

# The Register-Guard

LIFE FOOD

COOKING

## So many ways to have fun with fungi

Mushroom Adventure Weekend highlights how to use Oregon's bounty of wild mushrooms



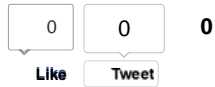


Chanterelle Marmalade (Ben Fink / www.eugeniabone.com)

**BY JOANNA BARTLETT**

*For The Register-Guard*

OCT 21, 2015



**A**dd this to the quirky features of Oregon life: edible wild mushrooms and the people who love them.

Edible wild mushrooms grow abundantly in Oregon's warm, rainy fall and spring seasons.

"There's probably between 40 and 50 good edibles here," says Sandy Patton, community outreach coordinator of the Cascade Mycological Society. "And probably a dozen that people hunt on a regular basis."

In October and November, some of those popular varieties include lobster, chanterelles, russulas and slippery Jacks.

Sound good? They're growing in the woods all around us.

But before you set out to hunt for wild mushrooms, there are some things you need to know.

"Our biggest thing is safety. We always recommend people go out with an experienced mushroomer," Patton says.

Cascade Mycological Society offers its members several forays each month during the mushroom season. "The No. 1 thing is making sure you have proper identification."

At the society's monthly meetings, folks can get the mushrooms they've found on walks in the woods or in their yards identified — before they try eating them.

Many mushrooms have lookalikes — and these can range from being bland to indigestible to poisonous. "Most of them have one feature that stands out," Patton says. "There's usually a characteristic that sets them apart from the lookalikes." And an experienced mushroom hunter can help you tell the difference.

Eugenia Bone, author of several culinary books including "Mycophilia: Revelations From the Weird World of Mushrooms," agrees.

“It’s so much more effective to learn about mushrooms from somebody in the flesh than in a book.

“There’s a lot of really good books out there but, in many cases, you’re looking at a single snapshot in time,” Bone says. “In the wild, chances are you’ll see a population rather than a single specimen. You’ll see young ones and old ones and some that have squirrel pee on them. You get past a specific image of the mushroom and start to see it as a spectrum. That’s what makes you a good mushroom hunter. The clubs are really good for that. Plus they’re full of really quirky, fun people.”

Bone is the keynote speaker for the Cascade Mycological Society’s Mushroom Adventure Weekend, which starts Thursday and runs through Sunday. She’ll talk about traveling around the United States and the world to hunt mushrooms and connect with fellow mycophiles.

Every hunt for mushrooms is a little different.

Patton likens it to an Easter egg hunt in the woods. “The first time you do it, it’s so exciting,” she says. “The first two years, my husband and I didn’t even have rain gear on. We’d come home and realize we were soaked, but it was so much fun it didn’t matter.”

Sometimes, Bone says, the hunt is easy.

She once went on a foray for chanterelles in Colorado, where “mushrooms were up in such enormous numbers, we’d drive up to 10,000 feet on the forest road, step out of the Jeep and start collecting.

“Other times, it’s very hard work. You really walk a lot for these mushrooms.” But it’s not aerobic exercise, she says. “We’re just walking in really small circles, around the base of every tree. It’s more like doing one of those meditation mazes.”

If tromping through the woods hunting for mushrooms isn’t for you, perhaps growing them is an option.

“You can grow them around here in logs and stumps,” says Jen Olsen of the Mushroomery. “You put in plug spawn and it grows seasonally. You can also grow indoor mushroom kits which usually produce after a few weeks, but they only fruit for a few months.”

The Mushroomery sells inoculated dowel plugs and indoor mushroom kits, as well as fresh cultivated and harvested wild mushrooms. It will offer tours of its farm during the Mushroom Adventure Weekend on Thursday.

You can also skip home growing and just buy wild mushrooms.

“One of the best places to buy mushrooms is at a farmers’ market,” Olsen says. “You’re supporting the wildcrafter or the farmer directly. And you’re getting a really fresh mushroom.”

Wild mushrooms are spendy, so get the highest quality you can.

“I use the same litmus test as flowers and fruits,” Bone says. “I look for the same elements: fresh look, a good strong smell. Slimy is bad.”

To get the longest storage life out of your fresh mushrooms, store them in a paper bag in the fridge, Bone and Patton advise.

When you cook with mushrooms — and both Bone and Patton recommend only eating them cooked — treat them like meat. Wash them well first, then cook them like a protein.

