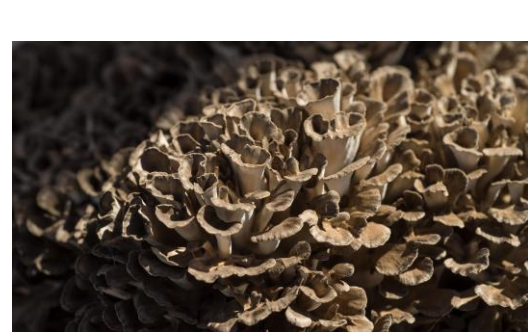




Designating a Vermont State Mushroom: H664

Windham-3 Representative Michelle Bos-Lun & VT Students





Selecting the Vermont State Mushroom

1. Introduction- *A Vermonter's Journey to becoming a mycophile: Mycography, Foraging, Cultivating*
1. School visits: how students learned about the legislative process and voted for *Heridium Americanum, Bear's Head Tooth* as a new VT symbol
2. Fungi Facts
3. Economic Impact- how mushrooms impact the global, US &VT economy
4. Mushroom Tourism: Vermont State Parks: *Mushroom Programs 2023*
5. Support for Mushrooms as a State Symbol



Mycography: Mushroom Photography

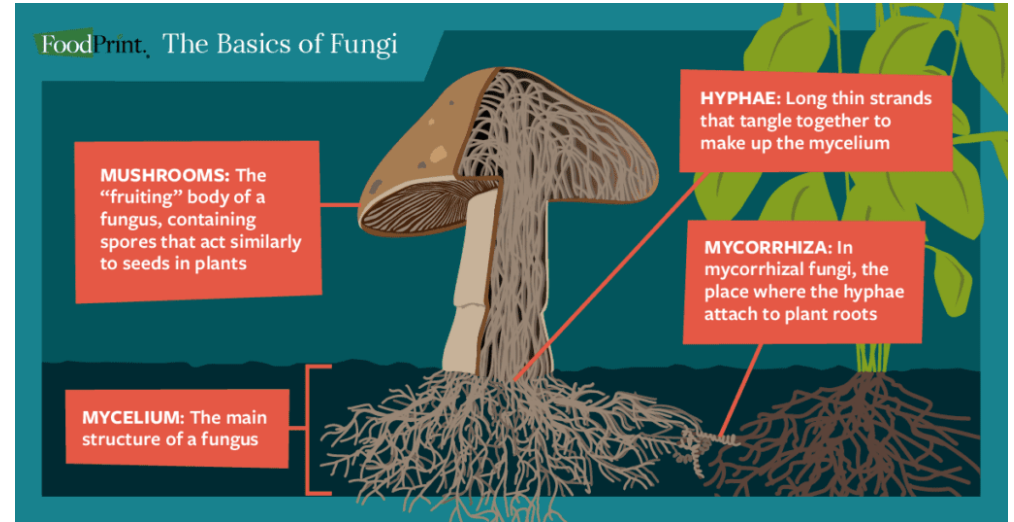


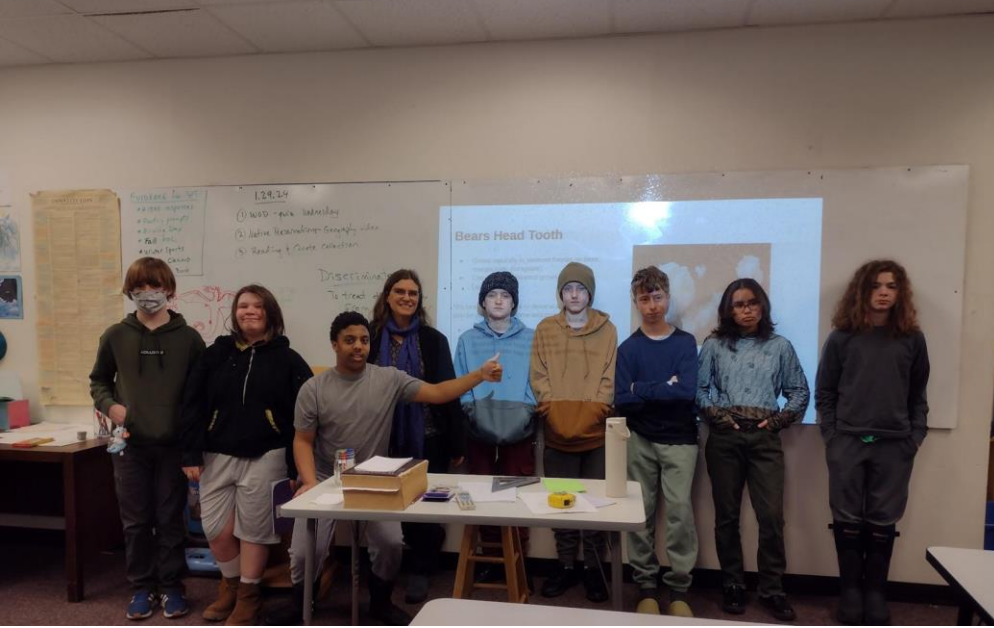
Home Cultivating



Fungi Facts

- There are about 10,000 kinds of mushrooms in North America.
- The Kingdom Fungi is made up of an estimated 3.5 million species including molds, yeasts and lichens as well as mushrooms
- Fungi are neither plants nor animals. (They do not have chlorophyll. They can be carnivorous and can merge with ants and caterpillars to make virtual cusp species).
- 90% percent of land plant species are associated with fungi that help plants & trees access nutrients (symbiotic relationship)
- Fungi help keep our soils and plants healthy & play an important role in decomposition.
- An increasing vegan population is expected to be a key driver for the global market.
- Mushrooms are considered a superfood owing to their nutritional contents (Shitake have B-12)
- Many mushrooms have medicinal qualities





Compass Middle School (emerging) Mycologists

Students at two Windham County Schools learned about mushrooms, state symbols and the legislative process with multiple visits this fall. They wanted a mushroom that grew in the Vermont woods & could be cultivated, that grew on trees, was edible, no poison look alike & had medicinal value. **They voted to select *Hericium Americanum*** by a nearly unanimous vote after many comments & debate!

