

MARKETS

In Europe, wild mushrooms have traditionally been recognized as a forest product which can be produced on a sustainable basis. Recently, the emergence of a commercial mushroom picking industry in the western United States has attracted the attention of forest landowners who recognize picking and selling wild edible mushrooms can provide supplemental income. The market for fresh, forest harvested mushrooms is expanding and has the potential to develop into a sustainable forest based business.



Some inedible or poisonous mushrooms look very similar to edible varieties and may grow in the same habitat so it is critical to make positive identification of any mushroom before consuming it. The books listed in this publication provide a good start but it's best to collect with

someone knowledgeable in mushroom identification.

If there's any doubt about a mushroom, don't eat it. If someone appears ill after eating mushrooms contact the poison information center (401) 444-5727 or (800) 682-9211.

ORGANIZATIONS

• *North American Mycological Association:*
3556 Oakwood
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(313) 971-2552
<http://namyco.org>

• *Mushroom Council*
11875 Dublin Blvd. Suite D 262
Dublin, CA 94568
(925) 556-5970
<http://www.mushroomcouncil.com>

• *Boston Mycological Club*
(617) 489-9494

• *Berkshire Mycological Society*
Pleasant Valley Sanctuary
Lenox, MA 01240

• *Maine Mycological Society*
RR1 Box 1920
Litchfield, ME 04350

• *North American Truffling Society (NATS)*
PO Box 296
Corvallis, OR 97339

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A Short 'Shroom Primer. Wes Stone. Lewis and Clark University. www.lclark.edu. 1997.

Edible Wild Mushrooms of North America : A Field-To-Kitchen Guide. David W. Fischer, Alan E. Bessette. University of Texas Press. 1992.

Harvesting and Marketing Edible Wild Mushrooms. Greg Filip. 1998. Oregon State University Extension Service. EC 1496.

Income Opportunities in Special Forest Products. Self Help Suggestions for Rural Entrepreneurs. USDA, Forest Service Agriculture Information Bulletin 666. Margaret G. Thomas and David R. Schumann. 1993.

MycMedicinals. Paul Stamets. Mycomedica. 1999.

National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms. Gary A. Lincoff, Gary H. Lincoff. Knopf Publishers. 1981.

The Mushroom Market (how to earn money by picking mushrooms). Mother Earth News April-May 1996.

The Mushroom Hunter's Field Guide : All Color & Enlarged. Alexander H. Smith, Nancy Weber. University of Michigan Press, 1996.

The New Guide to Mushrooms: The Ultimate Guide to Identifying, Picking and Using Mushrooms. Peter Jordan. Lorenz Books. 1998

Wild Mushrooms. C. Wayne Elliot. Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet. HYG-3303. Ohio State University. <http://ohioline.ag.ohio-state.edu/hyg-fact/3000/3303.html>

Wild Mushrooms. David B. Schroeder. UCONN Cooperative Extension Publication 69-71.

RI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & THE RURAL LANDS COALITION SUBCOMMITTEE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE:

Rhode Island DEM:
Office of Strategic Planning & Policy
Division of Forest Environment
Division of Agriculture

Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization
Southern New England Forest Consortium
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

RI DEM, Division of Forest Environment
(401) 637-3367 or visit our website at:
www.state.ri.us/dem/forprod/forstprd.htm

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
(401) 828-1300

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*How can I generate income
on my forestland?*



GATHERING WILD MUSHROOMS

as a sustainable
land-based business

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INTRODUCING WILD GATHERED MUSHROOMS

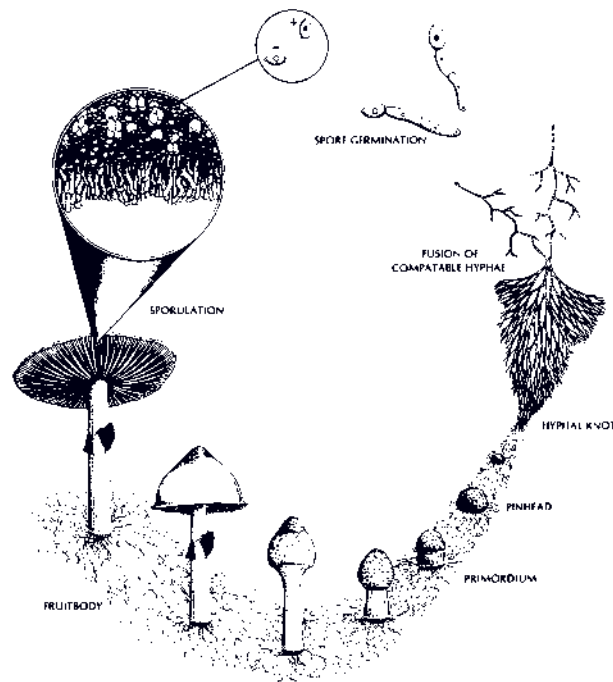
Native Americans used mushrooms for food, medicine and cultural purposes. Early European immigrants brought to Rhode Island a tradition of collecting mushrooms from the forest. Many Rhode Islanders still collect wild mushrooms as a family tradition, passing through the generations knowledge of the types of mushrooms to pick and the best places to find them.

Increased interest in natural food products, gourmet and ethnic cuisine, has led to interest in mushrooms. Managing forestland for sustainable harvests of wild mushrooms has the potential to provide supplementary income; at least enough to pay a portion of property management expenses, with the potential to develop into a small business.

This publication is intended to increase awareness of potential opportunities to grow and market wild mushrooms. It is designed to serve as an overview, providing enough information to allow landowners to evaluate their resources and provide direction to other sources of information.

MUSHROOM LIFE CYCLE

Mushrooms are fungi which live on decaying organic matter, such as stumps, leaves and rotten logs. Usually the fungus is out of sight but when climactic conditions (temperature, light, mois-



The Mushroom Cultivator; A Practical Guide to Growing Mushrooms at Home. Paul Stamets & J.S. Chilton. 1983.

ture and food supply) are right, the fungus forms buds that grow into the fruit we know as mushrooms. Wes Stone in *A Short 'Shroom Primer* equates this to a tree forming an apple. Spores released from the mushrooms spread the fungus to other decaying organic matter.

Nearly all the mushrooms produced in the U.S. are grown in high-tech structures designed to control environmental conditions and stimulate growth and production, but not all varieties can be produced in high tech structures. Mycorrhizal type mushrooms, such as chanterelles and truffles, grow in close association with tree roots and can be found only in the forest. Present technology does not allow for mycorrhizal type mushrooms to be cultivated, thus they may only be gathered in the wild.

The size of the potential wild mushroom industry in Rhode island is difficult to estimate because most mushrooms are collected on an informal basis. For comparison, picking and selling wild edible mushrooms has become a major activity both as a recreational pursuit as well as a commercial enterprise in the Pacific Northwest.

The market for mushrooms has also attracted the attention of forest landowners in the Northwest since other land management practices, including harvesting wood products, may be compatible with managing for mushrooms; the U.S. Forest Service has imple-

mented a fee system for selling the rights to collect wild mushrooms on federal land.

MANAGING YOUR FOREST FOR MUSHROOMS

Little research has been done in the U.S. regarding forest management to promote mushrooms. The tree species present on the site, growing conditions, soil, and climate all influence the formation of mushrooms. Management practices used in other areas to enhance production can be used to provide guidance.



Practices used in Japan to enhance mushroom production include thinning the forest, favoring certain tree species, clearing understory growth and removing accumulated leaves and twigs from the forest floor. These practices promote the development of selected species of mushrooms by allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor, thinning the litter and duff layers, creating sparse ground cover and promoting vigorously growing trees.