“I always recommend cooking the mushrooms separately and then add them to the dish,” Bone says. “They love to be roasted, broiled and cooked in a dry pan. Anything that’s going to caramelize them at the end of cooking is going to bring out that mushroom flavor.”

You can learn all about the weird world of mushrooms — finding, growing and cooking them — at the Mushroom Adventure Weekend, which includes a tour of the Mushroomery farm, a showing of a documentary on slime mold, mushroom landscaping workshops, a mushroom hunting foray, and Bone’s presentation and book signing.

The weekend concludes with the Mount Pisgah Arboretum Mushroom Festival on Sunday and its massive display of local wild mushrooms, culinary demonstrations and nature walks.

### Chanterelle Marmalade

*Eugenia Bone first tasted this scrumptious marmalade at a New York Mycological Society potluck. It is fantastic with cheese and as a condiment with roasted game birds and pork. The recipe is adapted from one created by a mushroom enthusiast, Long Litt Woon, who lives in Norway. This recipe is from "The Kitchen Ecosystem" (Potter, 2014). Makes 1 pint.*

½ pound chanterelle mushrooms (fresh or frozen)

1¼ cups water

½ cup sugar

½ cup vinegar

¼ cup minced onion

6 prunes, pitted and chopped

3 garlic cloves

3 cardamom pods

1 2-inch piece cinnamon stick

1 bay leaf

1 teaspoon minced ginger

¼ teaspoon mustard seeds

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

If using frozen mushrooms, thaw them and then squeeze out the extra water and retain it. (Taste the water. If it is very bitter, discard. Otherwise, save it.) Chop the mushrooms into bite-sized pieces. Heat a dry skillet over a medium high heat and add the mushrooms. Fresh mushrooms should cook until they release their water, and the water evaporates, about 10 minutes. Frozen mushrooms need only be cooked about 5 minutes (assuming that they were cooked before freezing).

In a small saucepan add the mushrooms and the remaining ingredients. If you used frozen chanterelles, then replace the regular water with an equal amount of the water you squeezed out. Cook the marmalade, uncovered, over a medium low heat for about 20 minutes, until the liquid reduces and is syrupy. It will be amber colored.

Pour the marmalade into a sterilized jar. (Boil the jar and lid for 10 minutes at sea level, adding 1 minute for every 1,000 feet above sea level.) Place on the lid, and screw on the band. The marmalade holds in the refrigerator for about 3 months.

— *Recipe from [www.eugeniabone.com](http://www.eugeniabone.com)*

*Joanna Bartlett is a Eugene freelance writer. Reach her at [joanna.y.bartlett@gmail.com](mailto:joanna.y.bartlett@gmail.com).*

### Mushroom Adventure Weekend

What: Cascade Mycological Society's annual event about wild mushrooms

When: Thursday, Oct. 22 through Sunday, Oct. 25

For full schedule: <http://cascademyco.org/mushroom-festival/>

#### Highlights

- 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday — Tours of Mushroomery farm, 39997 Mt. Hope Drive, Lebanon; 541-258-5855 or [themushroomery@gmail.com](mailto:themushroomery@gmail.com).
- 9:15 p.m., Thursday — Showing of "The Creeping Garden," a slime mold documentary, Bijou Art Cinemas, 492 E. 13th Ave.
- All day Friday — Mushroom hunting foray with Joe Spivack; cost \$50; register at [cascademyco.org/mushroom-festival/](http://cascademyco.org/mushroom-festival/)
- 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Friday — Author Eugenia Bone, keynote presentation, Unitarian Universalist Church, 1685 W. 13th Ave.
- 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday — Eugenia Bone, happy hour, meet and greet, book signing; no-host cocktails paired with special wild mushroom appetizers, Party Downtown, 64 W Eighth Ave.

### MOUNT PISGAH ARBORTEUM MUSHROOM FESTIVAL

What: Includes one of the largest fungal displays on West Coast, five 45-minute culinary demos from mushroom-loving local cooks,

guided nature walks, hay rides, arts and crafts vendors, a plant sale, live music and local food venues.

When: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday

Where: 34901 Frank Parrish Road

Cost: \$8 and free for ages 12 and younger

Of note: No dogs

For more information: [www.mountpisgaharboretum.com/festivals-events/mushroom-festival](http://www.mountpisgaharboretum.com/festivals-events/mushroom-festival)

*"It's so much more effective to learn about mushrooms from somebody in the flesh than in a book," says author Eugenia Bone. "The clubs are really good for that. Plus they're full of really quirky, fun people."*

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