



How to Be Prepared for Mushroom Foraging: A Guide

By Alyssa Hartson

Colorado is a unique and beautiful place to hunt mushrooms. From the plains and cottonwood riparian flatlands, up to alpine environments and snowbank fungi, we've got it all. With it, comes wildlife, poison ivy and thunderstorms that can catch you unprepared and unaware unless you take the right precautions to avoid them. Sometimes, however, even the most seasoned hunters get caught by surprise.

With foraging comes responsibility and knowing what to do if you run into danger is necessary for your safety. Being properly prepared should you encounter a dangerous situation can help you avoid a tragedy.

In this guide, we'll talk about what to do if you encounter wildlife, outfitting yourself with the right gear and what to do if you get lost in the woods



A Bull snake

Be Alert!

First and foremost, pay attention to your surroundings at all times. Make note of landmarks in case you get lost, bring a compass or download a map on your phone of the area beforehand that you can access offline. At some point, you're likely to see wildlife. Be respectful and remember that you are invading their territory. If you do find yourself face to face with a wild creature, stay calm. Here are some tips:

Bears:

Colorado is home to approximately 12,000 black bears. It is the only species of bear found in Colorado. "Black" actually refers to a species, not a color. Note that black bears can be brown, cinnamon or blonde. Seeing a bear from a safe distance is very exciting. Seeing a bear up close is not so exciting.

Here's what to do if you encounter a bear:

1. Leave or avoid the area if you are far enough away.
2. Do not surprise the bear, especially if she has cubs.
3. Make yourself known by speaking in a calm, appealing tone
4. Back away slowly, preferably in the direction you came. If you have small children, pick them up until you are safely out of harm's way
5. Keep pets leashed. Make yourself appear as large as possible
6. Walk, don't run, and keep your eye on the bear so you can see how it will react
7. Do not try to feed the bear or let it have access to your food
8. Carry EPA approved bear-specific pepper spray- available on amazon

If you are attacked by a bear:

DO NOT PLAY DEAD. Try to escape to a secure place such as a car or building. If escape is not possible, try to fight back using any object available. Concentrate your kicks and blows on the bear's face and muzzle. (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/bears/safety.htm>)



PIKES PEAK
MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CONTENTS:

Foraging Guide	Pg. 1
Events	Pg. 3
Oyster Substrate	Pg. 6
Foray Pics	Pg. 7



2021 PPMS OFFICERS:

President	Ben Kinsley
Vice -President	Jennifer Bell
Treasurer	Beth Leake
Secretary & Webmaster	Alyssa Hartson
Foray Coordinator	James Chellin
Newsletter Editors	Jessica Langley Mercedes Whitman
Librarian	Isabel Gring
Herbarium Liaison	TBA
Hospitality	TBA

WEBSITE

www.pikespeakmyc.org

CONTACTS

President: president@pikespeakmyc.org

Vice President: vicepresident@pikespeakmyc.org

Secretary: info@pikespeakmyc.org

Treasurer: treasurer@pikespeakmyc.org

Newsletter Editor: editor@pikespeakmyc.org

Librarian: library@pikespeakmyc.org

Webmaster: webmaster@pikespeakmyc.org

Membership Options

New Members:

Individual Membership: \$30/ year

Family Membership: \$40/year

Renewing Members:

Individual Membership: \$25/ year

Family Membership: \$35/year

Lifetime Membership

Individual: \$300

Family: \$400

To Pay Online via PayPal: <http://pikespeakmyc.org/join/>

Send renewal checks to:

PPMS Treasurer c/o Beth Leake

1370 Golden Hills Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Please make checks payable to PPMS.

All statements and opinions written in this newsletter belong solely to the individual author and in no way represent or reflect the opinions of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society. To receive this publication electronically contact Beth Leake at:

treasurer@pikespeakmyc.org

Archived copies of the newsletter are available in the Newsletters section of our website.

Submissions for the next issue of Spore Addict must reach the editors, Mercedes Whitman & Jessica Langley, by May 30, 2020.

editor@pikespeakmyc.org

2021 UPCOMING EVENTS

Meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of the month, starting at 6:00 pm. Due to the COVID crisis and limitations on group gatherings, meetings will be broadcast live on Youtube. As the season progresses, we hope to host in-person events. The meetings are recorded and can be viewed anytime on the Pikes Peak Mycological Society [Youtube channel](#).

June 23

Topic: "In Search of Mycotopia" presented by the Author, Doug Bierend

When: 6:00 p.m.