Compass Middle schoolers had two guided mushroom Identification walks at their school prior to helping select the VT State Mushroom. Windham had mycological learning opportunities at their school prior to the State Mushroom project as well. Compass is cultivating mushrooms now, as are the students testifying about mushrooms from Windham Elementary.



Windham Elementary School Students



Mushroom Economic Factors

- **The global mushroom market size was valued at USD 54.9 billion in 2022** and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 9.7% from 2022 to 2030. **In 2030, the mushroom market size is expected to reach \$115.8 billion.**
 - **The US mushroom market was estimated to be over \$4 billion in 2022**, growing to over \$9.2 billion in 2030. **Vermont's estimated market size was \$7.8 million in 2022, growing to over \$17.9 million in 2030.** (Extrapolated based on Grandview Research market report available [here](#))
 - **The American Mushroom Institute estimates that every pound of mushrooms has \$3.30 of economic impact in the United States and the industry supports over 21,000 jobs.** (American Mushroom Institute, available [here](#))
- ★ *Thank you to Vermont's State Treasurer, Mike Pieciak for helping compile this economic data*

2023 Agency of Natural Resources Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

Mushroom Offerings at Vermont State Parks

Mushrooms Demystified - Little River State Park Introducing some fabulous, fearsome and possibly delicious members of the Fungi Kingdom. Meets at the History Hike Parking Lot, up to 2hrs. **11 sessions offered Aug- Oct**

Foraging Walk at Woodford State Park Walk around the park to see and try mushrooms and learn about traditionally medicinal plants. There will be a foraged treat to taste after the walk. **1 session**

