

DISCLAIMER

THE CORRECT IDENTIFICATION OF MUSHROOMS THROUGH THE VIEWING OF PHOTOGRAPHS IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE. WITHOUT THE ABILITY TO HANDLE THE SPECIMEN A NUMBER OF THE CLUES USED FOR PROPER IDENTIFICATION ARE ABSENT. **YOUR RELIANCE ON AN IDENTIFICATION MADE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS IS DONE SO AT YOUR OWN RISK.**

--If you are already familiar with iNaturalist and have the cellphone app, start the app and follow B below.

--If you are not familiar with iNaturalist, please read the information below.

Using iNaturalist at Forays, Bioblitzes or on Your Own Jaunts

What is iNaturalist?

iNaturalist is a system for smartphones and computers that allows you to make observations of mushrooms (**or any organism**) in the field, attempt to identify them and then post these observations later for all to see. We encourage our members to use this system to obtain identification help on mushrooms they see.

Why Should I Use This App? --Here are 4 great reasons:

1. Make observations in the field. Your smart phone camera records the location (can be approximate) and date of your observation. Photos and info are filed with each observation. All users will know what, when and where mushrooms are occurring and can make species lists for favorite areas. (Precise location can be hidden so you won't give your favorite area away.)
2. iNaturalist can offer suggestions on the identity of what you find. This works for all organisms and is getting quite good for mushrooms, particularly once you have an **Internet** connection.
3. Your observations will be looked at by a number of others including experts. Some club identifiers are monitoring iNaturalist and will provide such verifications or ask for other information you might provide to clarify an ID.
4. The more observations we provide the system with good follow-up verification, the better the iNaturalist system will become at recognizing our local species.

How Do I Get Started? --It's as easy as A, B (don't have to worry about any step C!):

A. Get the App...

Register with iNaturalist <https://www.inaturalist.org/> and download the appropriate app for your smart phone or tablet. Once you are registered you will maintain a list of your past observations and can follow as experts verify them. You can also follow other observers' posts or join a "project" to see complete lists for observations in certain defined locations. See the help files at iNaturalist for specific instructions for your phone and help with all aspects of the system.

B. After you have a smart phone app, follow these steps to make and post an observation :

1. Photograph only mushrooms that are in good condition, relatively fresh, not overly moldy, eaten, or rotted. On forays and bioblitzes, keep multi-person postings of the same thing to a minimum.
2. Take a first photo. Restrict first photos to in-field observations (this will lock in the location).
3. Choose the "+" option to add more photos of the same observation. Record several views: whole mushroom, top and up underneath gills or pores. Make sure they are in focus. It is also useful to have photos of different stages of development, if present.
4. Once photos are added you can ask for a species ID by choosing "What did you see?". The suggestions will be very limited if there is no **Internet** connectivity (if so, best to save this step until you return.) Choose a name from the list or write in a guess and choose to keep the name as a placeholder. **The suggestions offered by iNaturalist are often accurate, BUT NOT ALWAYS! Later comments by others will help verify possible identifications.**
5. "Notes" can be helpful; anything not obvious from photos: odor (or taste), habitat, size, viscid cap or stem, staining, etc.
6. If you want to keep the precise location secret, change the geoprivacy to "Obscured".
7. Save for later posting, particularly if you don't have internet access at the moment.
8. Once you have returned, choose an observation and "Edit" to make changes or additions. Or just post your observations by clicking on the cloud icon.
9. If you are on a foray, don't submit records of table collections (the table is not the location for the species). However such a photo could be added to an existing observation using "Edit".
10. Using your computer, you can use the "Edit" feature to add additional details including other camera photos, photographs of microscopic features, notes on features, etc.
11. Check your list of your observations in a day or two to see verifications and comments.
12. You are encouraged to engage with the identifiers by adding comments or queries. This **feature** allows you to communicate with a wide range of identifiers throughout the world.

Your cellphone app is best for entering observations. You can also just take photos of things in the field as you would without using the app, following the guidelines above, and use the iNaturalist app later to choose photos from your camera's photo file and post observations at that later time. Your phone keeps the location, date and time of each photograph so the resulting post will be exactly the same as using the app in the field. To actually use all the power of iNaturalist to search for things that have already been posted (by species, location, date or observer) it is much more convenient to use your computer to access the iNaturalist website.