



Fall Edible Fungi

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Outline

- **Identifying Mushrooms**
- **Beginner**
 - No toxic lookalikes in Iowa. Unique features for identification.
 - Anyone should be able to identify this. You can teach this mushroom to a child.
- **Intermediate**
 - May have toxic lookalikes. Identification features a little more difficult to find, or more variable. Must use several features together to positively ID this mushroom.
 - Experienced foragers should be able to identify this. Children would have a harder time.

Mushroom Myths

- There are no easy tricks to identifying if a mushroom is edible.
 - **X** “Mushrooms growing on wood are safe.”
 - Deadly *Galerina* grows on wood.
 - **X** “Mushrooms with white gills are bad.”
 - Oyster mushrooms have white gills.
 - **X** “Brightly colored mushrooms are bad.”
 - Unlike bugs, color has no bearing on mushroom toxicity.



**Destroying
Angel**



**Indigo
Lactarius**



Identifying Mushrooms

- To know if you can eat a mushroom, *you have to know what it is.*
- How do you find out what it is?
 - **Practice, practice, practice.** Go out into nature, find mushrooms, and go through the process of identification. Then do it again!
 - **Ask for help.** Join the Iowa Mushrooms Facebook group, or email the PSMC Identification Committee. Confirming your ID with another person is important for beginners!

Beginner Mushrooms

Polypores, Puffballs, Lion's Mane, Oysters



Hen of the Woods –
Grifola frondosa

- Dark brown to cream with many lobes. Pores widen with age.
- Likes oaks, dead or alive, usually at the base. Can be enormous!
- Fronds are small compared to similar species.



Photos by Jeff Patch



Yellow-pored Chicken of the Woods – *Laetiporus sulphureus*



- A soft polypore with yellow pores, grows from trunks of trees (living or dead). Often on old logs.
- Loses its color with time and becomes white and chalky when old.
- Best picked when soft. Colorful mushrooms starting to go chalky can be used powdered or made into a stock.





White-pored Chicken of
the Woods – *Laetiporus*
cincinnatus

- White pores, grows from butts and roots of trees (living or dead). Favorite hosts are oaks.
- Growing up instead of sideways, they tend to form rosettes.

Dryad's Saddle – *Cerioporus squamosus*

- Also called Pheasant Back.
- Common all year. Likes maple and elm, dead or alive (but mostly dead).
- Smells like cucumber.
- Tough black stem.
- Has distinct hexagonal pores that widen with age.
- The best time to pick is when the pores are still mostly small.
- Size is NOT an indicator of age! Pore size is.









Resinous Polypore –
Ischnoderma
resinosum

- Super soft polypore, undervalued as an edible mushroom. Best to harvest the buttery soft edges as they are tough towards the base.
- The harbinger of fall. Likes dead hardwoods. Smells slightly of anise.
- The deer and squirrels love to eat this mushroom in the winter.



Giant Puffballs – *Calvatia spp.*

- *C. gigantea* is pure white and very large. Green spores.
- *C. cyathiformis* has a brown cracked skin and is smaller on average. Purple-brown spores.
- Shows up in the same spots every year.





Photo by Art McBreen





Gem-studded Puffball
– *Lycoperdon
perlatum*

- Studded with short, soft spines.
Green spores.
- Likes soil along pathways, and piles of
very well decayed wood.
- Have short stems.





Stump Puffballs – *Apioperdon pyriforme*

- Brown, finely hairy with surface cracks.
- Only grows on wood. More gregarious than *L. perlatum*.
- Green spores.



Lion's Mane –
Hericium erinaceus,
coralloides

- Likes barkless wood. *H. coralloides* has coral-like branching, *H. erinaceus* is more of a ball with spines.
- Fall seasonality, fairly rare. Great in “crab” cakes.



White Oyster
Mushrooms –
Pleurotus spp.

- White mushrooms with white spores.
- Grow on dead hardwood trees.
- Gills run down stem. Fishy smell.
- Grows in clumps or scattered.





