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Morel Booster™

Morel Mushroom News From Morel Mania, Inc.

Editor: Tom Nauman

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This and That

(Things I Should Have Written Months Ago, But Life Got In My Way)

No doubt that for most of us the 2013 morel season was great even if it did get a late start. And it was certainly much better than the three prior years. What's really strange is the comparison of the 2012 and 2013 seasons. We found our first morels in 2012 on March 22. In 2013 they appeared on May 1 - a full five weeks difference in the start of the seasons. Additionally, 2012 was, for the most part, very warm and dry. For most of us, it was over in two weeks. The season in Central Illinois is typically over by Mother's Day. In 2013, with cooler and wetter weather - remember the floods?, We were still picking ten days after that. Your season may have been different depending on how much further north or south of us you are and the amount of rainfall you received. The general rule-of-thumb is that the season moves north at the rate of 100 miles per week.



My Grandson, Kaden, with the first morels of 2013.



The back of the T-shirt from the Brown County, IN festival lists the musicians, mushroom guides, and sponsors.

One of the highlights of 2013 was a new event for morel hunters. The **Simply Music Simply Morels Festival** in Brown County, Indiana was a wonderful blend of mushroom hunting and bluegrass music held at the Bill Monroe Music Park and Campground near Bean Blossom, IN. It is normally scheduled to happen on the second-to-last weekend of April. This year it will be April 25-27 due to Easter being on the regular weekend.

-Continued , see *This and That* on page 2

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Also on that weekend of April 26 & 27 will be the **Mansfield, Mushroom Festival** in Mansfield, Indiana in Parke County and will again feature the morel auction. Our Morel Mania booth will be in Brown County on Friday and Parke County on Saturday & Sunday.

There is big news from the **Midwest Morel Fest** in Ottawa, IL on May 2 & 3 and you are hearing it here first. In addition to the regular cash prizes for the number of morels found at the **Illinois State Morel Mushroom Hunting Championship**, there will be a **cash prize of \$500** and a trophy for the largest morel found during the contest! We'll have complete details on the morelmania.com website soon. **You may register anytime by calling the Ottawa Visitors Center at 815-434-2737.** We'll have a complete list of festivals next issue.

Prior to the morel season, we'll be making appearances at several expos. First is the **Indiana Deer, Turkey & Waterfowl Expo** <http://indianadeerandturkeyexpo.com> which is scheduled for the second weekend of the **Boat, Sport & Travel Show** <http://renfroproductions.com> (February 20 - 23) at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis. While there, Tom Nauman of Morel Mania, Inc. will give several seminars on morel hunting in the **Quiet Sports Expo** area. Check the website for seminar times <http://quietsportsexpo.com/#>

We will also be at the **Field & Stream Ohio Deer & Turkey Expo** <http://deerinfo.com/ohio> at the Ohio State Fairgrounds on March 14 - 16.

What does the 2014 season look like? All this snow will certainly help if it melts slowly and sinks into the ground. It's only my opinion, but I believe the sub-zero temperatures will help more than the amount of snow. But, what's really critical is the amount of rainfall we receive from mid-March to mid-May and how warm or cold the soil temps are.

Remember, when your soil temp get to 50 degrees, it's time to start looking. Check the soil temps in your area at:

<http://dtn.ilfb.org/index.cfm?show=1&mapID=20&show-Menu=0>

To check precipitation, go to:

<http://water.weather.gov/precip/>



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<http://www.morelmania.com/3Catalog/newmisc.html>

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<http://www.morelmania.com>

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Psssst!

Hey Buddy, Wanna Buy Some Shrooms?

No, we're not talking about "funny" or "magic" mushrooms. But, it may be just as illegal in some states to sell morels! "What the heck?" you ask. It all started in 2008 when two different chefs in Maine bought some mushrooms from a private picker and became terribly ill after consuming them. Fortunately, none were served to restaurant patrons. The mushrooms involved were poisonous lilac brown boletes that were sold as edible king boletes. Read the entire story from 2011 at:

http://www.pressherald.com/news/maine-weighs-wild-mushroom-regulations_2011-05-02.html?pagenum=full

In response, Maine and several other states have enacted laws regulating the sale of wild mushrooms. Maine created a task force of mycologists, health officials, foragers, the state restaurant association and chefs to study the situation and make recommendations. The law was passed in April of 2012, but has not yet been implemented because the program to certify foragers and brokers has not been put in place. A follow up article from December of 2012 can be found at: http://www.pressherald.com/news/safety-of-wild-mushrooms-put-off-as-law-gets-moldy-_2012-12-16.html

Other states are dealing with the issue of consumer safety in different ways. In Illinois, only morels may be sold to the public and a notice given that the morels have been wild harvested and are not subject to regulatory inspection. This seems to be in effect for farmers markets or grocery store sales and does not mention private sales See the Technical Information Bulletin/ Food #16 through the Illinois Department of Public Health at:

<http://www.oak-park.us/sites/default/files/farmers-market/mushrooms-16.pdf>

Iowa does have a certification program through the University of Iowa at Ames. It's a three hour course with a cost of \$50. It's pretty basic and emphasizes the differences between morels and gyromitras, verpas, etc. The law in Iowa is that wild harvested mushrooms (morels only - there is no certification for other mushrooms) must be inspected by someone: either the seller, the buyer, or middle-man/broker that has successfully completed the certification course. three classes will be held in late March and April. You must pre-register so they know how many people will attend.

Contact Mark Gleason (phone: 515-294-0579; email: mgleason@iastate.edu)

Missouri's food code requires that "wild mushrooms that are to be sold to the public be inspected and approved by a mushroom identification expert".

<http://health.mo.gov/safety/foodsafety/pdf/missourifoodcode.pdf>

To become an "expert", simply take the class in Iowa, forward a copy to the Missouri Department of Public Health, wait a couple of weeks to get your "expert" papers in the mail.

The Minnesota Food Code states that a food establishment may only purchase wild mushrooms (morels only) from an approved source where each mushroom is individually inspected and found to be safe by a mushroom identification expert.

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety/foods/mushroom.pdf>

Indiana's code is tougher. http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/410_iac_7-24.pdf (section 164) states that "Except as specified in subsection (b), mushroom species picked in the wild shall be obtained from sources where each mushroom is individually inspected and found to be safe by a mushroom identification expert." To be an "expert" in Indiana, you either have to have a degree in mycology or be referred by several people that have degrees in mycology. There are currently only three people, I'm included, certified to inspect morels in Indiana.

For the specific laws in your state, do a google or bing search for "your state wild mushroom sale law".



My certificate from the state of Iowa.