Where: Broadcast LIVE on Youtube

Doug paints a portrait of the modern mycological movement that sees fungi as teachers, partners, and sources of wisdom that offer ways and means for realizing a better world. Learn more about Doug at doug Bierend.com

July 28

Topic: TBD

August 12-15: Annual NAMA Foray

Snow Mountain Lodge in Granby, Colorado

Tickets are selling out quickly!

Note: must be a NAMA member to attend. PPMS Members can claim the \$5 discount for members of affiliate clubs. Join NAMA here: <http://www.namyco.org/join.php>

August 18-22: Telluride Mushroom Festival

Visit [TMF site](#) for more info

August 25

Topic: Chef Chad Hyatt Presents: 2021 Burn Morels in Colorado.

When: 6:00 p.m.

Where: Bear Creek Nature Center

245 Bear Creek Rd, Colorado Springs, CO 80906

September 22

Topic: "Leveraging Mushrooms To Improve Taste, Texture, Nutrition and Bioavailability Of The Food We Eat " presented by Jim Alderink, CPO MycoTechnology

When: 6:00 p.m.

Where: Bear Creek Nature Center

245 Bear Creek Rd, Colorado Springs, CO 80906

October 27

Topic: Potluck

When: 6:00 p.m.

Where: TBD

"Mushrooms were the roses in the garden of that unseen world, because the real mushroom plant was underground. The parts you could see - what most people called a mushroom - was just a brief apparition. A cloud flower."
- Margaret Atwood, The Year of the Flood

MEMBERS CHECKLIST:

Is your email & phone number up to date?



Send contact info to: Beth
treasurer@pikespeakmyc.com

Have you paid your DUES?



If not, please send to:
 Treasurer c/o Beth Leake
 1370 Golden Hills Road,
 Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Care to Volunteer?



Reach out to: Alyssa Hartson
info@pikespeakmyc.org

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

We mean it!! We can't do this without you. Looking ahead to next season, we are seeking volunteers to do a number of things. Please contact Alyssa Hartson, info@pikespeakmyc.org, or Ben Kinsley, president@pikespeakmyc.org if you are interested in:

- coordinating forays
- writing for the newsletter
- hosting an event
- herbarium liason
- record keeping on forays
- leading a foray
- hospitality

Of course, avoiding an encounter altogether is best. Always hike in groups and do not leave food lying around. Always gather your trash and take it with you. ***Pack it in..... Pack it out!***

What to do if you encounter a rattlesnake:

Colorado is home to 3 different species of rattlesnakes: the western rattlesnake, the prairie rattlesnake and the massasauga rattlesnake. They can be found anywhere below 8500' between March and October.

It's usually easy to identify rattlesnakes as they have a few very distinguishable features. The most obvious feature is the rattle on their tail. It's important to note, however, that there are rattlesnakes that do not have a rattle. Other telltale features of rattlesnakes include:

- *A diamond or triangle shaped head
- *Their pupils are vertical and elliptical
- *2 visible fangs (used to deliver venom)
- *Pits between their eyes and nostrils

Taking a few extra precautions and being aware of your surroundings is of utmost importance when in rattlesnake country.

Avoid encounters completely:

1. Look before you step!
2. Carry a stick with you Poke around with your stick before you poke around with your hands.
3. Invest in good, sturdy footwear, such as hiking boots made by Redwing
4. Stay on marked trails

If you do see a rattlesnake:

1. Immediately freeze your movements.
2. Very slowly back away from the snake
3. It will only strike when it feels threatened or is provoked.

If you are bitten by a rattlesnake:

Call 911. If this isn't possible, send someone in your group to find help. *Getting help within 30 minutes of when you were bitten is imperative*

Do not attempt to suck out the venom. Bacteria in your mouth can cause infection.

Do not use a tourniquet

Do not raise the wound above your heart. This actually allows the venom to reach your heart more quickly.

Do not wash the bite. Venom from your skin may be needed to properly identify the anti-venom needed for treatment.

Remove tight clothing before swelling occurs.

Remain still to minimize your blood circulation until help arrives

Allow the wound to bleed but don't squeeze it in an attempt to release the venom

Remain calm to keep your heart rate and blood pressure down

Visit healthline.com for more information.

Mountain Lions:

Colorado is home to around 7000 mountain lions, though sightings are rare. Should you happen to run into one, the way you react could save your life. If you do find yourself face to face with one, the most important thing to remember, even if you forget everything else, is DO NOT RUN. Just like your kitty at home, all cats love to chase prey.

