



Photo courtesy of Josh Nauman.
It's the morels he cooked for our Christmas dinner.

Morel Booster™

Morel Mushroom News From Morel Mania, Inc.

Editor: Tom Nauman

Issue No. 4 • February, 2010

Readers Write

Hi Tom - We'll be traveling to S. Illinois this spring... Wondering if you have any friends in Southern Illinois who can give me good intel on the approximate date for yellow Morels in and around Washington County and the Shawnee National Forest. We have been told that April 1st is typically the date to look for - but I'm skeptical since the source is not all that reliable and our typical morel dates are a month later just 250 miles north. Any info would be a great help to plan our visit with the best chances of hitting the "sweet dates". Thanks for your help! -Tom C

Reply from Tom Nauman:

I've hunted in the Shawnee near the Jonesboro/Anna area and think April 1 is a bit early - specially for yellows. Of course each season is different (a friend of mine has found black morels in February in the Shawnee!) So your source may not be trying to lead you astray. But, my best guess is the third week of April. To get a better clue for a particular year, you'll have to watch weather patterns and check the *Sightings Page* on our website regularly.

You may also want to read my article, "Following The Season North" from March of 2001 which I've reprinted in the next column. Pay close attention to the reference to your car becoming a "time machine" since the Shawnee is such a vast area.

The Last Meal On The Titanic Included Morels!

According to the web site:

<http://redfishsolutions.com>

the last meal served to the first class passengers aboard the Titanic was a sumptuous 11-course dining extravaganza. The Filet Mignons Lili included morel and enoki mushrooms.

You may view the actual recipe and details at the redfish web site.

Morel Booster™

is free publication from
Morel Mania, Inc.

8948 Illinois Highway 18 • Magnolia, Illinois 61336

email: tom@morelmania.com

Phone: 309-364-3319 • Fax: 309-364-2960

Web Site: <http://www.morelmania.com>

To subscribe: Send an email to tom@morelmania.com with "Subscribe" in the subject line. If you no longer wish to receive the Morel Booster™, send an email with "Remove" in the subject line. If your email address changes, send an email to us and include both your old and new email addresses. Morel Mania, Inc. does not sell, rent, give away, or share addresses, phone numbers, or e-mail addresses. All of your information remains confidential.

Copyright 2010, Morel Mania, Inc.

Following the Season North

Originally published in March, 2001. By Tom Nauman

This question came from Central Illinois. "Can you tell us when the "usual" season for morels occurs in Northern Wisconsin? We're talking pretty far north--like Eagle River or even Boulder Junction. We will be vacationing in the area toward the end of May and are hoping to be able to alternate between fishing and 'shrooming. (By that time, we should be pretty much recovered from the end of April/early May rush in Central Illinois.)"

There is an easy way to determine the correct time. For us in Magnolia (Illinois) we always count on there being mushrooms on the first weekend of May. It is often not the best weekend of a given season, but there is always something out there. We've been having our festival on the first weekend of May for the past five years. In '96 & '97 the mushrooms found that weekend were mostly small grey ones indicating that it was early in the season. Had the festival been a week earlier, we might not have had any mushrooms at all. In '98 and '00 The mushrooms found were mostly big yellows which are indicative of the latter part of the season. A lot of those from '00 were too old to consume. Had the festival been a week later, we wouldn't have had too many edible mushrooms at all. In '99 we hit the season just about right in the middle.

So for us, the "sure" weekend is the first weekend of May. Again, not always the best, but there's always something. Remember, too, that the weekend can be anywhere from May 1 through May 7. So for practical purposes we're talking about the first week of May.

From my observations, with all else being equal, the season travels approximately 100 miles to the north per week. I mention "all else being equal" because mushroom production is affected by temperature, moisture, soil type, and altitude. The Wisconsin State line is just about 100 miles north of Magnolia. So the "sure" week would be the second week of May. Eagle River is about 200 miles north of the Wisconsin/Illinois border, without a great difference in elevation. So the "sure" week there would be the fourth week of May. So I think your timing is great to find at least some.

Boyne City, Michigan hosts the National Morel Festival. It is always held on the weekend after Mother's Day which means it occurs on the third weekend of May. In latitude, Boyne City is about 50 miles south of Eagle River. So again, your timing looks perfect.

