

Picking mushrooms is an enjoyable activity that takes no more than a simple basket, a knife, and a good knowledge of the forest and its fungi. To make it enjoyable for everyone, please consider the following picking tips:

Don't leave holes in the duff. It dries out the fertile ground underneath. Mushrooms are the fruit of a mycelium, an invisible web of threads that lives in the ground year round. Holes in the duff can dehydrate and shrivel the mycelium so that it eliminates mushroom fruiting. If you pick up duff to check out a promising mound or you leave a hole when you pick a mushroom, put the duff back when you're done.

And be sure not to rake the duff to look for mushrooms -- it's very damaging to the mycelium.



Do carry your picked mushrooms in a basket, mesh bag, or bucket with holes drilled in it. A picked mushroom continues to drop spores. By carrying it in an open-air container, you help it distribute spores so the mushroom can reproduce. Carrying mushrooms in a closed container eliminates spore dispersal. Not only that, it often ruins the mushrooms. A non-breathing plastic bag full of mushrooms can quickly turn into a bag full of mush!

Don't uproot, overturn, or smash mushrooms that you don't want. A mushroom stands upright so that it can drop reproductive spores and protect its spore-bearing underside from the rain. An upside-down water-logged mushroom is not a successful spore disperser, and it's ruined for anyone else who wants to examine it closely, photograph it, or eat it if it's edible.



If you pick a mushroom to examine it and decide you don't need it, put it back in the ground stem down so it looks like

it was never picked and can continue to drop spores. Better yet, try to identify the mushroom by feel before you pick it. If you're looking for boletes, for example, and feel gills under the cap there's no need to pick it.

Do bury your mushroom trimmings under the duff if they're unsightly. Although mushroom trimmings decompose pretty



quickly, they look like trash while they're in the open. And if you're a mushroom picker who likes to keep your favorite picking site a secret, mushroom trimmings are the best advertisement that you've found a nice spot. Bury them and let them decompose under the duff.

An artful mushroom picker leaves no trace of their presence in the woods -- a practice that helps the mushrooms, other pickers, and yourself.

Happy picking!

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MUSHROOM PICKING TIPS

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