

Harvesting and Selling Wild Mushrooms in Minnesota

FORAGING, SELLING AND PURCHASING

Wild mushrooms

Wild mushrooms are edible mushroom varieties, picked or foraged in the natural environment. Cultivated mushrooms grown in controlled environments may be the same varieties as wild mushrooms.

The biggest risk related to foraging and using wild mushrooms comes from misidentifying the type or variety of mushroom. It is difficult to distinguish between wild mushrooms that are poisonous and those that are safe to eat. Mushroom poisoning may cause mild to severe illness, or death.

Any edible mushroom variety is allowed to be sold commercially in Minnesota, as long as the forager has completed an approved identification course for that specific variety of mushroom.

Training for mushroom foragers

Foragers of wild mushrooms must take a mushroom identification course from an accredited college or university, or a mycological society.

The course may cover any number of wild mushroom varieties. A certified wild mushroom harvester is qualified to identify only the mushroom varieties covered in the course.

Certificates must record the mushroom varieties covered and the date of the course, as well as the issuing organization and signatures of the instructors.

Record of training

Foragers interested in selling their mushrooms commercially must submit a copy of their training certificate to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA).

The MDA maintains an online certified wild mushroom harvester database of training certificates.

Licensing requirements

A food handler's license is not required to sell wild mushrooms if the mushrooms were harvested on land the forager owns or rents in Minnesota or in other states. A food handler's license is required to sell mushrooms foraged from land that is not owned or rented by the forager.

Sections of the Produce Safety Rule (21 CFR 112) can apply to wild mushroom foraging. Other regulations such as the current Good Manufacturing Practices and the Preventive Controls for Human Food Rule may also apply, if the mushrooms are processed after collection. For more information, please contact the MDA Produce Safety Program (producesafety.mda@state.mn.us).

Storage and processing

Wild mushroom foragers that store mushrooms intended for commercial sale must do so in an approved space, not at a private residence. Processing wild mushrooms, including but not limited to drying, chopping, and cooking, must also be done in an approved space. Contact the MDA for more information on approved spaces.

Record-keeping for buyers

A written buyer specification is required for all mushrooms purchased from certified wild mushroom harvesters. This must be maintained at the retail establishment for 90 days and contain the following:

- Identification of mushroom species by scientific and common name.
- Date of sale.
- Quantity by weight, fresh or dried, of each species sold.
- Statement indicating that each mushroom was identified in its fresh state.
- Name, address, and telephone number of the mushroom harvester.
- Verification that the seller is listed on the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's registry of wild mushroom harvesters.

Record-keeping for sellers

A written record of sale must be maintained by the certified wild mushroom harvester or seller for 90 days that contains:

- Identification of mushrooms by scientific and common name.
- Country, state, and county location of harvest.
- Date of harvest.
- Names of the retail food establishments where wild mushrooms were sold.
- Dates of sale.
- Quantities by weight, fresh or dried, of each species

Consumer advisory

Establishments serving wild mushrooms must inform customers of the risk of consuming wild mushrooms by using brochures, deli case or menu advisories, table tents, placards, or other written means. The disclosure must include the statement "Wild mushrooms are not an inspected product and are harvested from a non-inspected site."

Licensed seller exemptions

Written buyer specifications and consumer advisories are not required for mushrooms purchased from a licensed, inspected cultivator or processing plant.