



Why we chose Bear's Head Tooth

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History of Bear's Head Tooth

The Bear's Head Tooth was identified in 1984 by Canadian mycologist James Herbert Ginns. This mushroom is native to forests and is thought to have grown in the wild for many centuries. They now grow well in temperate climate deciduous forests (forests where the trees drop their leaves).



It's in the *Hericium* Family of Mushrooms

Hericium americanum (Bear's Head Tooth) are found on decaying trees and sometimes in the wounds of living trees around the northeastern United States and Canada. The name means "Hedgehog of the Americas."

Bear's Head Tooth and Comb Tooth (also called Coral Tooth Fungus) all grow in our area.

Each of these mushrooms & Lion's Mane are similar *Hericium* mushrooms but there are differences in shape, size, texture, and growth patterns.

Hericium mushrooms are all white and have long "teeth".

Lion's Mane don't do well in the wild in VT, but some people confuse them with Bear's Head Teeth because they can look similar.

Although this mushroom looks similar to some others. None in this group are toxic if you mistake them with each other.



Comb Tooth/ Coral Tooth



Lion's Mane



Bear's Head Tooth

Medicinal Qualities

Native Americans would dry the mushrooms, make them into a powder, and use them to stop bleeding wounds and cuts.

Bear's Head Tooth is known as a "brain" food. It is also very nutritious.

Bear's Head Tooth are effective against memory loss, depression, anxiety, dementia, neurological disorders and cancer. As stated above, it also has wound-healing properties.

Usually they are taken as a tincture (drops) or a powder.



What does it look like?

Bear's Head Tooth branches out more than Lion's Mane. Bear's Head Tooth can be found on hardwood trees like oak trees and sugar maple trees that are dying or dead.

They have white to off-white coral-like branches or "icicles" that always grow towards the ground.

The Bear's Head Tooth fungus is white when fresh and yellows with age. It has long spines and a branched fruiting body. The fungus is 6-12 inches across. It is a tightly branched structure and has a rooted base, each column that grows out and down is called "a tooth".



Where do you find it?

These mushrooms are native to forests.

78% of Vermont is covered in forests. Vermont's forests consist of several hardwood trees which are favored by the Bear's Head Tooth mushroom.

Bear's Head Tooth lives on both living and dead hardwood trees and logs such as birch, maple, and oak.

You can grow it outside or inside as a cultivated mushroom. It is one of the easiest mushrooms to cultivate. This is unusual as many mushrooms cannot be intentionally grown by people.

They grow best between the months of August and November.



What does it taste like?

It is considered a very desired mushroom. It tastes mild and a bit crunchy when fried, with a hint of seafood. Many think it has a meaty flavor. It needs a fair bit of cleaning but can be washed in water. It gets bitter when old.

Bear's Head Tooth can be used as a substitute for meat, it can be used to make "crab" cakes.





Closing statement

Bear's Head Tooth would be a good mushroom to represent Vermont because it grows on most hardwood trees such as Oak, Birch, and Maple which are common in Vermont.

Vermont's state tree is the Sugar Maple which is a hardwood tree and a state symbol: our state tree.

The Bears Head Tooth mushroom is already a big part of Vermont because many look for them on beautiful, well known trees.

Let's recognize mushrooms and make Bear's Head Tooth an official symbol of our state.