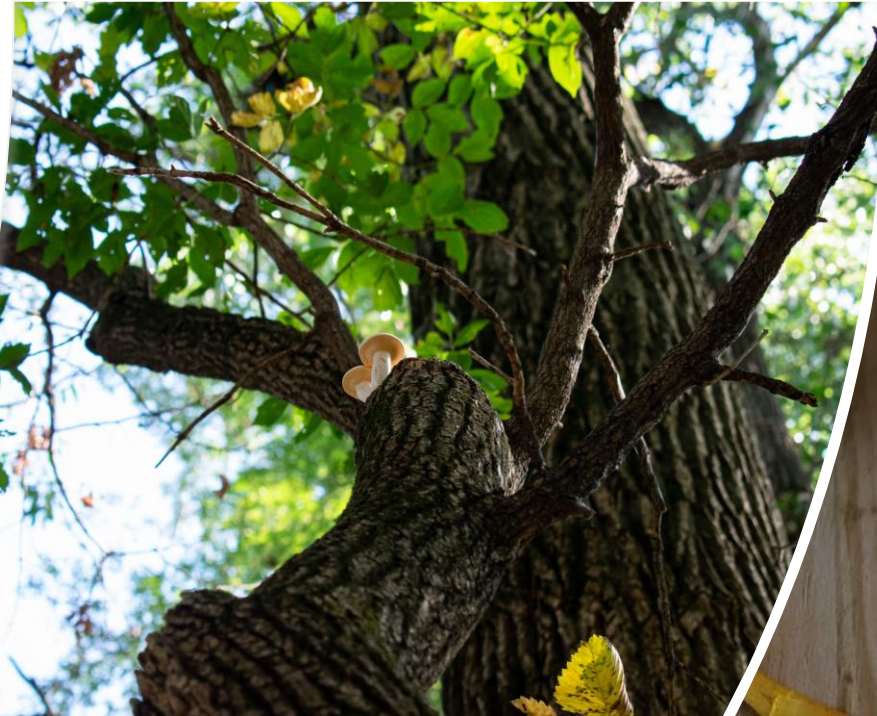
Golden Oyster Mushrooms – *Pleurotus citrinopileatus*

- Just like white oyster mushrooms, but more common and easy to identify.
- Really likes dead elm, but will grow on cottonwood and black cherry.
- Smells fishy like white oysters, but even fishier.
- Not native to the US, but are in fact cultivated mushrooms released from captivity. They were bred to produce a LOT of mushrooms.



Elm Oyster – *Hypsizygus ulmarius*

- Not actually related to oyster mushrooms.
- Grows from wood, particularly out of boxelder knotholes, often high up.
- Firm, meaty white mushroom, but not tough.
- Gills do not run down stem.
- Stem can be cracked-scaly.



Intermediate Mushrooms

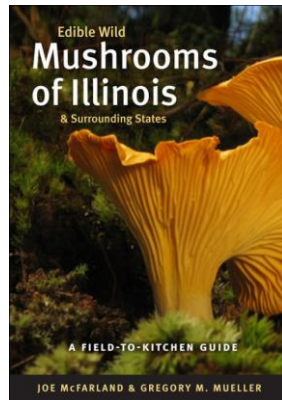
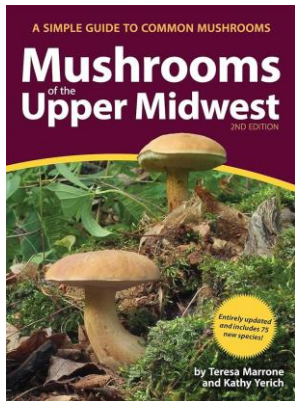
Honey Mushrooms, Aborted Entoloma, Wood Blewit

Tools for Identification




Books

- Compact, informative texts with pictures and descriptions.
- Dichotomous keys are useful!