If You Run Into a Mountain Lion

1. NEVER RUN. Seriously.
2. Keep your distance and don't turn your back.
3. Don't crouch down on the ground. This is seen as an aggressive move to the cat.
4. Slowly and calmly leave the area.
5. Be extra careful around a female with cubs.
6. Fight back if attacked- your mushroom knife, backpack, rocks and sticks can all be used as weapons.
7. Report Sightings of Mountain Lions. Call 303-441-3440.

Lightning:

Getting caught in thunderstorms can be scary. According to wikipedia, approximately 240,000 people get struck by lightning every year. If you're out and it starts lightning, it's best to give up and go home.

But what should you do if you're deep in the woods, miles from your car? First, figure out how close the lightning is by counting the seconds between when the lightning strikes until you hear thunder. Divide by 5. That number is approximately how close the lightning is in miles. If the answer is >30 seconds, seek shelter immediately. If you still have time to hike back to your car, keep 15 feet of space between you and everyone in your group.

Don't use your cell phone, hold metal objects or climb trees. If you must shelter in place, find a cave or trail shelter, low lying area (beware of flash flooding). If you get stuck in an open area, crouch low, but only allow your feet to touch the ground, tuck your head into your arms, making yourself as small as possible. Members of your group should keep a distance of 50-100 feet from each other. When the storm has passed and you or any member of your group has been injured, seek help immediately.

Dehydration:

Pack plenty of water. Becoming dehydrated can cause you all kinds of trouble that is easily avoidable. Symptoms of dehydration include:

- Dizziness
- Rapid heartbeat
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Sudden sleepiness, lethargy, confusion and irritability.
- Fainting/collapse

Colorado's high altitude, and it's hot summer sun, are the perfect storm to cause dehydration for even the most experienced forager. Taking time to ensure you have plenty of water, and sipping slowly throughout the day, will play a big role in staying hydrated. You may consider carrying iodine tablets, chlorine drops or a special water filter in your pack, just in case you have to drink from a stream or lake.

What To Wear:

Your choice of attire, especially in the Rocky Mountains, is important. The rule of thumb is to dress in layers.

- Long pants are a must
- Short sleeve shirt
- Long sleeve shirt, hoodie or jacket
- 100% wool socks (wool will keep your feet warm, even if they are wet)
- Sturdy hiking boots/shoes with ankle support (bonus if they are waterproof)
- Sunblock & Sunhat

Long pants can be uncomfortable in the heat, but they will protect your legs from bugs, thorns, sharp grass, twigs, snakes, cold and from sunburn. If you're out past sunset, depending on the time of year, you'll be extra glad you chose long pants, as it can get quite cold when the sun drops behind the mountains. Our weather can change in an instant, thanks to the Rockies, so being prepared for anything is smart.

What To Bring:

You'll need the right equipment to gather your forest finds. In addition to your first aid kit, water purification tabs and compass or offline map you're going to want a way to easily forage while causing the least amount of damage to nature as possible.

- A good mushroom knife, which has a curved (sharp) blade and a little brush
- A basket or paper sack + lunch sized paper bags to keep different species separated
- Your trusty field guide, such as "Mushrooms of the Rocky Mountain Region" by Vera Stucky Evenson
- Drinking water
- Snacks
- Trash bag to pick up any trash you find along the way

Know The Rules:

It's your responsibility to make yourself familiar with the rules and regulations in the areas that you plan to collect mushrooms. State parks, national parks and national forests all have different rules about gathering forest products. Some don't require anything, while others require you to purchase a permit and others do not allow it at all. Speak to a park ranger, stop in to the local forest service or state parks and wildlife office if you're unclear or unable to find the information you need. It's never okay to gather or forage on private property without the express permission of the property owner. If you get caught trespassing on private property, you could face up to \$100,000 and up to 3 years in jail. Crossing private property to get to public lands is also a no-no. Though it may be tempting at times, it's in your best interest to keep out of private property.

Be Respectful:

If we take care of our lands, our lands will take care of us. The Pikes Peak Mycological Society has a leave no trace policy. Be mindful of plants you may step on while out in the woods. If you see litter along the way, do the right thing and pick it up. Responsible hunters always leave the woods cleaner than they found it. If you take your pet along with you, follow the leash laws, pick up after them and be sure to pack water and snack for them also.

