**Mushroom Facts**

There are over 38,000 varieties of mushrooms available, over 3,000 in North America alone, with varying colors, textures and flavors. Some are so rare that they only grow for one week during the year.   
  
They grow wild in many areas, but most mushrooms on the market are commercially-grown on farms. Mushrooms do not depend upon photosynthesis to grow. They need only rain and moderate temperatures to proliferate. The best mushroom harvesting is done while it is raining.

**Warning! Many mushrooms are poisonous**

Some areas are known for their prized wild mushrooms, but it is most ***important*** that you research your target thoroughly if you intend to harvest your own [wild mushrooms](http://gourmetfood.about.com/od/wheretobuygourmetfoods/tp/buymushrooms.htm) because many are highly toxic and life-threatening.   
  
Please do not rely upon any casual column to determine toxicity of wild mushrooms. The danger inherent in many poisonous varieties of mushrooms cannot be over-stressed.   
  
Unless you are well-educated in all types of mushrooms, particularly in identification of poisonous ones, it is wise to purchase your mushrooms from a reputable grower or grocer rather than hunting them yourself.   
  
A simple identification error can lead to symptoms of sweating, cramps, diarrhea, confusion, convulsions, and potentially result in liver damage with a mortality rate of 60 percent or higher.



