

FRUIT GROWTH

Growth is the final stage of production. Temperature and water both play a role at this point. Water, moisture, and humidity (best of all) enhances mushroom size.

Temperature changes determine the rate of growth. Formed mushrooms that are triggered will grow slowly, or not at all, if proper changes do not occur. A general warming and daily variation between high and low air temperature is the key. 20 to 30 degree variations between high and low are best.

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

Getting ready for a matsi season can be simple or complicated, depending on experience and sincerity of an individual. One element all have in common is the need to know where matsutake grows. We are fortunate, in the Pacific Northwest, to have Allotropia to indicate where matsutake mycelia is located.

ALLOTROPA

Allotropia, without a doubt, is the best year round hunting tool harvesters have available. This plant provides harvesters a means to detect matsutake any time, except when the ground is covered with snow. Spring and summer walks in suspect areas could be extremely rewarding. Try to locate areas at a variety of elevations and aspects. Most years have a defined production area. Mushrooms are only produced at certain elevations and aspects. Knowing areas high, low, sunny, and dark, gives you better odds mushrooms will emerge in an area you scouted. Take the time to find areas before harvest begins, not when you should be harvesting.

Allotropia can also be useful during harvest. Their dead bodies can be seen most any time. While harvesting, examine areas near them. There may be no mushrooms, but at least you know you are looking in an area that will produce if conditions are right.

FORECASTING

The importance of forecasting has not been fully realized by the "Matsutake World". Partially due to an inability to understand, but mostly disbelief. Forecasting fruit conditions includes knowing when and where fruiting will start, rate of growth, and quantity expect. All categories of forecasting are not necessary to become a successful harvester.

CONIFER HOSTS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Ponderosa Pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>
White Fir	<i>Abies concolor</i>
Douglas Fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>
Shasta Red Fir	<i>Abies magnifica shastensis</i>
Lodgepole Pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>
Mountain Hemlock	<i>Tsuga mertensiana</i>

ALLOTROPA VIRGATA

Allotropia, common name candy cane, is a saprophyte which indicates matsutake mycelia. It feeds on the mycelia, taking the nutrients it needs. The mycelia must be present if the "plant" is. Allotropia has been noted with all host trees wherever Matsutake grows in the Pacific Northwest.

It is rare to find mushrooms among allotropia. Fruiting area associated is within 5 to 15 Ft.

Allotropia growth begins in early spring as temperatures warm. Young allotropia resembles asparagus with no color, or a pink tint.

The maturing plant is red and white striped. This stage is reached in mid June to early September. A mature plant has tiny white flowers with a red center. Height is 3 inches to 3 feet. The bright color and size allow them to be detected at a distance. However, it is common to find only stalks due to animal browsing.

Dead allotropia is dark brown. It may stand in place for up to 3 years. Winter rains beat them down making them difficult to see at times.

Dead or alive they indicate matsutake.

Allotropia can also introduce new harvesters to the smell of matsutake.

Directly under allotropia is matsutake mycelia. It will be white or have a bluish tint. Remove a small portion and smell. The smell may vary slightly depending on moisture and time of year. The mushroom body is composed of the same material as the mycelia. Thus the same smell. Gills are the only specialized portion.

OTHER FUNGI

A variety of mushrooms spring up before, after, and during matsutake. These mushrooms are generally called indicators.