

Raccoon Creek News

Fall 2025

Get out and explore!

Fungus Fever

By Lily Kijek

As the leaves fall and the weather gets cooler, the forest floor comes alive with one of nature's most fascinating displays, mushrooms! Hidden beneath fallen leaves and tucked along decaying logs, these biological anomalies emerge in a stunning variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. From the classic Chicken of the Woods to the supernatural Puff Ball, mushrooms play a vital role in our ecosystem services



https://lifehacker.com/11-of-the-best-ways-to-identify-wild-mushrooms-1850589488?test_uid=02DN02BmBRCCASIX6xMQY9&test_variant=B

globally. Beyond their ecological importance, mushrooms captivate scientists, foragers, hikers, and naturalists alike, offering a small glimpse into the hidden network that sustains forest life.

So, what exactly is a mushroom, and why is it vital for our ecosystems? Mushrooms are eukaryotic fungi that feed on organic matter and play an essential role in maintaining ecological health. Through the release of specific enzymes, mushrooms accelerate the decomposition of dead plants and animals, returning key nutrients such as carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus back into the soil and supporting the natural nutrient cycling process. Beyond decomposition, mushrooms form remarkable symbiotic relationships with a wide range of plant species. In exchange for carbohydrates produced through photosynthesis, fungi help plants absorb water and nutrients more efficiently, promoting growth and resilience across entire ecosystems. Mushrooms are just one small part of a vast underground fungal network that connects the roots of countless plants, fostering interdependence between species, and enriching soil biodiversity.



<https://a-z-animals.com/blog/morels-vs-false-morels/>

While this is only a glimpse into their ecological importance, mushrooms and their fungal networks contribute in countless ways to sustaining the delicate balance of life on Earth! More information can be found at <https://earth.org/fungi-the-hidden-heroes-of-ecosystems/>

ATHENS

GALLIA

HOCKING

JACKSON



MEIGS

VINTON

Fungus Fever

By Lily Kijek

Common Fall Mushrooms of Ohio:

<p>Oyster Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Pleurotus Ostreatus</i> Found on dead/decaying hard wood trees in clusters Spring and Fall seasons Fun Fact: carnivorous, often feeding on worms for nitrogen 	<p>Chicken of the Woods Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Laetiporus Sulphureus</i> Found at base of dead and living hardwood trees, commonly Oak Late September through October Fun Fact: used as a vegetarian substitute for chicken 	<p>Giant Puffball Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Calvatia</i> Found in parks, meadows, pastures, and urban areas Late August to early October Fun Fact: one mushroom can have up to 7 trillion spores 
<p>Lion's Mane Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Hericiumerinaceus</i> Found growing on hardwood trees like Oak Late September through November Fun Fact: used as a supplement for mental clarity 	<p>Chanterelle Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Cantharellus</i> Found under hardwood trees like Oak and Hemlock Late June through September Fun Fact: natural source of vitamin D 	<p>Shaggy Mane Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Coprinus</i> Found in grassy areas and densely packed ground Late summer to end of November Fun fact: also known as inky cap because it seeps black goo 
<p>Honey Fungus Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Armillaria Mellea</i> Most commonly found in clusters at the base of hard trees Mid to late October Fun Fact: their underground network glows in the dark 	<p>Jack-O-Lantern Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Omphalotus</i> Found in forested areas near dead or dying trees and decaying roots Late September through October Fun Fact: they are toxic and glow in the dark 	<p>Orange Mycena Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Mycena Leaiana</i> Grows in dense clusters on dead/dying hardwood trees Late spring through early fall Fun Fact: can grow on both dead and living plants 
<p>Turkey Tail Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Trametes Versicolor</i> Found in forests on dead/decaying hardwood trees Visible year-round Fun Fact: frequently used for medicinal purposes 	<p>Violet Coral Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Clavaria Zollingeri</i> Found in hardwood forests and grasslands June through November Fun Fact: used as an indicator of soil quality in many countries 	<p>Fly Agaric Mushroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific name <i>Amantia Muscaria</i> Often found under or near dead/dying trees August through October Fun Fact: very toxic, steer clear! 

Disclaimer: Please do not forage or eat ANY mushroom without 100% certainty of species! Many edible species have poisonous twins (Like Chanterelle and Jack-O-Lantern mushrooms, listed above)!

Zucchini Season!

