

British Columbia Mushroom Identification Chart

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Species	Season	Where It Grows	Key ID Features	Dangerous Look-alike	Edibility
Pacific golden chanterelle (Cantharellus formosus)	Sep - Dec	Douglas fir forest, coast	False gills (blunt ridges), fruity smell, peppery flavour	Woolly chanterelle (scaly cap, GI upset)	Edible
White chanterelle (Cantharellus subalbidus)	Sep - Nov	Same habitat as goldens	All-white, false gills, dense flesh	None serious once ridges confirmed	Edible
Hedgehog mushroom (Hydnum repandum, H. umbilicatum)	Sep - Dec	Coastal conifer forest	Spines (teeth) under the cap, not gills	None — the spines are definitive	Edible
Morel (Morchella spp.)	Apr - Jun	Riparian ground; prior-year burn zones	Honeycomb cap, completely hollow interior	False morel (chambered inside, brain-like cap)	Edible; always cook
Pine mushroom / matsutake (Tricholoma murrillianum)	Sep - Nov	Interior & North Coast pine/fir	Spicy-cinnamon smell, firm white flesh, cottony veil	Deadly Amanita smithiana — same habitat, no cinnamon smell	Edible
Lobster mushroom (Hypomyces lactifluorum)	Jul - Sep	Coastal & interior forest floor	Hard orange-red crust over white flesh	Only take firm, bright specimens	Edible
Cauliflower mushroom (Sparassis radicata, often listed as S. crispa)	Sep - Nov	Base of conifers	Ruffled, noodle-like cream mass	None serious	Edible
King bolete (Boletus edulis group)	Jul - Oct	Higher elevations, Okanagan/Kootenays	Pores not gills, white netting on fat stem	Bitter bolete; avoid red-pored boletes	Edible
Honey mushroom (Armillaria spp.)	Sep - Nov	Clusters on dead/dying trees	White spore print, ring on stem, always cook	Deadly Galerina — spore print every batch	Edible; always cook
Velvet shank (Flammulina velutipes)	Nov - Mar	Dead hardwood, coastal winters	Orange sticky cap, black velvety stem base	Deadly Galerina again — spore print (white vs rusty)	Edible
Yellowfoot / winter chanterelle (Craterellus tubaeformis)	Sep - Jan	Rotting conifer wood and moss, coast	Hollow yellow-brown stem, brown funnel cap, vein-like ridges not gills	Deadly Galerina on the same rotting wood (true gills, rusty spore print)	Edible
Admirable bolete (Aureoboletus mirabilis)	Aug - Nov	On or near rotting conifers, especially hemlock	Maroon velvety cap, yellow pores, grows on wood	Boletus fibrillosus (grows on the ground); avoid red-pored boletes	Edible
Shrimp russula (Russula xerampelina group)	Aug - Nov	Conifer forest	Red-purple cap, fishy shrimp-like smell, stem browns when scratched	Other red-capped russulas; insist on both the smell and the browning	Edible
Saffron milk cap (Lactarius deliciosus group)	Aug - Nov	Under conifers	Orange cap, orange latex that slowly stains green	Other milk caps with white latex; confirm orange milk	Edible
Bear's head tooth (Hericiium abietis)	Aug - Nov	Dead conifer logs and stumps	White cascading spines from branched stalks, no gills	Coral tooth (Hericiium coralloides), also edible; confirm spines, not gills	Edible
Western chicken of the woods (Laetiporus conifericola)	Jul - Oct	On mature conifers	Orange shelves, yellow pore surface, no gills	Poisonings reported; never eat raw, young soft edges only, cook well	Edible with caution; never raw
Oyster mushroom (Pleurotus ostreatus, P. pulmonarius)	Year-round, peaks Apr - Jun and Sep - Nov	Dead alder and cottonwood	Shelf caps, gills running down a short stem, white-lilac spore print	Angel wings (thin, white, on conifer wood; avoid)	Edible
Shaggy mane (Coprinus comatus)	Sep - Nov	Lawns, roadsides, disturbed ground	Tall shaggy white cylinder, gills turn to black ink	Common ink cap (reacts with alcohol); pick young and all-white	Edible; pick young
Death cap (Amanita phalloides)	Aug - Nov	Urban and suburban Victoria, Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, under imported trees and Garry oak	White gills plus a sac-like cup (volva) at the base; dig up the whole stem	Mistaken for Asian straw (paddy straw) mushroom and edible Asian Amanitas	DEADLY – do not eat
Amanita smithiana	Sep - Nov	Conifer forest, often on pine mushroom ground	No cinnamon smell, soft flesh, parsnip-shaped base, powdery veil	Mistaken for pine mushroom	DEADLY – do not eat
Deadly Galerina (Galerina marginata)	Year-round, mostly fall	Rotting conifer and hardwood logs and wood chips, common across BC	Rusty-brown spore print (those edibles print white)	Mistaken for honey mushroom, velvet shank	DEADLY – do not eat
Conocybe filaris	Spring and fall	Lawns, grassy areas and wood-chip beds over buried wood	Small, fragile brown cap with a ring on a thin stem; don't eat little brown mushrooms at all	Mistaken for other little brown lawn mushrooms	DEADLY – do not eat
False morels (Gyromitra spp.)	Mar - Jun	On the ground under conifers, especially pine, in spring	Wrinkled, brain-like lobes instead of pits; chambered or cottony inside (true morels are completely hollow)	Mistaken for morels	DEADLY – do not eat

Never eat any wild mushroom you have not identified with certainty against multiple features. When in doubt, throw it out.

Suspected poisoning: BC Drug and Poison Information Centre 1-800-567-8911 or 911.

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