

# TIPS ON FINDING MUSHROOMS

By Larry Renshaw

- Mushrooms like moisture. The chances of finding mushrooms are much greater in damp areas. A good time to look is a few days after a period of rain. Well irrigated fields, parks and cemeteries are likely spots, even in dry weather. In the mountains, a gulch with a slight seepage or the banks of a small stream are good places to start looking. A culvert under the road is another good place to stop and look, because it indicates that water sometimes collects on one side of the road.
- Long term success will be enhanced by a good memory or good notes. If mushrooms are found at a certain location at a certain time one year, it is likely that more mushrooms of the same type will be found at that spot at the same time next year if the climatic conditions are similar.
- A little change in elevation can make a lot of difference in average temperatures in the mountains. If you aren't having much luck at a particular elevation, moving up or down a few hundred feet may change your luck. Also keep in mind that one side of the Continental Divide may be dry while the other side is moist. Changing sides may increase your success.
- Some mushrooms grow in association with particular types of trees. To improve the variety of your finds, try searching mixed forests or the interfaces where Aspen and conifers meet.
- It is not necessary to hike through dense forest to find mushrooms. Trails and gravel road edges are often productive. Trails and roads can act as funnels, collecting and concentrating water thus promoting mushroom growth along their borders.
- Start looking at the bottom of a hill and concentrate your search while going uphill. It is easier to spot mushrooms partially hidden under duff while looking uphill.
- Some species of mushrooms seem to need more moisture than other species. One way to take advantage of this is to walk along a stream bank in one direction and return via a higher, drier path.
- A large part of mushroom hunting is timing, and a large part of timing is luck. So much depends on where you happen to be at what time. If you are too early, the mushrooms will not be visible. If you are too late, the mushrooms will have already been harvested, too old to eat or riddled with bugs. In Colorado, the peak month for finding mushrooms, particularly edible species, is August.