



Gold is growing in our forests once again!

By Anne Munier

I know that I'm not the only one that's been foraging these prize 'shrooms from Royal Road's grounds lately- chanterelles are back, and are well-sought after! With a feature article in this month's *Vogue* magazine the allure of this favoured edible mushroom has clearly gone beyond the typical wild forager cohort (whatever that may be) to the more glamorous mainstream. The most common species, the golden or yellow chanterelle (*Cantharellus cibarius*), is yellow-orange to bright orange, with a concave cap (some say 'trumpet shaped') when mature and with

well-spaced, thick gills running down the stalk (which itself is solid rather than hollow). The flesh is white, the mushroom is medium-sized (up to about 15 cm tall and wide), and it does not have a veil, ring, or volva. If this all comes together with a nice apricot or pumpkin odour, then you've got the right mushroom! (But, of-course, **always** check with an expert and/or multiple field guides before eating or serving them if you're just learning!!).

Chanterelles grow on the ground, often under conifers and oak trees in young to mature (30-80 year old) coniferous forests (look for Douglas fir, spruce, or hemlock stands with mossy floors). A couple look-alikes that are probably best avoided include the western jack-o'-lantern (which have thinner and more crowded gills and do not have white flesh) and the false chanterelle (which have thinner, more orange gills, a less solid stalk, and often a browner cap).

To harvest chanterelles cut the base with a sharp knife rather than pulling it to avoid damaging the mycelium, and collect them in shallow baskets rather than buckets or plastic bags to avoid having them rot. It's best to harvest in dry weather for the same reason. They can be stored for a week or so in the refrigerator, or for longer periods by drying, freezing, or pickling. Most harvesters recommend not washing them (which causes them to absorb water) but rather brushing off dirt and plant material while still out in the woods.

Before freezing, pickling, or preparing chanterelles it is recommended to dry-sautee them. This involves slicing them and cooking at maximum heat in a skillet without butter (but a bit of salt is okay to draw out moisture). They will start to give off water in which they can be cooked for a few minutes, and save some liquid for later use as stock. After this feel free to add all the butter and garlic that you like, or use the chanterelles in soups, omelettes, dips, bread (really!), salads, meat dishes, or perhaps some golden chanterelle puffs.

It was hard to choose a recipe for this week's non-timber forest product, but the CNTR's Tim Brigham is awfully proud of his mom's recipe for "*Delicious Chanterelles*" that go well with pasta, meat, or on toast as an appetizer, so we thought that it deserved a wider audience:

1 onion or 2-3 shallots, finely chopped
1 lb fresh chanterelles, sliced
butter
½ cup (or more) of port or Madeira wine
1 cup (or more) whipping cream
salt and pepper to taste

(all amounts approximate)

Slice the Chanterelles. Sauté onions or shallots in butter until slightly brown; remove from pan. Dry sauté mushrooms in the pan until almost all of the liquid has evaporated. Add onions and port. Turn temperature down, add the cream and heat gently (do not boil after adding the cream). Add salt and pepper to taste.

And, just in case you're not a regular *Vogue* reader but are interested in their scrumptious-sounding recipe for *chanterelle salad with frisee, poached eggs, and black truffle vinaigrette*, you can access it here: <http://www.style.com/vogue/feature/2009/07/the-mushroom-forager/>

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