Additionally, you can create your own good fortune. Let's say you're near Eagle River and all you are finding is little

-Continued, see *Following the Season* on page 2

Following the Season - continued from page 1

greys, which are delicious, but you'd like a little more volume. Your vehicle can become a time machine of sorts. Just drive 50 or so miles south and you should be a little later in the season. Remember too that the black morels usually appear before the little greys. So don't start driving until you're sure there's not a big herd of them around. The opposite is equally true. If the mushrooms near Eagle River are mostly old and spoiled, drive awhile north to travel to an earlier point in the season.

When you get to mountains, the 100 miles per week theory still holds true, but altitude wreaks havoc on just looking at a map and figuring out where to stop. The season begins later at higher elevations. It also makes a difference as to which side of the mountain you are on. The season generally begins on the south facing slopes as the sun warms them first.

The 100 miles per week theory may also be affected by moisture, temperature, and soil conditions. If you travel 200 miles north two weeks after a great season in Illinois to an area that is solid rock, or lacking rainfall, or the jet stream has brought in unseasonably warm temperatures, don't expect the same results.

Once the season starts, you can check the "Sightings" page on our website: <http://www.morelmania.com> to find out how the season is developing and use the 100 miles/week formula to determine when the best time will be for a particular area. Morel Mania started the page in 1998 when fellow hunters emailed their successes to us, It seemed such a waste to not share the information. So now we post all reports to the page sorted by state and date. Reports from prior years are also included.

Morel Mania Appearances in February

We will be attending two events in February of 2010. The first is the

Michigan Deer & Turkey Spectacular

Lansing Center
333 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48933
Event Hours:
Friday, Feb. 12, 2010 • 2:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Saturday, Feb. 13, 2010 • 9:00 am to 7:00 pm
Sunday, Feb. 14, 2010 • 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

**WE'RE
IN
BOOTH
#106**

Two weeks later, you'll find us at the

Illinois Deer & Turkey Classic

Interstate Center
2301 W Market St., Bloomington, IL 61704
Event Hours:
Friday, Feb. 26, 2010 • 2:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Saturday, Feb. 27, 2010 • 9:00 am to 7:00 pm
Sunday, Feb. 28, 2010 • 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

**WE'RE
IN
BOOTH
#915**

Both of these premier hunting sports shows are productions of Target Communications. Their website for complete event information is at:

<http://www.deerinfo.com>

We enjoy being there to see old friends and make new ones. Bring a copy of this newsletter or our catalog 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.

History Channel -

How The Earth Was Made

Several years ago I was contacted by Illinois State Geology Section. They wanted to drill a deep hole in my pasture. As I remember, they had been contracted by the Illinois Department of Transportation to compare sedimentation on the east side of the Illinois River to that on the west side. The study was to be used by the IDOT for the proposed upgrading of Illinois Route 29 on the west side of Henry, Illinois.

The crew was here for approximately ten days and we enjoyed the experience. Since it was spring, we even fed them morels on their last day here.

While they were here, some of the geologists involved took a walk onto my brother, Dave's, land. A tributary of Sandy Creek runs the length of Dave's property. The scientists discovered an area where a hillside is washing into the creek. And the exposed soil shows the epitome of the sedimentation layers that remain from the glaciers of the Ice Age.

This area is where the Mississippi River once flowed. Had it not been for the glaciers, I might have grown up a Hawkeye fan!

I was again contacted by the ISGS in July because The producers of the History Channel series *How the Earth Was Made* wanted to film the area. A film crew from London, England spent most of one hot August day at the site.

The episode is scheduled to air on Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 8:00 p.m. I'm not sure if that is Eastern Time or Central Time, so check your listings. It should be interesting.



Morel Salt Available Again!

Many customers have asked for the Morel and the Maitake (Hen-of-the-Woods) Seasoning Salts. We're please to announce that they are available again.

We'll have them on the "Edibles" page of our web catalog soon.

Other Scheduled Appearances for 2010

Deer & Turkey Expos

Ohio:
March 19 - 21, 2010
Columbus

Wisconsin:
April 9 - 11, 2010
Madison

**Mansfield
Mushroom Festival**

April 24 & 25, 2010
Mansfield, Indiana

Morel University

May 1, 2010
Henry, Illinois

**50th Annual National
Morel Mushroom
Festival**

May 13 - 16, 2010
Boyer City, Michigan

**Spoon River Valley
Scenic Drive**

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