



# Morel Booster™

Morel Mushroom News From Morel Mania, Inc.

Editor: Tom Nauman

Issue No. 9 • September, 2010

*Sponsored By:*

**The National Morel Mushroom Festival**  
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**morelfest.com**

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**Just Arrived**

**DEHYDRATED GREY MORELS**

- **LOTS OF THEM** •
- **GREAT PRICE** •

**See Page 3**

The **Morel Booster™** is free publication from Morel Mania, Inc.  
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## Late Summer/Fall Mushrooms

### Our "Second Season" Has Arrived!

The end of summer triggers an opportunity for mushroom hunters to partake in rewarding walks through the woods as there are numerous easily identified edible mushrooms available. Our two favorites are the Hen-of-the-Woods and the Sulfur Shelf.

The Hen-of-the-Woods (*Grifola frondosa*) is so named because it resembles the ruffled feathers of a nesting hen. They are also known as Sheep's Head, Maitake, or Quarenes.

We find them growing at the base of an oak tree that has been damaged by wind or lightning or even on the stump of an oak that has been cut down. The bottom picture on this page shows two that we found growing from the exposed roots of an ancient oak that had toppled in the wind.

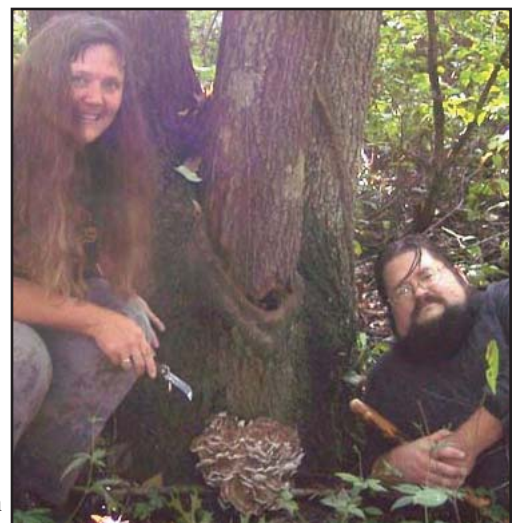
They are almost unmistakable in appearance and the ones we find typically weigh two to ten pounds. They have numerous fan-shaped petals growing from a central stalk. They do not have gills. The top of the petals can be gray, tan, brown, to almost black while the under side are buff white to cream colored and are covered with pores.

One nice feature is that they may reappear at the same location for several years. A tree we always check has produced for thirteen years in a row!

To harvest, simply use a sharp knife to cut the stalk near the tree.

Cleaning can be difficult. We use the spray attachment of the kitchen faucet then cut away the petals. This mushroom grows rapidly enough that it can encapsulate and surround grass, leaves, and twigs. We remove the debris with a knife.

The flavor of the Hen-of-the-Woods is unique and delicious by



*Doe & Andrij prepare to harvest a nice Hen-Of-The-Woods.*



*Two Hen-Of-The-Woods growing from the roots of an oak tree that had been blown over in a storm.*

*-Continued, see Fall Mushrooms on page 2*

**Fall Mushrooms** - continued from page 1

itself or added to other recipes and soups. One caution is that as this mushroom matures it will be attacked by insects. Too many insects usually means it has spoiled and should not be consumed.

Our other Fall favorite is the Sulfur Shelf, (*Laetiporus sulphureus*). It gets its name because the under side is a sulfur yellow and it grows in shelves on wood. It's also called the Chicken Mushroom because its texture resembles chicken meat. Some people refer to it as the "Chicken-of-the-Woods" which is confused with the "Hens" mentioned previously.

The Sulfur Shelf can grow in massive quantities on living or dead trees. They are typically found where a limb has broken off a living tree or where lightning has scarred the tree.

They can also grow on a tree that has died and fallen over or is still standing. They can grow anywhere on a standing tree. More than once we've had to go home to get a ladder. Vicky stood on my shoulders to reach the one pictured at right.



*Sulfur Shelf Mushrooms growing on a tree.*

They are reddish-orange on top and sulfur yellow on bottom and on the outer edges of the shelves. They do not have gills. With age, the colors fade and the mushroom can also become infested with insects. It may also reappear at the same location for successive years. One that we find even skips a year or years at a time, but has always come back in an autumn with ample rainfall. The Sulfur Shelf is typically a Fall mushroom. But keep your eyes open, Vicky has found them fresh in the Spring while morel hunting!

As mentioned, this is sometimes called the "Chicken Mushroom". But that's only because of the texture. The flavor is far beyond chicken. We like to simply cut it in strips and fry in butter. That may sound a little mundane but we get the most flavor from the mushroom that way. Both the Sulfur Shelf and the "Hen" may be preserved by dehydrating. Just don't wash them first.

For more info, we suggest the book "Start Mushrooming". It's for beginners or even seasoned morel hunters who want to learn about other edibles. It is available through our web catalog in the book section. For advanced studies, we suggest the book "Edible Mushrooms of Illinois and Surrounding States" also in our web catalog Or, we offer guided Fall Mushroom Forays - on the web catalog under the heading of "Morel University".

