

Manitoba Mushroom Identification Chart

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Species	Season	Where It Grows	Key ID Features	Dangerous Look-alike	Edibility
Black morel (<i>Morchella angusticeps</i> group)	May – Jun	Boreal mixed-wood, especially burns the spring after a wildfire	Dark-ridged honeycomb cap fully attached to the stem; hollow from tip to base when sliced	False morel (brain-like, chambered inside, never hollow)	Choice; always cook
Yellow morel (<i>Morchella esculenta</i> group)	May – Jun	Cottonwood, aspen and elm river bottoms in the Pembina Valley and Red River floodplain	Pale yellow-tan honeycomb cap fully attached to the stem; completely hollow	False morel	Choice; always cook
Dryad's saddle (<i>Cerioporus squamosus</i>)	May – Jul, peak Jun	Dead elm, aspen and maple stumps and logs	Large cream shelf with brown scales; pores underneath, no gills; cucumber-rind smell when young	None dangerous; too tough once it firms up	Edible when young and tender
Wild oyster mushroom (<i>Pleurotus ostreatus</i>)	May – Oct, peak Sep – Oct	Fallen aspen, elm and cottonwood	Shelf-like caps; gills running down a short off-centre stem; white-lilac spore print	Angel wings (thin, pure white, on conifer wood; avoid)	Choice
Chanterelle (<i>Cantharellus</i> spp.)	Jul – Sep, peak Jul – Aug	Jack pine and mixed forest in eastern Manitoba: Whiteshell, Sandilands, Grand Beach	Egg-yolk to orange; blunt false gills that fork and run down the stem; solid pale flesh; grows from soil	Jack-o'-lantern (true gills, clusters on wood); false chanterelle (<i>Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca</i> : thin, true forked gills, on conifer debris)	Choice; cook well
Aspen bolete (<i>Leccinum insigne</i>)	Jul – Sep, peak Aug	Under aspen in the western parkland, Riding Mountain and Duck Mountain country	Orange-brown cap; pale pores; stem covered in scabers that darken to black	Other scaber-stalk boletes; avoid red-pored boletes	Edible; cook well, some people react
Birch bolete (<i>Leccinum scabrum</i> group)	Jul – Sep, peak Aug	Only near birch, boreal and parkland	Grey-brown cap; whitish pores; tall stem with dark scabers	Bitter bolete (pinkish pores, dark netting on stem)	Edible; cook well
King bolete / porcini (<i>Boletus edulis</i> group)	Jul – Sep, peak Aug – Sep	Spruce and pine in the boreal north and the eastern pine country	Brown bun cap; white pores ageing olive-yellow; fine white netting on a thick stem; does not stain blue	Bitter bolete; avoid red-pored or blue-staining boletes	Choice
Slippery jack (<i>Suillus luteus</i>)	Jul – Oct, peak Aug – Sep	Jack pine and pine plantations: Whiteshell, Nopiming, Lac du Bonnet, Sandilands	Slimy brown cap; yellow pores; membranous ring on stem	Other <i>Suillus</i> ; peel the slime layer, which upsets some stomachs	Edible; peel before cooking
Lobster mushroom (<i>Hypomyces lactifluorum</i>)	Jul – Sep, peak Aug – Sep	Mixed forest floor across southern Manitoba, most often in the southeast	Hard, pimpled orange-red crust over dense white flesh; no gills	Soft or deteriorated specimens; pick only firm, bright ones	Good; cook well
Saffron milk cap (<i>Lactarius deliciosus</i> group)	Aug – Oct, peak Sep	Pine forest in the boreal and eastern Manitoba	Orange cap with concentric rings; orange latex when cut; bruises green	Orange <i>Lactarius</i> with white or bitter latex	Choice
Chicken of the woods (<i>Laetiporus sulphureus</i> group)	Jul – Oct, peak Aug – Sep	Oak and other hardwoods in southern Manitoba: Pembina Valley, Red River corridor	Bright orange and sulphur-yellow overlapping shelves; pores underneath, no gills; soft edges when young	Jack-o'-lantern (true gills, orange clusters on wood)	Choice when young; cook well, some people react
Honey mushroom (<i>Armillaria mellea</i> group)	Aug – Oct, peak Sep	Dense clusters at the base of dying aspen and oak	White spore print; ring on stem; grows in clusters	Deadly galerina (rusty-brown spore print); spore print every batch	Edible with caution; cook thoroughly
Hedgehog mushroom (<i>Hydnum repandum</i> group)	Aug – Oct, peak Sep	Mixed forest across the boreal, parkland and eastern pine country	Orange-tan cap with soft spines underneath instead of gills	None; the spines are definitive	Choice
Hen of the woods / maitake (<i>Grifola frondosa</i>)	Sep – Nov, peak Sep – Oct	Base of living and dead bur oak in southern oak country; returns to the same tree	Large grey-brown rosette of overlapping spoon-shaped caps; white pores underneath; no gills	Black-staining polypore (larger, tougher caps that bruise black)	Choice; cook well
Lion's mane (<i>Hericium erinaceus</i>)	Aug – Nov, peak Sep – Oct	Wounds and logs of oak, aspen and maple	White, rounded mass of long hanging spines; no cap, no gills	None dangerous; other white <i>Hericium</i> species are also edible	Choice; cook well
Shaggy mane (<i>Coprinus comatus</i>)	Aug – Oct, peak Sep	Lawns, gravel road edges, disturbed soil	Tall shaggy white cylinder; gills dissolve into black ink with age	Common ink cap (reacts badly with alcohol); pick only young, all-white specimens	Good; cook the day you pick it
Giant puffball (<i>Calvatia gigantea</i>)	Aug – Oct, peak Sep	Pastures and field edges in the parkland and south	Large white sphere; flesh pure white and uniform when sliced	<i>Amanita</i> egg-stage buttons; slice top to bottom to check for a hidden cap outline	Good; only while pure white inside
Chaga (<i>Inonotus obliquus</i>)	Oct – Apr, peak Dec – Mar; on the tree year-round	Living birch in the boreal forest	Black, cracked, burnt-looking exterior with a rusty-orange interior	Birch burls (wood-hard, no orange interior)	Tea only; harvest sparingly
False morel (<i>Gyromitra esculenta</i>)	May – Jun	Sandy soil under conifers, overlapping morel season	Reddish-brown, brain-like wrinkled cap; chambered interior, never hollow	Mistaken for true morels; slice every "morel" lengthwise	DEADLY – do not eat
Destroying angel (<i>Amanita bisporigera</i> and <i>A. virosa</i>)	Jul – Sep	Mixed forest across Manitoba	All white; free gills; skirt-like ring; sac-like volva at the base (dig to check); white spore print	Mistaken for puffball buttons and meadow mushrooms	DEADLY – do not eat
Deadly galerina (<i>Galerina marginata</i>)	Aug – Oct	Clusters on dead wood, same logs as honey mushrooms	Small brown cap with a ring; rusty-brown spore print	Mistaken for honey mushrooms	DEADLY – do not eat
Jack-o'-lantern (<i>Omphalotus illudens</i>)	Jul – Oct	Dense clusters on hardwood stumps and buried roots in southern Manitoba	Bright orange caps; sharp true gills running down the stem; grows on wood	Mistaken for chanterelles and chicken of the woods	Poisonous – severe stomach upset

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

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