iNaturalist

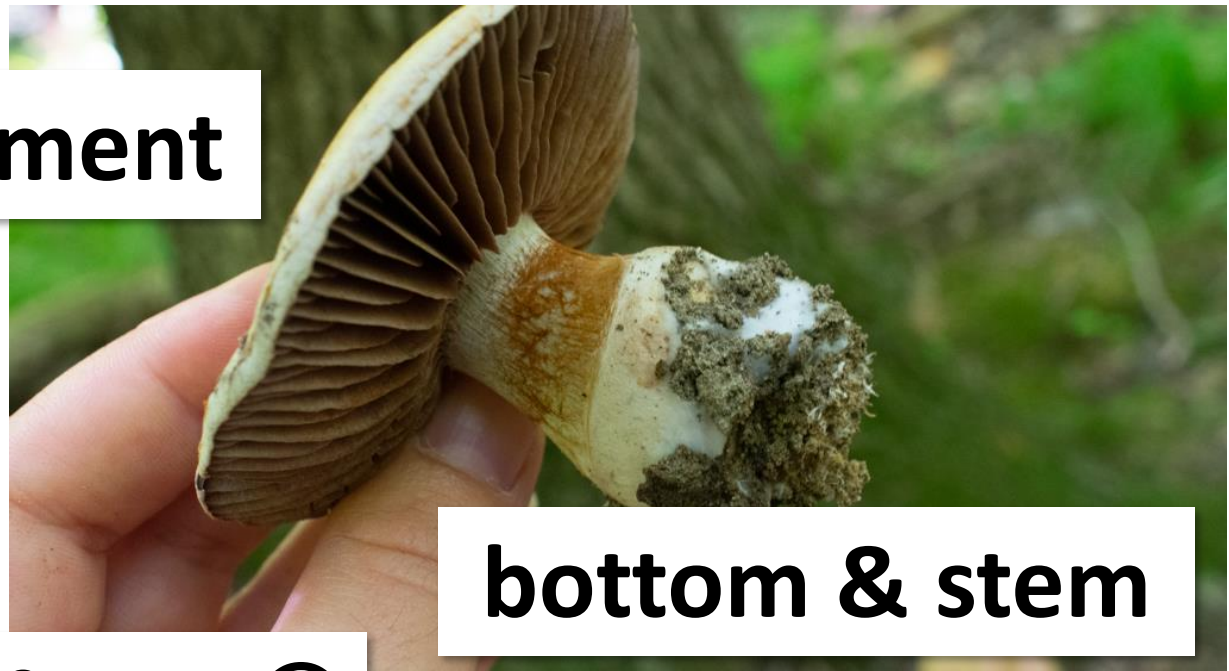
- A nonprofit app and website designed to help you identify and keep track of your nature observations.
- Works on more than just mushrooms.
- A good starting point, but fallible. Use it to inform your guess!



Taking Pictures for Identification



gill attachment



bottom & stem

clear, in focus 😊



side and habitat



cap

Honey Mushrooms – *Armillaria spp.*



- Parasitic mushroom with fall seasonality.
- Grows from tree bases, roots, and sometimes trunks.
- Has a cobwebby veil that breaks off into a cottony ring. Ring often yellow.
- Overall pinkish, especially the flesh and where it's bruised.
- Cap has little hairy scales, often yellow.
- Stem is fibrous and darkens with age.
- Cap slimy when wet (and cooked!)



Honey Mushroom Rhizomorphs





Photo by Jeff Patch



Aborted Entoloma – *Entoloma abortivum*

- *Entoloma abortivum* is a simple white mushroom with pinkish spores. The “shrimp of the woods” is formed when it parasitizes Honey Mushrooms.
- They are easy to ID due to their unique shape.
- “Unaborted” Entolomas and Honey Mushrooms can often be found nearby.
- Beginners are often advised to only pick the aborted mushrooms, not the white, gilled Entolomas.



Honeys!



