

FISH

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Cap

- The top portion of the mushroom.
- Cap shape, color, and texture are used in identification.
- Cap can vary and change greatly over time.

Ring (or annulus)

- Remnant of a membranous tissue (veil) that completely covered the mushroom in its early stages of development.
- Some mushrooms have them, some don't, and some lose them with age so look at mushrooms closely and at different stages.

Stem (or stalk)

- Many, but not all, mushrooms have stems. Stems can vary by:
- Shape and size
 - Texture (chalk-like? string cheese texture?)
 - Color (some change color, bruising when touched)
 - Presence of remnant ring or volva



Volva

- Present at the base of some, but not all, mushrooms (a remnant on those mushrooms that initially developed from an egg-like sac).
- Carefully dig up mushrooms to determine if volva is present as cutting their stems may cut off volva.

Gills, pores, tubes, veins, teeth, etc...

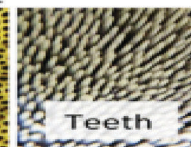
- Examine the underside of the cap to identify spore-producing structures, a key part of mushroom identification.
- Common ways that mushrooms present spores include:



Gills



Pores



Teeth

Spores

Spores enable mushrooms to reproduce and spread to new places. Spore color can be important in identification. To check spore color, make a spore print:

- Remove mushroom stem.
- Place cap gill (or pore) side down on a sheet of paper (white if you expect dark spores, black if you expect light or both if you are unsure).
- Cover with a bowl 12-24 hours.
- Check spore print left on paper.



Knowing the parts of a mushroom and their characteristics are crucial in proper identification.

PHOTO COURTESY/University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Plant Pathology Extension

2. Identify all the mushrooms to be eaten. The same species of mushroom can vary in appearance at different life stages.

3. Start small. When trying a new mushroom, only consume a small amount in case of an allergic reaction.

4. Know mushroom look-alikes. Only eat mushrooms that have been identified as edible, and be aware of poisonous look-alikes.

5. Do not trust folklore. Science-based information, not folklore, is critical in correctly identifying both poisonous and non-poisonous mushrooms.

6. Store mushrooms properly. Clean mushrooms, refrigerate in paper bags (not plastic), inspect carefully,

and discard wilted or slimy mushrooms.

7. When in doubt, throw it out. Mushrooms deemed "questionable" are not worth the potential cause of illness or worry.

When dry land fishing, it is important to remember to only collect mushrooms where you have been permitted to do so. Also, if a potentially dangerous mushroom has been eaten, seek medical attention immediately.

Ashley also has tips of her own to share with others who are ready to take to the woods.

"Find you a good woods and just start looking down," Ashley said.

See FISH, PG 27

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