

Featured Mushroom
Auricularia auricula (Tree Ear)



*This image can be found at
at:*

[www.ency.tcv.pl/eo/wiki/Dosiero
:Auricularia_a...](http://www.ency.tcv.pl/eo/wiki/Dosiero:Auricularia_a...)

Auricularia auricula (Tree Ear or Ear Fungus) is quite distinctive and can be easily spotted looking like clumps of ears on dead logs. It can be found any time of year on dead elms and other deciduous wood. There have been many times when it was the only edible in my basket. I've even found it in an edible state in the winter. It can still be edible if it has begun to dry. Actually drying it and reconstituting it in broth is the best way to eat it. It's important to know that it is either fresh or dried while fresh and hasn't become dessicated. If its rubbery or pliant it should be okay, but if its fragile and crumbly it's probably old and not good.

I've eaten it many times but was never too impressed until I tried it in several dishes in China. The Chinese name for it is Yung Ngo or Black Mushrooms because they blacken when dried. Its mild flavor and gelatinous texture fit just right with other vegetables in Chinese dishes. I even got pretty good at sliming it up onto chop-sticks.

Auricularia auricula will be discussed in more depth in the Spring 09 issue of Symbiosis. To learn more about this fascinating often under-rated (in America) fungus, visit Tom Volk's web page: http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/toms_fungi/apr2004.html or Micheal Kuo page: http://www.mushroomexpert.com/auricularia_auricula.html

Dave