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Hericium coralloides

On a gorgeous Fall day in a deep golden forest near the banks of your favorite river you spot this stunning display on a log from ten yards away. As you approach the marvelous specimen, you become reverent and thankful, reminded of the amazing beauty and abundance of life. Then, if you're like me, you hog into this yummy stuff and cook something delicious with it.

Okay I don't just hog into these common but seldom abundant mushrooms. I always leave some attached to the log to mature and spread millions of spores for the future. This practice is important with all edibles.

There is some confusion over species names with *ramosum* being an older name. The variety with many branches and longer spines is now called *H. americanum*. *H. erinaceus* grows from a central stalk and has much longer spines. I've found *erinaceus* in early summer, though guides say it grows in Fall. All *Hericium* are edible, but I think *coralloides* is the best and I always seem to find it during Fall on dead logs in river bottom forests. That means that when I find this fungus, I also might be catching fish - a day to give thanks for indeed!

Dave