Here's a story about us and Fall Mushroom Hunting in the New York Times:

<http://travel.nytimes.com/2007/11/09/travel/escapes/09mush.html?scp=1&sq=tom+nauman>

## "Get Lost" T-Shirt Available



Our newest shirt pretty much says it all. It is silk-screened in two colors - both front and back on light green. The front reads "Morel Hunting Guide Service" with the back reading "On Second Thought Get Lost". It's available on the web site catalog under Apparel in sizes Medium through XXL.

## I "Stan" Corrected

In Issue No. 8 of the Morel Booster, I made mention of the much less than good morel season in the Midwest. I did make mention of "pockets of prosperity" and apparently one of them was in Minnesota as I received the following message:  
*"Tom, It would appear we had a banner year for morels here in Minnesota this spring. Even people who never found morels before were finding them this year. Take care."* ~Stan Tekiela

Stan, from Victoria, Minnesota, is an Author / Naturalist Wildlife Photographer. His nationally syndicated NatureSmart Column, takes an in-depth look at animals, plants, and Nature in general, as well as lots of Gee-Whiz Nature Stuff. The column appears in over 20 newspapers and his wildlife programs are broadcast on a number of Midwest radio stations. He has authored more than 100 field guides, nature appreciation books and wildlife audio CDs. His web site is:

<http://www.naturesmart.com>

Thanks for the info, Stan. Next time though, let me know while a bumper crop is still happening! Stan is a co-author of "Start Mushrooming" mentioned in the story in the column at left.

## Where We'll Be

### Spoon River Valley Scenic Drive

October 2 -3 & 9 - 10, 2010 • London Mills, Illinois

We'll be just north of the intersection of Second and Main Streets

\$5 COUPON \$5

Present this coupon at any of the listed events we are at and we'll deduct \$5.00 from your purchase of \$20.00 or more. Redeemable at these events only and only one discount per person.

**Just Arrived**  
**DEHYDRATED**  
**GRAY**  
**MORELS**

**VERY SPECIAL PRICE!**



**Two Ounces of Gray Morels at \$16.00**

(They will re-hydrate to be a full pound)

While the 2010 Morel Season was far less than perfect in the Midwest, the Pacific Northwest seems to have had a bumper crop season. We just received a large amount of Medium/Small Gray Morels from the state of Washington. We got them at a greatly reduced price and are passing the savings on to our customers. I've tasted them myself (it's a tough job, but someone has to do it!) and think they're perfect.

Please order soon before I devour them all!

The picture above is of the actual mushrooms included in this offer.

At **\$16.00 for two ounces**, these are a true bargain.

An equal amount of our Yellow/Gray mixture is \$30.00 and the Blacks are \$22.00.

**And, if you order by 09/15/10,  
SHIPPING IS FREE!**

Find them on the Edibles Page of our web catalog.

[www.morelmania.com](http://www.morelmania.com)

Or Phone Us At:

**800-438-4213**

The Product Number is DG678

## **... and Then the Dog Died**

My family will recognize that heading as the punch line to a joke I've been telling for probably the last forty years. However, this story is no laughing matter.

The phone rang recently. It was from a friend who had just moved to Florida. He wanted to know if I could identify a mushroom growing in his neighbor's yard. He described it as being toadstool shaped, the top of the cap was brown, and the underside of the cap was green and spongy - no gills. I told him I wasn't really familiar with any such mushroom, but volunteered to see what I could find in some of my field guides.

He then told me that the neighbor's dog was discovered dead that morning and a there was half of one of the mushrooms lying in the middle of a concrete slab. They assumed the dog had eaten the other half since there was no logical explanation for the partial mushroom to be located on the slab. The neighbor also told him another dog had died a couple of years ago for no apparent reason.

I stopped the inspection of the field guides and told him that I was not the person to help him since I am just a mushroom hunter, not a mycologist. What I do is recreation - fun and games. A death of even a pet is serious. A mycologist is a person with a degree in mycology - the scientific study of fungi, which includes mushrooms.

I instructed my friend to first of all have his neighbor save some of the mushrooms in question in waxed paper and keep them refrigerated for later identification. Then, destroy any other specimens that were still growing in the yard to prevent any other accidental ingestions. And to lastly find a computer and go to the web page of the North American Mycological Association (NAMA).

<http://www.namyco.org>

On the far right side of the menu selections there is a link to "Toxicology" which gives instructions on what to do if you suspect mushroom poisoning. Since this was a dog and death had already occurred, the only sensible action is to report the incident and try to identify the mushroom.

NAMA's web page also has a history of incidents (both deaths and sicknesses in both humans and pets). NAMA has been tracking them for 30+ years.

There is also a list of volunteer mycologists that are available to help identify a suspect mushroom. But, they will want to see and inspect the actual mushroom for exact identification. I don't think any of them would make a guess from a verbal description. Please note: these volunteers make identification for suspected poisonings. Don't call them just because you found this funky looking thing and would like to know what is is!

Had this involved a human, and hopefully the human was still alive, the instructions are to get to an emergency room post haste. Take whatever samples of the suspect mushroom(s) that are available with you. The doctor will probably call the Poison Control Center at: **800-222-1222**. The American Association of Poison Control Centers also has a web site for assistance at:

<http://www.aapcc.org>

We're sincerely sorry about the dog, But, hopefully there are precautions to be taken to prevent this or something even worse from happening again.