

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

DEATH CAP MUSHROOM

(*Amanita phalloides*)

NATIVE RANGE

Death cap mushrooms are native to Europe.

DESCRIPTION

- Death cap mushrooms emerge from the ground as white buttons (called primordia) about the size of small chicken eggs. At this stage, they can be mistaken for puffballs or straw mushrooms.
- If the primordia are cut in half from top to bottom, a very careful examination will reveal the cap, gills, and stem of a tiny mushroom.
- As the fungus matures, the stem elongates and the white tissue enveloping the developing mushroom (universal veil) breaks, leaving a membranous white sac (volva) at the base of the stem that may require careful excavation to keep it intact for observation.
- As the stem elongates further and the cap expands, a second white tissue (partial veil) that had covered the gills breaks, leaving a skirt-like ring or veil on the stem.
- In the mature mushroom, the cap has a distinctive olive or green hue, although the cap overall can appear pale green, pale brown, pale yellow or sometimes white, with: white gills; a white stem (or tinged with the cap's colour); a white, skirt-like partial veil or ring on the stem; and a white, membranous, sac-like volva surrounding the base of the stem.
- The death cap mushroom usually fruits in the fall, but it can fruit in the summer when yards are watered.
- Visit the following link for more photos and descriptions:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amanita_phalloides

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www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species



PRIMARY THREAT

The death cap mushroom is **deadly poisonous** if eaten. It can be mistaken for edible puffballs when young or the Asian straw mushroom when older.

DEATH CAP MUSHROOM *(Amanita phalloides)*

BIOLOGY AND SPREAD

The death cap mushroom forms mutually beneficial symbioses called ectomycorrhizas with the fine roots of certain trees native to Europe. The death cap mushroom was likely unintentionally introduced many decades ago from Europe on the roots of horticultural trees. It is likely that the mushroom became established in bare root tree nurseries in North America and has since spread to urban areas on the roots of trees raised in these nurseries and then planted along streets and boulevards. Common host trees are hazelnut, hornbeam, beech, linden, sweet chestnut, and oak.

In Victoria, the death cap mushroom has been found to associate with Garry oak roots. If it acclimates to the Garry oak, the death cap mushroom may move out of urban areas into native Garry oak woodlands.

HABITAT

Presently in B.C., the death cap mushroom is known primarily from urban areas in Vancouver and Victoria. The mushroom fruits on the ground in the fall under suitable host trees and in the summer where lawns are watered. On Galiano Island, death cap mushrooms have fruited on the ground under a hazelnut tree that was planted decades ago when a farm was being developed there. In the Fraser Valley, death cap mushrooms have fruited in agricultural and suburban areas under old sweet chestnut and hazelnut plantings in Langley, Mission and Surrey.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND ONE?

- Collect the whole mushrooms, bag them and dispose of them in the garbage.
- Wash your hands with soap and running water after handling the mushrooms.

B.C. Drug and Poison Information Centre:

1 800 567-8911

More info: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/death-cap-mushrooms>

www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

HOW CAN WE SLOW ITS SPREAD?

- Plant non-host trees on private property, boulevards or in parks.
- Collect, bag and dispose of these mushrooms in the garbage, preferably while they're still in the button stage. Although this step will not eradicate the fungus on the host tree's roots, it may slow this mushroom's spread via spore dispersal.
- Do not water known death cap mushroom sites on lawns during the summer.

