

INTRODUCTION

Mushroom poisoning is a threat to lives of many mushroom collectors as due to look-alike characters of mushrooms. Therefore it is important for all of us to be aware of some of the most poisonous mushrooms in our forest. Every year there are some deaths in the county by consuming poisonous mushrooms. It is therefore important that one can identify some of these mushrooms in the field. This brochure provides you with information on some of the poisonous mushrooms, their description and the symptoms of poisoning. It is safer not to consume mushrooms that you are not familiar with. There are also many look alike mushrooms. Do not collect and consume the mushroom that looks familiar but you are not sure of. Protect yourself and others by avoiding the mushroom that you are not able to identify properly. Applying popular myths can also be very dangerous where mushroom consumption is concerned.

Here is the description of a few poisonous mushrooms. In case of symptoms similar to mushroom poisonings indicated, seek medical help immediately.



Panaeolus papilionaceus

Habitat: Manure or in cow dongs.

Description: Cap campanulate or hemi-spheric, first brownish pink viscid then dry lucid white tinged with pink.

Stalk thin, tall, fragile, same color as cap and hollow.

Flesh thin, odor and flavor mild. Gills yellowish brown. Spore print black

Type of poisoning: Neurotoxins (Psilocybin poisoning)

Symptoms: Inebriation or hallucinations without drowsiness or sleep. Complete and spontaneous recovery within 5-10 hours; may take up to 24 hours with large doses.



Gymnopilius spectabilis

Common name: Big laughing mushroom

Habitat: Usually in clusters around stumps and trees.

Description: Cap yellow orange to yellow-ish buff to reddish brown, Stalk solid, firm, dry rusty orange to rusty yellow. Gills ochre-buff. Spore print rusty orange. Veil pale yellowish.

Type of poisoning: Neurotoxins (Psilocybin Poisoning)

Symptoms: Inebriation or hallucinations without drowsiness or sleep. Complete and spontaneous recovery within 5-10 hours; may take up to 24 hours with large doses.



Coprinus atramentarius

Common name: Inky Cap Mushroom

Habitat: In tufts, terrestrial but associated with buried wood.

Description: Ovoid then conical and convex in old age. Stalk whitish. Gills crowded, white at first then black and soon deliquescing (becoming inky). Spore black. Smell faint and pleasant

Type of poisoning: Disulfiram-like toxins (Coprine converted to cyclopropanone hydrate)

Symptoms: Flushing, palpitations, rapid heart-beat, rapid, labored breathing occur within 1/2 to 2 hours after consuming alcohol, if alcohol was consumed within 72 hours of mushroom ingestion (a short-lived acute toxic syndrome).

Recovery is spontaneous and complete within a few to several hours after onset of symptoms but its use is cautioned.



Clitocybe cerussata

Common name: Deadly Cortinarius

Habitat: Conifers and broad leaf

Description: Cap thin, depressed convex or with slightly umbonate, white later turning yellowish brown in the centre. Gills thick and whitish. Stalk whitish. Flesh white. Spore print white

Type of poisoning: Neurotoxins (Muscarin)

Symptoms: Excessive sweating, lacrimation, salivation, hallucination, excitement, convulsion, etc, beginning 15-30 min after ingestion. Complete recovery within approximately 2 hours.



Amanita pantherina

Common name: Panther cap

Habitat: coniferous or deciduous forest.

Description: Ochraceous brown covered with white warts. Stem white with ring and bulbous base within volva. Flesh white. Spore white

Type of poisoning: Neurotoxins (Muscarin)

Symptoms: Delirium with sleepiness or coma developing within 1 or 2 hours after ingestion.

Alternating periods of drowsiness and excitement for several hours, followed by total recovery.



Ramaria formosa

Common name: Pinkish Coral Mushroom

Habitat: Conifers and oak forest

Description: Profusely branched from a fleshy base (stalk), pinkish to pinkish-orange, salmon colored branches. Spore print pale ochraceous and taste bitter.

Type of poisoning: Protoplasmic poisons

Symptoms: Causes diarrhea.

