

Mushrooming Resources
A beginners guide to getting started with identification
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Books:

After over 30 years of mushrooming, my book collection now numbers well over 100 mushroom books. You should arm your self with at least 2 or 3 good books to get started. However, with any field guide, you often need more information than has been given to be positive about your identification and you must remember that no field guide covers more than a small percentage of all the mushrooms that you may encounter – so don't assume that your mushroom will be in any field guide – you may need a monograph of the genus to identify your find – and even then you may have found a new species. Part of the fun of mushrooming is the realization that you can still discover an unnamed species – and will probably do so regularly if you collect in a poorly studied area. Nevertheless, a good book **written for your area** will cover most of the distinctive mushrooms that you will find.

Some of my favorite field guides include:

Arora, David. Mushrooms Demystified

The focus is on Northern California. David is a very entertaining writer and there is good basic information on how to collect fungi. The coverage (over 2,000 species) is extensive for a field guide. David has included the most common and abundant mushrooms in his region and many of the species are found in many other parts of the country.

Bessette, Alan and Arleen, and Fischer, David. Mushrooms of Northeastern North America

The coverage (nearly 1500 species) is of both the U. S. and Canada from the Northeast through the Plains States and as far south as Tennessee and North Carolina. The arrangement of the mushrooms by genus name rather than clustering mushrooms together by family is a disadvantage.

Lincoff, Gary. The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms

This compact book covers over 700 species from all of North America, with an emphasis on mushrooms of North Eastern North America. The photographs were chosen by editors unfamiliar with mushrooms and are not always characteristic of the species.

Moser, Meinhard. Keys to Agarics and Boleti

Once you get beyond the beginner's stage, this is a great book to help key your find to genus or species. It covers the difficult gilled mushrooms plus boletes and does not have pictures. Finding a copy can be a challenge but it is worth it even though as with any field guide, your mushroom may not be one of the included species.

Regional Field Guides:

Metzler, Susan and Van with Orson Miller, Jr. [Texas Mushrooms](#)
A handy pictorial guide for collecting in Texas.

McKenny, Margaret and Stuntz, Daniel revised and enlarged by Ammirati, Joe. [The New Savory Wild Mushroom](#)
Covers 199 common mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest.

Weber, Nancy Smith and Smith, Alexander H. [A Field Guide to Southern Mushrooms](#)
Covers 241 species found in the South.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST KEY COUNCIL:

This group of dedicated amateur and professional mycologists has been working for just over 30 years to produce keys for mushroom identification. We are not yet broadly advertising where to get our materials on the web since the materials are under development. However, you will still find our site to be a singularly powerful resource:

<http://www.svims.ca/council/keys.htm>

At this site, the introductory page gives you some background and shows which keys are in printed form and which are available electronically. If you know which group your mushroom falls into, and there is an electronic key available for that group, go straight to the appropriate key and go to work on identifying your find. If you do not know the genus of the mushroom, or the genus is not listed for your mushroom, go to the “Key to Keys” and use that to try to figure out what you have. When you think you have figured out the genus or the species, proceed to the section on mushroom descriptions. Note that at the end of most mushroom descriptions, there is a way to connect to the web and see illustrations of what you think you have found (you will eventually discover, however, that some of the images you pull off of the web are not correctly identified, so use caution and confirm your ID with another method, *e.g.* Matchmaker):

Gibson, Ian. [Matchmaker](#)

A fantastic must have CD that is used to key out gilled (and soon non-gilled) mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest. This is an extremely comprehensive key where you type in the most distinctive features of the mushroom you have and the computer creates a list of the mushrooms with the closest match to that set of features. The CD covers every known named species in the Pacific Northwest along with detailed descriptions. Many photographers have contributed to the CD so thousands of mushroom images are available. The last I checked Ian was still charging a mere \$10 per copy. For ordering information contact ig@islandnet.com. Note: Fungal Kingdom students received a special bulk discount. If you send Ian your email address, every time Matchmaker is updated, he will send you an email so that you can update electronically for free.

Electronic Materials:

Kou, Michael. www.mushroomexpert.com

This is a great website with beginners pages, tips on photography, identification techniques, keys and mushroom descriptions with photographs.

Volk, Tom. www.TomVolkFungi.com

A very useful site with a range of information and a mushroom of the month feature page.

Lincoff, Gary. www.nemf.org/files/lincoff

Another great site for beginners, focusing on the Northeast mushrooms. Advice on books, lists of the best edible mushrooms of the region, information about deadly and other poisonous mushrooms including some good rules on what not to do that are applicable anywhere.

Beug, Michael. www.evergreen.edu/mushrooms

Gives you on-line access to 4 NAMA slide-tape programs that will help you get more comfortable with the range and diversity of mushrooms to collect for the table and to avoid. Includes “Introduction to Mushrooms”, “Introduction to Fall Mushrooms”, “Truffles and other Spring Fungi”, “Poisonous and Hallucinogenic Mushrooms”. Each program features 80 mushrooms with a picture and a little bit about the mushroom.

Wood, Michael www.mykoweb.com

One of the better mushroom sites on the web with descriptions of over 400 California species and over 2,000 illustrations.