By Nichole Mazzone

Although often considered a quintessential summer vegetable, zucchini can be harvested well into the fall, making it a versatile ingredient for transitioning to heartier, autumn-inspired recipes. Using your leftover zucchini to make cookies will leave you full and satisfied with just the right amount of sweetness. Alternatively, add your favorite spread to a slice of moist zucchini bread for a perfect sweet and savory treat, or turn them into muffins to share!



Double sided Recipe Card Below!

<https://www.thekitchenmagpie.com/zucchini-oatmeal-chocolate-chip-cookie-recipe/>, <https://www.rumispice.com/blogs/recipes/healthy-zucchini-bread-with-mulling-spice?srsltid=AfmBOoxf44o9XTAu7ZB4kl1-ydyh6dfn19Db-IXQneJXyE9QmZD2L>



Zucchini Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups shredded zucchini, patted dry
- 1 3/4 cup quick oats
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 2 cups chocolate chips



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly grease a baking sheet or line them with parchment paper
2. Whisk the flour, cinnamon, and baking soda in a small bowl.
3. In a separate bowl, combine the butter and sugar, and beat until well mixed. Add in the egg and beat until incorporated. Stir in the vanilla extract.
4. Add the zucchini to the batter and stir until evenly mixed, then gradually beat in the flour mixture. Finally, stir in the oats, nuts, and chocolate chips until evenly distributed
5. Drop the dough by heaping tablespoons onto the prepared baking sheet, each 2 inches apart.
6. Bake for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown around the edges
7. Let the cookies rest on the baking sheets for 5 minutes, then move to wire rack to cool



<https://www.thekitchenmagpie.com/zucchini-oatmeal-chocolate-chip-cookie-recipe/>

Upcoming Board Elections

Our upcoming Board elections this year are a big one! We are saying a thankful goodbye to both our Chairman Kate Blythe and our Vice Chairman Nichole Mazzone, as well as general board member Kristin Andrews. As such, we will have 3 spots open on our board this year! Please join us at our Annual meeting on November 9th to renew your membership and vote in board elections! More details for the event can be found at the end of this newsletter

Currently, we have 3 candidates for board positions!

Wayne Rossiter is a professor in Wildlife Conservation at the University of Rio Grande and has worked in species conservation and wildlife disease ecology for many years, with a focus in aquatic systems.

Lydia Dodson is a recent graduate of Ohio University's Master of Science in Environmental Studies (MSES) program. Lydia was born and raised in Perry county, and has hands-on experience working in freshwater aquatic ecosystems and conservation.

Mary Gatonye is also a recent graduate of Ohio University's MSES program. She has a background in water quality assessments, ecological analysis, community development, and environmental education.

If you're interested in running for a board member position, or just want to learn more, please reach out to us at RaccoonCreekPartnership@gmail.com.

The deadline for nominations is November 2nd.

Zucchini Bread

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups grated zucchini (approx. 1 med. Zucchini)
- 2 large eggs
- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/3 tsp salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease a loaf pan or muffin tin, or line with parchment paper.
2. Finely grate the zucchini. Blot off extra moisture until moist but not dripping.
3. Combine the eggs, brown sugar, granulated sugar, oil, and vanilla extract in a large bowl and whisk to combine. Stir in the zucchini.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon.
5. Gradually add dry ingredients to the wet mixture. Stir gently until combined, do not overmix.
6. Pour the batter into your prepared pan. Bake for 50-60 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
7. Let the bread rest for 10-15 minutes, then move to wire rack to cool completely.



Farewell to Outgoing AmeriCorps Member, Jordan Carey!

By Jordan Carey



Hello Everyone! Serving with Raccoon Creek Partnership over the past year has truly been a great experience that I will forever be grateful for. Over the past year I was able to do and learn so much. I have gained a lot of hands-on experience in environmental monitoring and education. I have been able to see parts of Ohio that I had never seen before. I have also built relationships and created memories that I will forever cherish. It was an absolute blast that helped affirm my desire to pursue a career in the environmental field. I have so many great memories but a few to highlight would be seeing Raccoon Creek being designated a state scenic river, going out and doing field work all over Ohio, Summer Camp, and getting really dirty removing some beaver dams that were blocking one of our treatment sites.

