

Gabriola Sounder, November 1, 2016, p7.

Two comments on the otherwise good article on poisonous mushrooms in *Oct.25 Sounder*

One is that identifying a mushroom solely by its common name as in the article can be misleading. As it happens "deathcap", whose scientific name is "Amanita phalloides", is fairly reliably identified as such in this part of the world, but it has elsewhere been lumped in with other Amanita species as "destroying angel". Some mushrooms have a variety of common names even in western North America. Only the scientific name provides certainty.

Secondly, as a one-time hunter myself, I resent the fact that foragers often leave behind them a trail of kicked-over or picked and discarded specimens. Few would treat wildflowers this way, so why is it acceptable to do this with mushrooms? Take photographs or enjoy seeing them among the leaf litter. With practice, it's not difficult to identify not-worth-collecting specimens without destroying them, without depriving others of the pleasure of discovering them, and by digging up the entire thing, without interfering with their reproductive cycle. Mushrooms are a vital part of the forest ecology, and we've progressed a long way since the days when they were all regarded as just "poisonous toadstools".

Regards