

Chanterelle Abundance



I love mushrooms for two reasons. Sooner or later I see a wonderful new fungus and sooner or later I have a wonderful new fungi eating experience. On July 25th 2009 I was provided with a wonderful new fungi eating experience – Chanterelle abundance!

Every year I find a few of the golden yellow trumpet-shaped *Cantharellus cibarius* along forest paths and under brush. Their bright color and ruffled gill-like ridges underneath make them one of the easiest mushrooms to spot and identify. Even so they are usually rather small in both number and size. Still I occasionally find enough to flavor a meal with their unique, almost fruity golden flavor. In 35 years of mushroom hunting I've never found them in a real abundance. That is, until this year, when hundreds of all sizes were growing near an old pine tree on a mowed city park lawn!

For the first time, I was able to choose only the firmest most worm-free specimens and still have plenty in my sack for multiple meals, plus some to freeze and share at an upcoming cooking class at New Pioneer Coop in Coralville on September 22nd at 6 pm. Most fun of all, I had enough to experiment with.

After a couple experiments and some web research, I've learned that Chanterelles' flavor is great sautéed slowly with a little fresh garlic and onion, chive or shallot in extra-virgin olive oil. From there they can go well in a wide variety of meals with their strong yellow flavor holding its own nicely. We enjoyed them in an omelet with some delicious Bonnet Caps (*Marasmius oreades*). The frozen packet that I'll use at the cooking class was sautéed in this manner before freezing. An internet article said this is the best way to freeze them. We'll find out.

Some people need lots of money and stuff to find life rewarding. I'm much luckier. My life's biggest rewards can come in a nice patch of yellow mushrooms or something even more amazing that I know sooner or later will just pop up.

Dave

