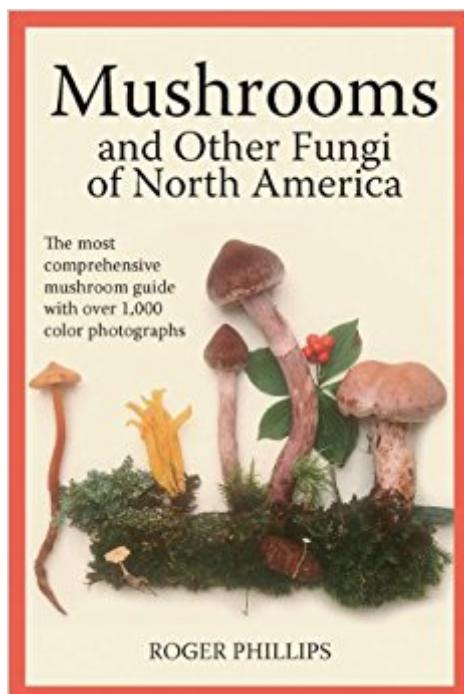


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# Mushrooms And Other Fungi Of North America



## Synopsis

Praise for the hardcover edition: "The quality of the photographs, along with the detailed descriptions, makes the volume an excellent identification guide." -- American Reference Books Annual "If you have even the slightest interest in identifying North American mushrooms, this is -- quite simply -- the book on the topic, bar none." -- January Magazine For amateur collectors or professional mycologists working in the field, this guidebook is quite simply the best North American mushroom reference ever published. Each of the 1,000 specimens is shown in full color on a neutral background to eliminate distractions, and specimens are arranged to show the cap, stem, gills, spines and a cross section, usually in various stages of growth. Roger Phillips identifies all regional varieties of Basidiomycetes, which include chanterelles, puffballs and fungi, and Ascomycetes, which include morels and cup fungi. Detailed descriptive information on each mushroom variety includes: Dimensions of cap, gills and stem Color and texture of flesh Odor and taste Habitat and growing season Distribution and appearance of spores Edibility and poison warnings There is also helpful advice on collecting specimens plus an illustrated beginner identification key and a generic key for the more advanced collector. *Mushrooms and Other Fungi of North America* is at once the ideal introduction to mycology and an essential reference for the experienced collector -- the definitive book in its category.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Our yard, which is surrounded by swamps and a pine barren, is a haven for mushrooms: bright

yellow ones that look like curdled egg yolk; morels in the spring (yummy); groups of flat-headed, long-stemmed mushrooms with black gills that turn into an inky sludge overnight (if you step into the sludge you're doomed), and shelves of multicolored fungi that grow on dead trees. I figured it was time to consult a book on mushrooms, and this one is a doozy. "Mushrooms of North America" has over a thousand color photographs of mushrooms, along with detailed descriptions of its subjects. The explanatory paragraphs include a description of the mushroom's cap, gills, stem, veil, and flesh. There is also information on the mushroom's odor, taste, spores, and habitat (including the season when it can be found). Additional comments are included on important matters such as edibility. The introduction has directions on how to use this book. Novice mycologists like me are supposed start at the two-page "Beginner's Key" that illustrates some of the most common groups (genera) of mushrooms. So, let me go out and collect a mushroom and see if I can identify it from the "Beginner's Key"...Unfortunately, my mushroom doesn't look like anything in the "Beginner's Key" but I have learned two things: (1) I need to collect the base of the mushroom in order to completely identify it. I can't just break the mushroom off at ground level; (2) spore color is an important identification key. This book has directions on how to collect spores, but for the impatient it may be possible to scan through all thousand photographs and get a hit without waiting overnight for the spores to show up, which is what I did. What I thought were three distinct species of mushrooms all turned out to be Shaggy Manes (*Coprinus comatus*) in different stages of growth. According to the author, shaggy manes are edible and delicious when young, but the cap liquefies into such an inky mess, I think I'll give them a pass--at least until I become more familiar with fungi. In spite of the fact that my mushroom's genus wasn't in the "Beginner's Key," I believe this book will be an important element in my mycological education. It's the most comprehensive identification guide I've yet found. P.S. The bright yellow mushrooms in our yard are Jack O'Lanterns (*Omphalotus illudens*)- also not in the "Beginner's Key" but easily identified from their photograph and description. According to the author, it is "poisonous, but usually not fatal" so I'll restrain myself from eating this one, too.

On the plus side, this book exhaustively presents lots of species, including quite a few not covered in other popular guides, and in general, the photos are very good in all respects save one: the color accuracy. It appears that there has been little or no attempt to use color management when it came time to reproduce the photos. It appears that the mushrooms were all photographed in-studio rather than in the field, against a gray background. To appreciate how much the color reproduction varies, just look at the gray background in each photo, and you'll see just how off the color really is. Other

than that, I'd give the book 5 stars, but accurate color is very important in a book like this, so I give it 3 stars.

I have been a mushroom enthusiast for years now, but when I was given this fine book for my birthday, my excitement was doubled. The endless, clear, complete photos give all phases of the fungi you could find in the wild, not just a single photo or drawing. The written information is complete and easy to read. The glossary is amazing. The photos are so lovely you'd be proud to have them hanging in your house! The only drawback is it's too large to take into the field, but I always have it waiting for fast and certain identification at the end of a day. This is a "can't do without it" book for the mushroom hunter. His book on European mushrooms is equally fine.

This book is excellent to keep in the car during forays and cross reference with mushroom field guides. The pictures are almost 3 dimensional and most of them show the various stages of the fruit bodies. The photos also show with clarity, every part of the mushroom in detail in their true colors and variations. This affordable reissue of this highly regarded tome caused quite a clamor in my mycologist club.

To date this is the **BEST** 'mushroom identification book' that I own. I have used this book for the last 17 years and it has not let me down save for a couple of instances. I have the 1991 paperback edition that is quite easy to tug along on vacation, field trips, and back yards. Yes, the size makes it a tad inconvenient on long trips but having large, clear pictures and the identification points on the same or the page next to the picture makes rapid identification a lot easier. So in my opinion this more than makes up for the large size problem. The author does state that for an accurate identification the **ENTIRE** specimen should be uprooted to use the base, spore colors etc as identifying points. Please be aware that in many parks and private property areas uprooting specimens is prohibited except by permission. The pictures are quite clear and the author has identification keys that make the text very easy to follow. There are a couple of issues that I wish were fixed. First, the pictures are not taken in the field but in a studio with a bluish grey background. This helps because **ALL** parts of the mushroom are clearly visible but the background used diffuses the color scheme of the specimen. In most cases this is no big deal I was easily able to identify specimens but in some cases I was led down the wrong path. Secondly, the key does not contain all specimens but that is understandable. All in all I am very happy that I chanced upon this book in 1991. It has served me well all these years. In fact just this morning while working on my sprinkler

heads I used this book to identify a specimen I had not seen before. I have checked out the new edition which is in hardback but I prefer my old reliable companion so I'll just keep it.

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