

Hoquiam Farmer's Market News - We Already Have A Mushroom Edition, Edition

Local News

Posted by:

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The Rain Dance finally worked! The long dry spell was lovely, but seeing the plants lift their grateful faces to the nourishing rain is a beautiful sight to behold. Knowing that our precious forests will soon be out of fire danger is an answer to many prayers. And- the mushrooms finally will have what they need to come bursting out of the soil! Usually we would be smothered in Chanterelles by now, but only a few hardy fungi have been able to make their way above ground. I expect that by weeks end we'll be seeing 'shrooms ecstatically coming into view, and I am so ready for them. Of course, mushroom season now coincides with hunting season, and therein lies a bit of a worry. Mushrooms reside in the same areas as the four footed wild game, and we need to make it abundantly clear that we are not legal to hunt. Picking mushrooms means bending over, sometimes crawling on all fours after our elusive quarry. You may not like the color orange, but the only safe way to pick is by covering yourself in Hunter Orange. People are often leary of eating wild mushrooms, fearful that they might pick one which contains toxins. That fear limits their mushroom consumption to the grocery store mushrooms which are okay. Okay is not Fabulous. It reminds me of when I was a teenager and dating this guy. After my parents met him, my mother pronounced him to be 'harmless'. Ouch. That did it, he was soon replaced. Teenagers and mushroom aficionados want to have flavor and excitement in their relationships. However, I do recommend my mother's method to any parent trying to discourage their daughter from making an unfortunate choice. In order to make good choices, education and proper identification are absolute necessities. This holds true for boyfriends and mushrooms. Having landed myself the perfect husband, I then set about figuring out how to tell a good mushroom from a bad mushroom. There is a lot to learn and you are in such luck!

This weekend the Lake Quinault Mushroom Festival convenes, bringing mycological experts together for a three day crash course on everything from field trips to cooking demonstrations . I'm amped up with excitement for the event, because I have questions. Lots of questions. So far I have confined my mushroom hunting to varieties which are easily identified; Chanterelles, Chicken of the Woods, Oyster, Cauliflower. But we see so many other kinds, and I've tasted others which leave me swooning in delight. I need to be sure of the Matsutake, one of the finest tastes ever, and my issues with the ugly Lobster mushrooms needs to be resolved. We see them everywhere and they are the most unpleasant looking mushrooms. They look more like a Steven King creation than anything I want to cook, but they are much loved by many. Because they are a parasite, growing on another mushroom, I need to learn the gentle art of spore printing so that the ugly Lobster mushroom and I can become better acquainted. If you are interested in great Chanterelle recipes, stop by the Grays Harbor Farmers Market in Hoquiam for a free copy of my very best; Cream of Chanterelle Soup, Chanterelle Spaghetti, Chanterelles steeped in Liquor, Chanterelle Pie, Chanterelle Sandwich. Here is my newest creation; Smoked Chanterelles 2 cups of wood chips for the grill 3 rosemary sprigs 6 thyme sprigs 1 lb or more of sliced Chanterelles pierced aluminum pan foil pan This recipe works well for a standard gas grill with two burners. I discovered that stores carry packages of thin aluminum sheets with slits in them, perfect for holding wood chips for smoking! What will they think of next?

Combine the wood chips and herbs on the pierced foil pan. Place it on the grill and start the heat under that side. When the wood chips begin to smoke, place the mushrooms in the other foil pan which is NOT pierced and set it on the unheated part of the grill. Cover the grill and let the mushrooms smoke for 20 minutes. These are fabulous by themselves as a side dish or added to some of the other recipes, such as my mushroom soup or spaghetti. Or simply fold them into some cream cheese for a bruschetta or cracker topping. Happy Hunting! Barbara Bennett Parsons, manager of the Grays Harbor Farmers Market. Watch for Chanterelles to be on our produce tables soon! 1958 Riverside in Hoquiam, ph. 538-9747 Deidra's deli 538-5880--
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