Photo by Betsy



Wood Blewit – *Lepista nuda*

- Can be tan, brown, purple, white. Usually some shade of purple.
- Strong fall seasonality.
- Loves deep leaf litter, usually oak. Grows from leaf mulch, not soil.
- Cap is hygrophanous, aka two-toned when wet, especially at the edge.
- Thick stem with bulbous base.
- No dangerous lookalikes.





Blewit Lookalikes

- Purple Cortinarius, while not appetizing, are not toxic.
- They are rarer than wood Blewits and grow from soil.
- Spores are a dark rusty color and *Cortinarius* have webby cortinas that cover the gills when young.

Purple Laccaria

- Waxy mushrooms with thick, distant gills and tough stems.
- Edible, just not common and not that good.



Photo by Keara R. Giannotti



Velvet Foot – *Flammulina velutipes*

- The same mushroom as Enoki, but under normal growing conditions looks like delicious sticky buns.
- Creamy white gills and a velvety stem that gets darker near the base.
- Prefers trees with loose bark to grow under. Likes elm.



Photo by Ross Salinas



Velvet Foot vs. Deadly Galerina

- Velvety stem with dark base and cream gills VS. fibrous brown stem with brownish gills.
- White spores vs. brown spores.
- Galerina often still have their annulus (stem ring).
- Galerina **ONLY** grow on very old debarked wood. Velvet Foot grows on **BOTH** barked and debarked. Can avoid debarked wood to be safe.



Common Inedible Fungi



Gymnopilus



Jack-o-Lantern



Bay Polypore



Orange Mycena



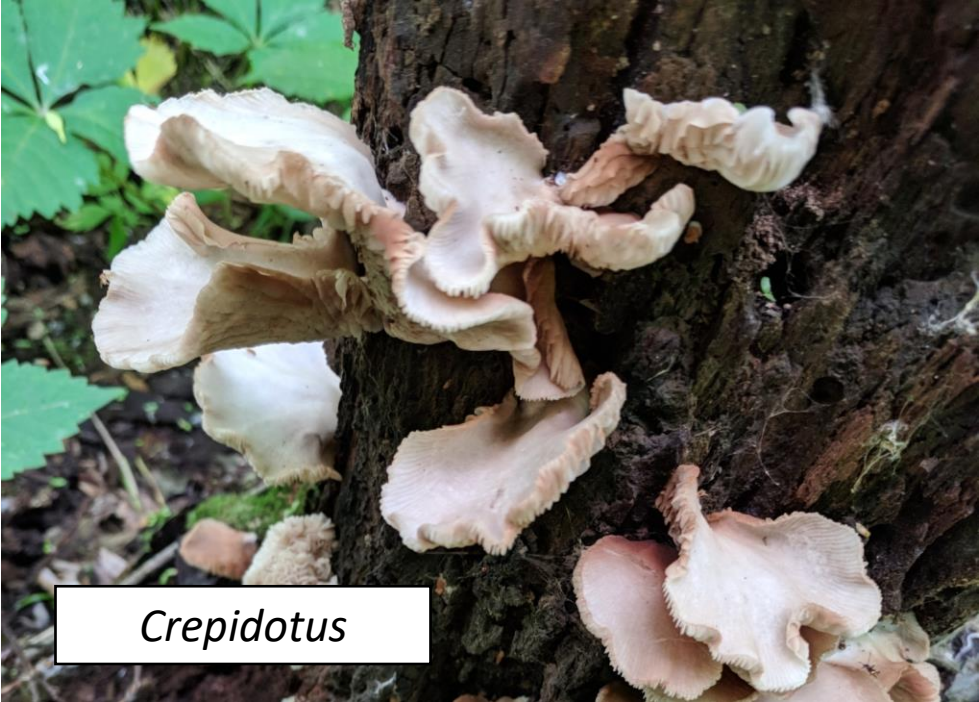
Golden Pholiota



Deadly Galerina



Purple Tooth



Crepidotus



Stereum



When in doubt, ask the
mushroom club!