

WSGW RADIO PRESENTATION

WILD MUSHROOMS

May 28, 2019

It's wild mushroom season in Michigan, and foragers are out in droves gathering the tasty morsels by the bushel. Wild mushrooms, like morels and chanterelles, help define the forests of Michigan and provide potential income streams for foragers, farmers, restaurateurs, and food entrepreneurs.

However, if improperly identified, mushrooms can pose serious health risks. If you are purchasing wild mushrooms, you should only purchase them from a certified mushroom identification expert, as required by Michigan's Food Code, to assure they are safe and edible.

Michigan's Food Code requires those who sell mushroom species picked in the wild to either be certified as an approved mushroom identification expert, or to have each mushroom individually inspected and found safe by a certified mushroom expert.

There are many varieties of edible mushrooms that grow in Michigan, but there are also toxic, poisonous varieties, so there is some risk involved. There are also many look-alike varieties for some of our favorite wild mushrooms, including morels. These 'look-alikes' can cause serious illness or death when eaten, so it's important to know how to properly identify mushrooms and to only buy mushrooms from someone who is a trained, certified mushroom identification expert.

The bottom line is: please enjoy hunting for and eating your favorite wild mushrooms, but make sure you know how to properly identify them.

If you plan to sell your wild mushroom harvest, you must be a certified mushroom identification expert. Finally, if you're purchasing wild mushrooms, especially online through social media platforms, always ask for proof of certification before purchasing any mushrooms.

Foraging mushrooms on public lands (including Michigan's state parks and game areas) for personal consumption and enjoyment is allowed and encouraged. However, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources advises that selling wild mushrooms harvested from public lands is illegal.

Check out the DNR's Mi-Morels map at michigan.gov/mimorels to explore locations where large prescribed burns were conducted last year, and where morels may be more likely to grow.

Mushroom poisoning refers to harmful effects from ingestion of toxic substances present in some mushrooms, with symptoms ranging from slight gastrointestinal discomfort to death. Common symptoms associated with mushroom poisoning include

vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, weakness, lethargy and yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice). Mushroom poisoning is usually the result of ingestion of wild mushrooms after misidentification of a toxic mushroom as an edible species. The most common reason for this misidentification is close resemblance in terms of color and general morphology of some toxic mushroom species with edible species.

If you suspect mushroom poisoning, seek immediate medical assistance, and call the Michigan Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

www.saginawpublichealth.org

Source: Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development