

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
Oregon State College
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OREGON MUSHROOMS OR TOADSTOOLS

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The Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station receives many inquiries relative to the identification of edible and poisonous wild mushrooms or toadstools. There are doubtless three or four hundred varieties of edible and poisonous mushrooms which grow in Oregon. To distinguish any one of these from the others requires accurate knowledge. If you do not specifically know your mushrooms you should not eat them. There is no reason, however, why one should not know definitely six or eight of the edible forms which occur commonly in the neighborhood where one lives.

Some individuals are allergic to certain edible mushrooms, and sometimes a species of mushroom which ordinarily is considered edible in one part of the country proves to be poisonous elsewhere. If you move to a new section of the country eat sparingly of wild edible sorts until you have given them sufficient test.

There is no good, simple test of poisonous as distinguished from edible mushrooms. You must know the species.

Unfortunately, descriptions of the mushrooms of western Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia may not be found in American books, which cover essentially eastern species.

If you care to become acquainted with a limited number of the common species in your neighborhood you could send whole specimens by parcel post to the author, Department of Botany, Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, Corvallis, and an effort will be made to help you. If you are a newcomer to this area, first inquire of your neighbors the ones they use and send those types to us first. If more than one sort is sent at one time, number each so that we may answer by number. Keep a duplicate specimen in a cold place for your information. Do not bother with the occasional one which does not occur in quantities enough for eating. Also, do not send specimens so they will arrive on a weekend when they may spoil in the package.

Specimens should be wrapped in newspaper, not crushed but quite firmly packed. Specimens in moist moss usually arrive in good shape. Do not be disappointed, however, if they spoil in the mail. Some sorts of mushrooms are very perishable.