



University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

E&C News

Campbell County Cooperative Extension • Environmental Education Center
1261 Race Track Road • Alexandria, KY 41001 • (859) 694-1666

Campbell County Environmental Education Center Newsletter

Summer 2023

Best Practices for Mushroom Foraging in Kentucky

Source: Ellen Crocker, Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Kentucky; Brandon George, Kenton County Cooperative Extension, University of Kentucky; Megan Buland, Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Kentucky

Kentucky is a great place to forage wild mushrooms. Its extensive forests are home to many different edible fungi including morels, chanterelles, lions' mane, chicken of the woods, oyster mushrooms, and more. While mushroom hunting is a great hobby, it is not without risks. Many mushrooms can cause illness if consumed and some are deadly poisonous, resulting in lasting illness or even death. Even those broadly considered edible should be approached cautiously as improper storage and cooking, drug interactions, and allergies can all result in adverse reactions. Care **must** be taken by foragers to ensure both the safety of those eating wild foraged mushrooms and that natural areas are not disturbed through collection.

In addition to practicing proper safety strategies while mushroom hunting, it is important to be aware of, and follow, regulations about where and how to mushroom hunt. Be aware that each state may have its own set of rules and regulations surrounding mushroom foraging and that the rules in Kentucky may be different from those in other states. This publication provides information on regulations in the state of Kentucky.

WHERE TO HUNT?

The location of a favorite morel patch is typically a closely guarded secret. Most new mushroom hunters will have to find the best spots themselves through years of trial and error.



Figure 1. Chanterelles, like these smooth chanterelles (*Cantharellus lateritius*) are a favorite mushroom to forage in the summer-time. Photo credit: Ellen Crocker, University of Kentucky



Figure 2. Hen of the woods (*Grifola frondosa*) is a favorite fall mushroom that grows at the base of oak trees. Photo credit: Ellen Crocker, University of Kentucky

Mushroom hunting on private land:

You can collect any mushrooms growing on your own property. There are no regulations on mushroom species, or endangered mushroom species, in the state to be concerned about when foraging.

The main 'body' of a fungus exists as a network of thread-like filaments (called hyphae), growing in the soil, in wood, or on whatever else the fungus might be feeding. What we call a mushroom, is the fruiting part of the fungus, much like an apple is the fruit of an apple tree. If you are just taking the mushrooms, you are unlikely to damage the main body of the fungus that produces them. Because of this, overharvesting is less of a concern for mushrooms than for other species of plants or animals. However, you should keep in mind sustainable foraging principals and the value of leaving uncollected mushrooms around to continue to produce spores. While most of the foraged mushrooms in Kentucky are ephemeral (they quickly come and go), there are some mushrooms, particularly polypores foraged for medicinal value, that may have perennial fruiting bodies and overharvest can be a concern for these. Taking only a small portion of the mushrooms you find means that there will be mushrooms left over for other foragers, and for the wildlife that may rely on these mushrooms as an essential source of food in their environment.

Be careful not to damage the area you are collecting from. For example, trampling the forest floor can result in conditions that aren't conducive to fungal growth. Be mindful of other mushrooms and plants growing in the area you are collecting from and try to avoid injuring these plants or otherwise damaging the environment. Also keep in mind the history of land use where you are foraging, as well as potential pesticides or toxins that may currently or previously have been used in the area. If you are hoping to forage on someone else's land, **MAKE SURE** to first receive permission and then clearly communicate with the landowner. Just as you would when hunting wildlife on someone else's land, you must respect the landowner who is allowing you to hunt on their property

Mushroom hunting on public land:

Each public area in Kentucky has its own regulations regarding foraging of wild mushrooms. It is important to follow them and regularly check on these regulations as they may change.

| Location | Mushroom hunting status* | Other regulations to follow |
|--|--|--|
| Daniel Boone National Forest | Allowed, no permit required | Individuals may collect small quantities (approximately one gallon per person) for personal use. A permit will be required if these products will be collected in larger quantities or for commercial purposes. |
| Mammoth Cave National Park | Edible fungi- Allowed, no permit required Inedible fungi- Not permitted | Individuals may collect small quantities (one gallon, per person, per day) of edible fungi for personal use of consumption. All edible fungi must be collected in a mesh container. Inedible fungi may not be collected for medicinal, artistic, or other uses. |
| Land Between the Lakes National Forest | Allowed, no permit required | Mushrooms may be gathered. However, damage to plants or trees is illegal. Also make sure to follow prohibition on destruction, defacement, disturbance, or removal of any building, sign, structure, barrier, natural feature, archaeological artifact (including "scrap" metal), or public property. |
| State Forests | Allowed if permit acquired | Mushroom hunting is allowed but each person needs to first acquire a "Free Use Permit" from the local forest manager. To do this, call the KDF Frankfort office at 502-564-4496. |
| Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) | Allowed, no permit required | Mushrooms may be gathered for personal consumption, but note that the collection of plants is prohibited. Some WMAs are closed to the public during periods when quota deer hunts are occurring. Please check current hunting guides or the KY Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources website at fw.ky.gov |
| State Parks and State Historic Sites | Collection is prohibited | |
| Nature Preserves | Collection is prohibited | |
| Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest | Collection is prohibited | |
| Berea Forest | Collection is prohibited | Some exceptions may be made, inquire with managers for more information. |
| The Nature Conservancy Properties | Collection is prohibited | |
| Other parks and natural areas | Inquire with park manager, regulations vary. | |
| *This applies to non-commercial (personal consumption) mushroom foraging. Please check with each location on regulations regarding educational collection and research use as permits may be needed. Commercial mushroom foraging is generally not permitted. Status and regulations are subject to change. | | |