I'll miss all the fun times but I feel this position has prepared me well to have a successful career. I'm excited to see what the future holds and where it takes me. I hope to stay in contact and help Raccoon Creek Partnership when they need it. I wish you all the best and can't wait to see what the future holds.

Welcome to Our New AmeriCorps Member, Lily Kijek!

By Lily Kijek

Hello! My name is Lily Kijek and I am the newest Appalachian Ohio Restore AmeriCorps member serving with Raccoon Creek Partnership for this upcoming term. As a first year AmeriCorps member, I am beyond excited to begin my full year of service with the latest and greatest scenic river in the State of Ohio!

Originally from Northeast Ohio, I obtained a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Cleveland State University at the end of 2022, with an invested focus in environmental policy, politics of conservation and sustainability, and how humans and the environment interact and rely on one another. After, I spent 5 months as a water ecology field assistant with the Greater Cleveland Aquarium. In August of 2025, I graduated from Ohio University's Master of Science in Environmental Studies program, with a focus on water quality, environmental conservation, sustainability, and plastic pollution/microplastics. I absolutely love spending my time outside hiking, riding my bicycle, gardening, disc golfing, and searching for different types of bugs. I also enjoy listening to old music, crocheting, playing board games like Settlers of Catan and Dominion, and spending time building reptile, fish, and amphibian enclosures.



I cannot wait to begin my service with Raccoon Creek Partnership and further deepen my understanding of environmental stewardship, conservation, outreach, and education through hands-on collaborative efforts!

Activities and Upcoming Events

RCP Nature Bingo

Explore, discover, and celebrate the changing season in Raccoon Creek! Take this card with you during your autumn adventures in the Raccoon Creek Watershed! Complete 5 boxes in a row, across, down, or diagonal — or fill the whole board. Whether you're out hiking, fishing, or simply relaxing by the creek, every action helps you connect more deeply with your watershed.







Visit a trail in Raccoon Creek	Go fishing in the watershed 	Find a colorful mushroom 	Find a Buckeye	Have a picnic in the watershed
Explore a pollinator garden	Flip stones until you find a water critter 	Skip a stone across the creek	Find a feather along a trail in the watershed	Identify signs of a beaver or muskrat
Spot a native pollinator	Spot a flock of migrating birds	FREE SPACE Thank you for connecting with your watershed!	Find a frog in the creek 	Attend a Raccoon Creek Partnership Event
Pick up 5 pieces of litter	Find 3 leaves, each a different color 	Find a turtle basking in the sun	Find a Paw Paw Tree	Find an arrowhead
Take a photo of your favorite spot along Raccoon Creek	Identify a native wildflower	Catch a Crayfish (be careful, they pinch!) 	Spot a new Raccoon Creek State Scenic River Sign	Find animal tracks in the watershed

Share your bingo card or photos with us at Raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com or via Social Media @raccooncreekpartnership
We love seeing your adventures in the latest Scenic River in Ohio!

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Raccoon Creek Partnership Annual Meeting _____ Sunday, November 9th, 2pm-4pm

Raccoon Creek Outfitters- 74815 US-50 #8010, Albany, OH 45710

Free and open to the public: Silent Auction, Hot Chocolate, a guest speaker, and a bonfire!

**** All events subject to change ****

For info or directions visit our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/raccooncreekpartnership/>

Or e-mail raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com or mackey@ohio.edu





Join us for the

RACCOON CREEK PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL MEETING!

Open to the public



Sunday, November 9th, 2 pm - 4 pm

**At Raccoon Creek Outfitters- 74815 US-50 #8010, Albany, OH
45710**

**Come enjoy a fun fall evening of snacks, hot chocolate, a
bonfire, board elections, our silent auction, and a guest
presentation by Andrew Peters with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service!**

**Please bring your own
chair and any extra
bonfire snacks**

**Thank you to Snowville
Creamery for providing the
hot chocolate!**



Raccoon Creek Partnership

c/o Amy Mackey
Voinovich School
The Ridges, Bldg 22
Athens, OH 45701



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Name

Address

Phone

E-mail

A local partnership working towards conservation,
stewardship, and restoration of the watershed
for a healthier stream and community

Membership

Creek Chub	\$15
Johnny Darter	\$30
Channel Catfish	\$50
Grass Pickerel	\$100
Spotted Bass	\$500
Paddlefish	\$1000