



Identification Skills for the New Mushroomer: Foraging for Edible and Medicinal Mushrooms

July 26–August 1, 2026

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Until recently in North America, people associated wild mushrooms with the fear of poisoning, or the promise of food. Today, the value placed on locally sourced and sustainable food coupled with a pandemic-inspired return to nature has expanded awareness of the flavor and variety of wild mushrooms. The increased interest in foraging mushrooms for food has also increased the number of mushroom poisonings. But mushrooms bring up many different and divergent associations. For the ecologist they are invaluable decomposers (nutrient recyclers), symbionts (mycorrhizal), or parasites essential to forest health. To the taxonomist, fungi are a tangled web of relationships to explore, with the ultimate goal of tidy, understandable order.

Participants will use dichotomous keys, field guides, websites, and their naked eyes, aided with a hand lens, to gain skills for macroscopic identification of the mushrooms we will find in Maine during mid-summer. We will discuss representative divisions of the Kingdom Fungi, investigating biology, ecology and cultural elements. The theme of the week will be learning to identify mushrooms to species with additional focus on use of mushrooms for food and medicine, while exploring the place of fungi in diverse cultures. We will develop cooking skills by adding great wild mushrooms to our menu. The seminar is for beginning mushroomers and amateur mycologists who are interested in expanding their knowledge of the world of mushrooms. Participants must bring their own copies *Mushrooms Demystified* by David Arora.

Greg A. Marley (GregAMarley@gmail.com) Greg Marley has been collecting, studying, eating, growing and teaching mushrooms for over 45 years. He spreads his love of mushrooms through walks, talks and classes held across the New England. Marley is the author of *Mushrooms for Health; Medicinal Secrets of Northeastern Fungi*, (Downeast Books, 2009) and the award-winning *Chanterelle Dreams, Amanita Nightmares; The Love Lore and Mystic of Mushrooms*, (Chelsea Green, 2010). As a volunteer mushroom identification consultant to Poison Centers across New England, he provides expertise in mushroom poisoning cases. Greg is frequent lecturer to college groups and occasionally a mushrooming foray faculty member. When not mushrooming, Marley works as a mental health clinician specializing in suicide prevention. He resides with his family and gardens in Rockland Maine.

Michaeline Mulvey (mjpmm955i@comcast.net) wandered field and forest long before her mother believed she could find her way home. Fascinated by plants, she was intrigued by ephemerals. They were both fun to find and challenging to identify. In Maine the most numerous ephemerals are mushrooms, appearing magically throughout the season, often disappearing quickly. Observing the short fruiting periods of fleshy fungi, and frustrated that some species occur only every few years, Michaeline began recording fruiting dates of her finds, graphing the results of selected species. More recently, she has dabbled with creating fabric dyes from mushrooms, and mushroom cultivation. She has been an active member of Maine Mycological Association for over 30 years. She happily works in field and forest across Maine as a Professional Land Surveyor, rain or shine.