



Morel Booster™

Morel Mushroom News From Morel Mania, Inc.

Editor: Tom Nauman

Special Edition • December 2009

Yes, Virginia, Morels May Grow!

There are those that tell me that morels simply “pop” out of the ground. And once that happens, they are full size. It’s a discussion that is never-ending. In my opinion, morels typically emerge from the ground taking several hours and it usually happens overnight. From that point, they may grow or they may not. It depends mostly on the weather. And, they may grow for several weeks. Or, again, not at all.

I did a photo study in 1998 that documented morel growth. My photography skills aren’t the greatest, but all four pictures are of the same mushroom.



04/22/98 - 1.5” tall



04/28/98 - 3.5” tall



05/03/98 - 5” tall



05/09/98 - 6.5” tall

I’ve witnessed morel growth many other times, but never with a camera handy. I’ve also left some morels to grow, but they did not do so. Again it depends on the weather: moisture and temperature.

Here’s a link to another morel study by Pamela Kaminski:

<http://pkaminski.homestead.com/morelgrowth.html>

Copy/paste or type the above URL in you browser window. It is of a black morel, but the results are similar. And, Pamela is a much better photographer than I am.

The most frequent comment I hear goes something like this, “I walked through an area and didn’t see a thing. I came back through an hour later and there were plenty. So they must’a just popped up.” Sorry, the lighting was different or your viewing angle was different. But, they were there the first time, you just didn’t see them.

Not all who wander are lost.

~ J. R. R. Tolkien.

Fresh Mushroom Holiday Sale



Golden Chanterelle
\$14.95 per pound
plus 2nd Day FedEx
Regular price is \$19.95
Save \$5.00 per pound



Hen-Of-The-Woods
\$16.95 per pound
plus 2nd Day FedEx
Regular price is \$21.95
Save \$5.00 per pound

We’ve made special arrangements for unique gift ideas or a very special treat for your Holiday feast at a reduced price.

These are fresh and must be shipped 2nd Day FedEx.

These are not available through our online ordering system. You must email Jason for details at

morelmasters@centurytel.net

Tell him you saw it in the *Morel Booster*™ to receive the special price. Please order by December 7.

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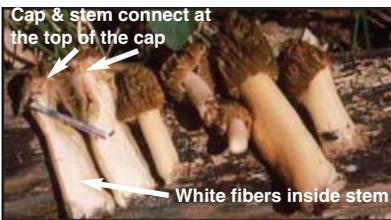
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Happy Holidays

Vicky and I wish you and yours a tremendously joyous Holiday Season.

Somebody Wants Your Gyromitras & Verpas!



Above left: *Gyromitra caroliniana*.
Above right: *Gyromitra esculenta*.
Left: *Verpa bohemica*.

Photos by Darrell Cox

Robert Giles contacted us toward the end of the 2009 morel season asking if we knew anyone that could send him some gyromitra or verpa mushrooms. The strange request led to my dissertation on why one should never consume these species.

Robert interrupted me because he doesn't want to eat them, he is conducting research on alternative fuels. That made a lot more sense.

The gyromitras (*G. esculenta*, *G. caroliniana*, *G. fastigiata*, and others) all contain levels of monomethylhydrazine (MMH) which is a chemical also found in rocket fuel. And also why we don't recommend eating them. They are sometimes mistakenly called "red morels" and "beefsteak morels" but the truth is that they are not morels at all.

I've been involved in discussions, even arguments, on this subject because there are people that eat and enjoy these mushrooms with no apparent ill effects. They are even sold fresh and canned in some European grocery stores. But, other people have become extremely ill and even died from eating them.

The verpas are a different story. They are sometimes referred to as the early morel, bell morel, skirt cap, or simply cap. These are the ones that people sometimes mistake for the Half-free morel, *Morchella semilibera*. While the Half-free morel is a true morel, the verpas are not. The main differences are that the cap and stem of the verpa connect at the top of the stem - hanging like a thimble on the end of a pencil and the stem of the verpa is not hollow. It is filled with a cottony substance. See the picture above.

I'm not sure that verpas contain MMH or not. But if Robert can somehow figure out how to make an alternative fuel from mushrooms, I'm all for him and wish him success.

Contact Robert at rgilesemcq@netzero.com or 505-792-5477. His address is 132 Ranchitos Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87114

Some News on Morelfilm

We reported in the last issue that there was "No news on Morelfilm. It's the project by two Purdue University students, Ed Gilmore and Dave Yonkman, to film a documentary of The Illinois State Morel Mushroom Hunting Championship.

They have over 100 hours of video including the last interview ever given by Larry Lonik and the last seminar by Larry also. They "shadowed" all of involved for literally days at a time. They had eight camera crews on hand at the 2002 Championship. One crew tried to tag along with Darrell Cox, a two-time Grand Champion, but couldn't keep up. They lost Darrell within five minutes. Yes, they were carrying camera equipment, but they're college students and Darrell was over 65 years old at the time.

We had not heard from Dave or Ed since 2004 despite regular phone calls and emails. Our article in the last issue asked if anyone knew them to please have them contact me. It worked! I received an email from Ed within days. Ed is now a software developer in Florida and Dave owns a video production company in New York City.

The project came to a standstill because they graduated, got "real" jobs, and just don't have the time available to finish the film right now. I figured that was the case. Hopefully, they can resume the editing soon.

Edit/paste the link below to see a trailer of the film:

<http://www.deadelm.com/morelmaniacs.html>

Special Price On Dried Black Morels

Our pickers had a good year and we have an abundance of dehydrated Black Morels We're passing the savings on to you.

While supplies last, the price listed is discounted 20%.

They'll impress everyone at your Christmas dinner. Visit the "Edibles" page in the Catalog section of the web site for details and frequently asked questions:

<http://www.morelmania.com>

Morel Mania Scheduled Appearances for 2010

Here's a list of events that we will attend in 2010. Stop and visit. In fact, Bring a copy of this newsletter 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.

Deer & Turkey Expos

Michigan:
February 12 - 14, 2010
Lansing

Illinois:
February 26 - 28, 2010
Bloomington

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
Boyne City, Michigan

**Spoon River Valley
Scenic Drive**
October 2 - 3 & 9 - 10, 2010
London Mills, Illinois