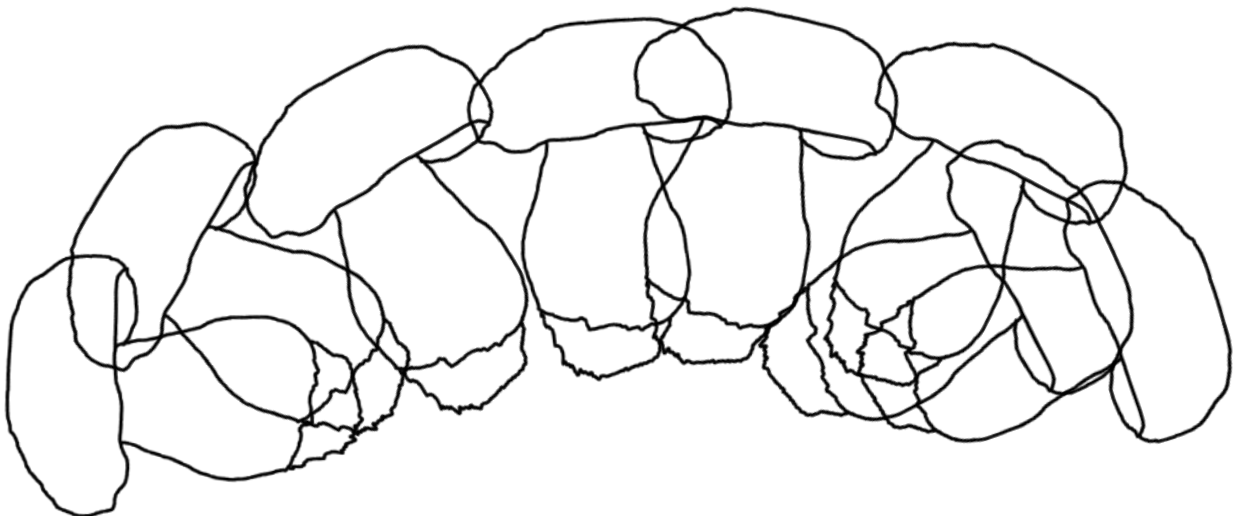
Conclusion:

Mushroom hunting can be very fun and exciting, as well as a great learning opportunity for you and your family. Be mindful of your surroundings, making sure you're adequately prepared and knowing what to do in case of an emergency is all you need to get out there and have a great time.

If you have tips or stories you'd like to share about mushroom hunting and safety in the woods, we'd love to hear them! Send your comments and questions to info@pikespeakmyc.org and visit our website at pikespeakmyc.org for information.



Alyssa Hartson on a foray with PPMS



Closing the Loop with Spent Oyster Substrate

By Anna Wermuth

The blue oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) pictured here were fruited from spent substrate that was recovered from Microvora, a local microgreens and mushroom cultivation business. With permission, the used blocks were obtained from the dumpster and taken home for further use.

I started by taking some single-use plastic containers and poking several holes in them. I then broke up the spawn and mixed it into the containers with newspaper and coffee grounds. I sprayed this mix until it was damp. I lightly covered the containers with lids and allowed them to incubate near my house's water heater, misting the spawn every day to keep it moist. Full myceliation was achieved after ten days and pinning began around day 12.

Once the containers showed signs of primordia formation I moved them to the top of my bathroom cabinet for fruiting. I encouraged fresh air flow by opening the window for an hour or two on warmer days, and I trapped humidity in the room by closing the door after showering. I also added a humidifier which definitely helped. The containers have fruited at different intervals, giving me a steady supply of delicious oysters! I plan to re-use some of the spawn in a bucket-style fruiting method and compost the rest.



Anna "foraging" for spent oyster spawn



New mycelium growth from old spawn mixed with newspaper and coffee grounds.



re-used plastic containers fruiting with oysters

Foray Pics!

The season is off to a good start! Let's hope it stays that way!



PPMS foray coordinator, James Chellin, and PPMS President, Ben Kinsley, helping to ID mushrooms on a foray in Cheyenne Canyon, Colorado Springs.



PPMS Librarian, Isabel Gring, with father displaying blonde morels!



PPMS members using identification guides as reference.



PPMS members displaying their finds



PPMS members pointing out a clitocybe fairy ring!



PPMS members with giant puffball!



PPMS member, Casey Weinrich with beautiful pluerotus sp. from Memorial Day foray



Giant puffball