Table 1. Mushroom Hunting Status of Public Lands in Kentucky



Figure 3. Morels like this one are mycorrhizal and emerge only in the spring. Photo credit: Ellen Crocker, University of Kentucky

SALE OF WILD FORAGED MUSHROOMS IN KENTUCKY

In general, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture does not allow the sale of wild foraged mushrooms. KDA regulation 3-201.16 specifies that mushroom species picked in the wild shall not be offered for sale or service by a food establishment unless the food establishment has been approved to do so by an approved mushroom identification expert. However, there is currently no formalized system in place to determine what qualifies a mushroom expert or how these are approved. If you have questions about this, inquire with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

This ban in sales **DOES NOT** apply for cultivated mushrooms, which can be sold in Kentucky.



Figure 4. There are several different species of *Hericium* mushrooms, like lion's mane (*Hericium erinaceus*) and coral tooth (*Hericium coralloides*), both of which have teeth instead of gills or pores. Photo credit: Ellen Crocker, University of Kentucky

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What's Up Next?

June 1st - 9:00am *Birding Walk*

June 7th - 2:00pm *Wildflower Hike*

June 16th - 2:30pm *Birding Walk*

June 22nd - 10:00am *Wildflower Hike*

June 28th - 10:00am *Birding Walk*

July 6th - 2:00pm *Aquatic Ecology*

July 13th - 2:30pm *Build a Birdfeeder*

July 21st - 2:00pm *Aquatic Ecology*

July 26th - 9:30am *Build a Birdfeeder*

August 2nd - 10:00am *Nature Crafts*

August 11th - 2:00pm *Sensing Nature*

August 17th - 1:30pm *Nature Crafts*

August 23rd - 10:00am *Sensing Nature*

August 31st - 2:00pm *Sensing Nature*

EVERY TUESDAY 3-4pm & **FRIDAY** 9-10am *1000 Hours Outside*

Find us on facebook

**@ Campbell County
Environmental
Education Center**

Follow us on Instagram



@ campbellcountyeec



University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

Birding Walk

6/1 ~ 9:00AM

6/16 ~ 2:30PM

6/28 ~ 10:00AM



CAMPBELL COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
1261 RACE TRACK ROAD
ALEXANDRIA, KY 41001

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. PLEASE CALL (859) 694-1666 / (859) 572-2600
OR REGISTER ONLINE AT [HTTPS://CAMPBELL.CA.UKY.EDU/](https://campbell.ca.uky.edu/)

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Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

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LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notificati

Wildflower Hike

at the Campbell County Environmental
Education Center

6/7 - 2:00pm

6/22 - 10:00am



Registration is required. Please call (859) 694-1666 / (859) 572-2600
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AQUATIC ECOLOGY

Always wondered about what's living in that lake? Come find out as we conduct some water testing and search for aquatic life!

July 6th @ 2:00pm ~ July 21st @ 2:00pm

**Campbell County Environmental
Education Center
1261 Race Track Road
Alexandria, KY 41001**

**Registration is required. Please call (859) 694-1666 / (859) 572-2600
or register online at <https://campbell.ca.uky.edu/>**

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Build a Bird Feeder

**Come visit the
Environmental
Education Center and
build a bird feeder.
All kits are premade
and all you have to
do is drill a few holes
and hammer in nails!
This is a fun and easy
project!**



**July 13th 2:30pm
July 26th 9:30am**

**Registration is required. Please call (859) 694-1666 / (859) 572-2600
or visit <http://campbell.ca.uky.edu/> to register**

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Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
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Nature Crafts

August 2 - 10:00am
August 17 - 1:30pm

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Alexandria, KY 41001

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SENSING NATURE

Join us at the
CAMPBELL COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
to experience the sounds, sights,
and textures of nature!

8/11, 2:00pm ~ 8/23, 10:00am ~ 8/31, 2:00pm



 **Martin-Gatton**
College of Agriculture,
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Lexington, KY 40506



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1000 HOURS OUTSIDE

@ THE CAMPBELL COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

Get in your 1000 hours outside this year
with a guided walk along the nature trails!

EVERY TUESDAY 3-4PM & FRIDAY 9-10AM
JANUARY - DECEMBER 2023



Some dates may be cancelled due to school field trips or inclement weather throughout the year



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CAMPBELL COUNTY
**FARMERS
MARKET**

2023

Highland Heights*— Tuesdays

Senior Citizens Activity Center

3504 Alexandria Pike

May 16 thru October 24

3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Fort Thomas— Wednesdays**

Mess Hall in Tower Park

801 Cochran Avenue

April 12 thru December 13 (no market on 11/22/2023)

3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

*Hours extend to 7:00 p.m. June-September
(Senior shopping begins at 2:45 p.m.)*

Alexandria*— Fridays

Southern Lanes Sports Center

7634 Alexandria Pike

May 19 thru October 27

3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Newport*— Saturdays

Next to Pepper Pod Restaurant

709 Monmouth Street

May 20 thru October 28

9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

* Accepts WIC, SNAP and Senior Farmer's
Market Nutrition Program

** Accepts SNAP only
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Large variety of
home grown produce,
breads, honey and other
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