

Mycophagy

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It has been suggested that I record my experiences and opinions regarding the eating of many species of mushrooms. In doing so I am aware that I may not be contributing much to what has already been written.

I am submitting to The Indiana Academy of Science a number of species, that I have eaten, with my comments regarding their esculent qualities. In determining the taste and flavor I give credit to my wife, who has assisted me many times.

Agaricus campestris Fr., *A. placomyces* Pk., and *A. Rodmani* Pk., are considered among the best although I found *A. Rodmani* much stronger in flavor than the others. *Agaricus silvatica* Schaeff, is milder flavored than the others and is very delicious. It is unfortunate that this species is so rare.

Armillaria mellea Fr., when gathered young and fresh, I find to be fair in flavor but not excellent. This species is soon infested with larvae.

**Calvatia cyathiformis* Bosc, *C. gigantea* Batsch, and *Lycoperdon pyriforme* Schaeff, are good if you like puff balls but I am not fond of any of them.

Cantharellus cibarius Fr., and *Craterellus cantharellus* Schw., have similar flavors and are among the best.

Clitocybe illudens Sacc. A physician called me late at night, said he had three patients ill of mushroom poisoning and asked me to identify the mushrooms. I found them to be Jack-O-Lanterns as expected. No deaths reported from eating this species. I have not tasted it.

Clitocybe monadelphpha Morg., and *C. multiceps* Pk., are good but not excellent.

Claudopus nidulans (Pers.) Pk., I have eaten this species and considered it fair in flavor but a little tough. I know of one couple who ate it and became ill in the night but were well the next day.

Collybia longipes Fr., *C. radicata* Fr., *C. platyphylla* Fr., *C. velutipes* Fr., *C. dryophylla* Bull. One authority said "this genus offers no highly desirable species for the table". It is true that some are very watery but I find, if they are fried dry and brown, that *C. radicata* and *C. dryophylla* are excellent.

Coprinus atramentarius Fr., *C. comatus* Fr., *C. micaceus* Fr., are all very good. They have a nutty flavor and should be sought for and used for food.

Cortinariu michiganensis, Kauff. I have found and eaten this species in quantity and find that, while they are safe to eat, the flavor is almost lacking.

Gyromitra esculenta Pers. There has been a great controversy regarding the edibility of this fungus. We have eaten and enjoyed it. A man called me, described it and wanted to know if it is edible. I told him that one authority said one hundred and sixty people had been killed by eating this mushroom. I also told him that we ate it and that many others have eaten it without bad effect. He called me up later and said he and his friends ate it and loved it and he thanked me for my information. If one hundred and sixty persons died from eating this species, who and where were they and who kept the record? I agree with Güssow and Odell that, if this mushroom is fresh, it will cause no harm.

Hydnum caput-ursi Fr., and *Hericeum (Hydnum) coralloides* S. F. Gray are delicious. We stew them with butter added. *H. repandum* L., is very meaty and has an interesting flavor.

Lactarius piperatus Fr. when fried well is very good.

Lepiota Morgani Pk. I ate a piece the size of a quarter, raw, at 6 o'clock. At nine o'clock I became very ill with pain and vomiting. In about thirty minutes, the symptoms were gone and I was well again. McIlvain, in reporting a similar case, said that, if the mushroom had been cooked, it might not have been poisonous. Many people report that they have eaten this green gilled species with impunity but there is no doubt that it is poisonous to some people, although not fatally. *L. procera* Fr. and *L. americana* Pk., are excellent. *L. naucina* Fr. is one of the best. This beautiful white mushroom looks like the "Destroying Angel," but can be distinguished by the absence of a volva.

Marasmius oreades Fr., called the "Fairy Ring Mushroom" is also excellent. We found a large quantity on the golf course at Wawasee. We dried them and had mushrooms to eat for many weeks.

Morchella. Have eaten every species and find *M. deliciosa* Fr., as the name indicates, to be more tender and delicious than the others. *M. semi-libera* D. C. has a very insipid flavor. I believe the morels to be the most popular of all the wild mushrooms.

Mycena leajana Berk, is very good if fried brown. Otherwise, it is watery. *M. galericulata* Scop. Although often passed up as worthless, on account of its small size, I find it is worth gathering and eating. The flavor is excellent.

Naematoloma (Hypholoma) sublateritium Karsten and *H. appendiculatum* Fr., are very good. They should be fried brown. *H. sublateritium* Fr. is better than some authorities say. I have eaten them for years and have never yet tasted one that was bitter. They can be found until near Christmas and are better when found late, for then they do not become infested.

Pholiota praecox Fr., is very good.

Pleurotus ostreatus Fr. and *P. sapidus* Kalchb. are very delectable. I believe I have eaten more of these than of any other species. October, November, December, are the best months for then they are generally

free from larvae. Have gathered them many times when frozen solid. They can be dried and eaten later.

Pluteus cervinus Schaeff is rather watery and is soon infested in warm weather but, if fried brown, when fresh, they are very good. Can be found from early spring until late fall.

Polyporous sulphureus Fr. While Gibson and others praise this species very highly, the portions I ate seemed to be almost tasteless, perhaps because they were not so young and tender as they should have been.

Psilocybe conwissana Pk., while edible is lacking in fine flavor.

Tricholoma personatum Fr. This large meaty mushroom is one to be sought for and enjoyed. We found a large fairy ring of this species at McCormick's Creek State Park. They have a very fine flavor. I gave some to a friend, who reported to me that he was made ill from eating them but he said "they were creamed," in which case, I believe they were not thoroughly cooked. While some may be eaten raw, I believe most mushrooms should be cooked well done. They should be free from larvae and all old or partially spoiled portions should be discarded.