

NEEDLE CAST LAYER

In pumice soils, needles and soils mix together forming this layer. Fruit formation is from 1 to 6 inches from the surface.

FINDING MUSHROOMS

As the mushroom grows, it pushes up the soil and litter cover, creating raised areas or bumps. Bumps usually indicate an older mushroom. Study each foot of ground around the bump. Get down on hands and knees and feel the ground. Push down on the litter with your hands. You will be able to feel other mushrooms. Don't worry about missing some, you will feel them before they are large enough to pick. It's better not to disturb the young ones. Return in a few days for a second picking.

Needle cast layers are generally tightly packed and crusted leaving little room for mushroom expansion. Young mushrooms can be detected by a slight rise, and a crack in the layer. These cracks resemble dry weather cracks. Poke your finger into the crack and feel for a mushroom top. Mushrooms will feel cool and moist. Size can also be determined in this manner. Cracks may contain 1 or run for several feet and contain 60.

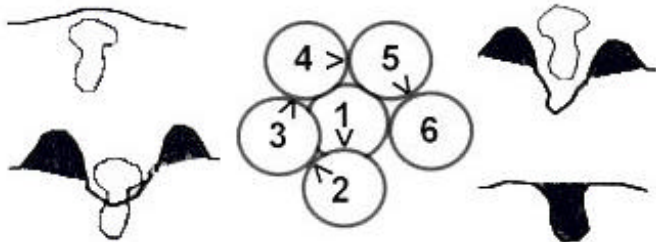
HARVESTING

Proper harvest methods are essential to achieve potential.

Production decreases as disturbance increases.

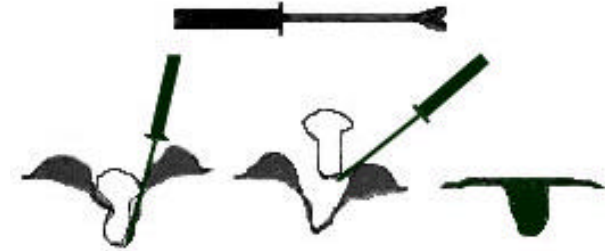
When you find a mushroom, remove litter and soil covering only the cap. Place your hand around the cap and wiggle it in a circular or side to side motion, **DO NOT TWIST**.

Occasionally mushrooms are tightly clustered and only 1 is mature enough to harvest. Care should be taken to limit damage to immature to remain. Place your fingers on top of the immature, press down. Gently remove mature. This leaves young mushrooms undamaged, insuring another harvest. Replace all soils and litter to its natural look.



HARVEST METHOD USING A TOOL

Some situations may require a tool for harvest. Deep fruiting in tight soils leave little room for rotating, using hand method. A tool is needed. Uncover the mushroom as described in the previous section. Insert the tool, weed poppers are best, along the stalk to a depth just below its bottom, wiggle in a circular motion, as you pry up. Be sure to replace soils and litter.



USE TOOLS ONLY WHEN HAND METHOD FAILS. NEVER USE TOOLS OVER 1 INCH WIDE CLEANING

Hold the mushroom by the stem, cap up. Gently tap the top with your hand. Brush the cap and stem with a piece of bed foam. Remove needles, leaves, and soil from both. Do not clean veil.

INFESTATION

Worms, fly larvae, is the most common infestation found. To find worms, squeeze the stem. If you feel soft spots that run up and down, it probably has worms. Hoppers is another infestation. Examine the gill area for tiny red hopping insects. Infested mushrooms have a minimum or no commercial value.

HARVEST CONTAINER

The best container is a plastic bucket. Drill holes in side and bottom to allow air circulation, and put a lid on. Stack the mushrooms in the bucket, gills down. The gill area is the focus of commercial value. Take precautions to protect it. Pack the bucket as tight as possible. Never leave mushrooms in the sun. Always set your container in the shade. Warmth matures mushrooms even after the are harvested.

STORAGE

Cool storage is important during warm periods. Place 2 to 3 inches of ice in an ice chest. Insert a basket and mushrooms. Cover with a damp cloth and close the lid.