Mushroom Madness at Woodford State Park Search for mushrooms throughout the Atwood loop and fungi bingo. Tent at day use area. Materials provided. **1 session**

Teatime: Ethical Foraging Discussion at Lake Carmi State Park Tea made from native plants and learn about ethical foraging & edible plants in Vermont. Program is free for campers or with purchase of day use park pass. (Mushrooms & More)
1 session

Mushroom Walk at Jamaica State Park Short night hike for mushrooms. Program is included with Camping registration or \$5 state park entry fee. **1 session**

Mushroom Bingo

Pick up a bingo sheet at the center to see how many fungi you can identify. If you get bingo then you can earn a sticker! **1session**

Since introducing this bill I have been contacted by & connected with many who want a State Mushroom

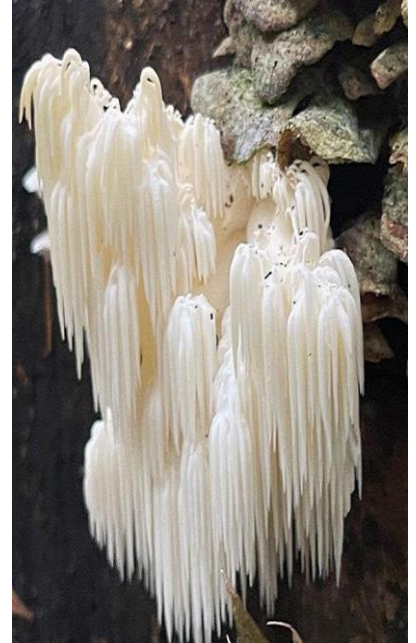
- Parents, Students, Foragers, Naturalists, Mushroom Guides
- Vermont Fungi Scientific Committee Member
- Author of ***Mason Goes Mushrooming*** (*Children's foraging book*)
- Mushroom Forager blogger, educator from Dept of Agriculture
- Secretary of Agriculture
- Director of Forestry
- Legislators (*lots of Conversations across the aisle- mycophiles have very diverse political perspectives*)

A Few Final Fungi Facts

- Mushrooms play an important role in our world: ecologically, nutritionally, medicinally, economically.
- Mushrooms are a vital part of Vermont's natural and agricultural worlds.
- Mushrooms get people out into nature and draw people to Vermont in a variety of ways

**Thank you for helping Vermont recognize
the importance of Fungi
by considering designation
of Bear's Head Tooth
as our State Mushroom**

***& for giving Vermont students an
opportunity to learn about,
engage in and impact the
Legislative process.***





Questions?



“I don’t think mushrooms are going to save the world. I think people are going to save the world, and mushrooms are the resources that will help us in this pursuit.”

Professor David Hibbett, Clark University



Additional Resources

What are Fungi and What do they have to do with Everything? 2021

<https://foodprint.org/blog/fungi/> Addresses mycoremediation, forest regeneration after fires, role of decomposing , soil regeneration in our forests, how fungi impact climate

Are we on the Cusp of a Mushroom Renaissance?

<https://foodmatterslive.com/podcast/are-we-on-the-cusp-of-a-mushroom-renaissance-food-podcasts/>

The Mushroom Moment 2024

Professor David Hibbett of Clark University addresses the

Important role of mushrooms in our world.

<https://clarknow.clarku.edu/2024/02/01/the-mushroom-moment/>

Fantastic Fungi: 2019 Documentary introducing the world of Fungi and their many roles

for forests and people <https://fantasticfungi.com/>

Vermont State Mushroom Legislation in the News

WCAX Compass State Mushroom <https://www.wcax.com/video/2024/02/12/vt-students-push-have-bears-head-tooth-designated-state-mushroom/>



Keeping Spore <https://www.commonnews.org/issue/743/743bos-lun-11> (About the VT State Mushroom Student Project)