn of plenty" is black and looks rather unappetizing, but its trumpet-like shape is recognizable, and the mushroom is quite tasty.
- ▶ *Pleurotus ostreatus*. Called "oyster mushrooms," these fungi look fragile and flare from the stem. They have a slightly meaty taste.
- ▶ *Morechella esculenta*. The morel, which resembles a pine cone or Christmas tree-shaped sponge on a stalk, is commonly found in the spring in wooded areas.

Stewart credits the wild mushroom renaissance in part to Americans' fascination with outdoor activities and environmental causes.

Courtesy of the Penn State NewsService

**WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
MUSHROOM CLUB**

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