

Mushroom Identification Workshop in Evansville

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The professor for my college mycology (study of fungi) class used to start each semester off with this little phrase: “There are OLD mushroom hunters; and there are BOLD mushroom hunters; but there are no OLD, BOLD mushroom hunters!”

Basically, he said, it is very easy to mistake one mushroom species for another, often with deadly results. You should never put anything in your mouth, he said, until you’ve positively identified it...especially if it’s a mushroom.

And yet, despite all this, harvesting wild mushrooms is an increasingly popular pastime. In fact, there’s a growing interest in trying to market wild mushrooms, especially at Farmer’s Markets and local restaurants. However, buyers are understandably reluctant to purchase mushrooms just on the seller’s say-so of what type they are, and there are precious few mushroom experts in Indiana who have the time to visit all collectors and certify their harvests for them.

To help collectors and potential sellers, the Hoosier Mushroom Society and Purdue Extension have teamed up to offer a Wild Mushroom Certification class in Evansville on Saturday, July 9, from 9 am to 5 pm Central time. The class will be held at Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve, 551 North Boeke Road in Evansville. Cost of the program is \$125, which includes the study materials, the test, and the certificate. You can register for the class online by visiting this site: <http://mycomap.com/store/product/10-indiana-wild-mushroom-certification-evansville>.

This class will NOT make one a mushroom expert. This course has a very specific list of species that it is focused on. These include the best edible mushrooms, with the most characters to allow for an accurate identification. These species represent the list that have been approved for sale in the State of Indiana and that the Hoosier Mushroom Society is willing to certify people for. You will only be certified for the species listed, not all wild mushrooms.

The Indiana State Department of Health and county health departments will honor this course as a basis for fulfilling the requirement of mushrooms needing to be certified by a "mushroom identification expert" before they can be sold.

If you’re not interested in selling mushrooms and becoming certified, but still want more knowledge on some edible mushrooms in our area, there will be a “Mushroom Foray” on Friday, July 8, starting at 6 pm, also at Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve. Cost of this program is \$15 per person (free for Hoosier Mushroom Society members), plus the \$5 entry fee for Wesselman Woods (free for Wesselman Nature Society members).

To register for the Friday night Mushroom Foray, contact the Wesselman Nature Society at 812-479-0771. For information on the Wild Mushroom Certification, contact Steve Russell of the

Hoosier Mushroom Society by email at steve@hoosiermushrooms.org or by phone at 765-532-4227. And to learn how to get rid of mushrooms growing in your lawn, contact me at the Purdue Extension Service at (812) 435-5287.