

Suillus Americanus – Yikes!



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Yikes! I've known about the American Slippery Cap, (*Suillus americanus*) or Chicken Fat mushroom for decades. It's edible - not the greatest, but not the worst either. It's also one of the most common local mushrooms around Eastern Iowa where Eastern White Pine is common, so I've eaten it a number of times, but in recent years I've grown suspicious.

I get poison ivy pretty easily and I'm around it a lot so I'm careful. I always say I don't look for mushrooms. I look for poison ivy and happen to find mushrooms. When I'm in it I can feel it, but I take a good shower and it's usually not a problem. Still every year around mid summer, I would get terrible poison ivy on my face and ears. It made no sense. My legs never got any and I was always as careful as usual around it, but I began to notice that it was right around the time I'd find this mushroom that I'd get the tell-tale rash. But I thought that was a coincidence. I never got on the internet to see if there could be a connection to these mushrooms. Then, for Christmas, I got the wonderful book 100 Edible Fungi by Michael Kuo. In it he states that some people get contact dermatitis from this mushroom – Yikes! Upon further research I found similar statements on a variety of websites. It all makes sense. I'd pick these mushrooms, smell them and taste them, and put the freshest ones in a basket. I'd go home and take my poison ivy shower, then proceed to pull them out of the basket, clean them smell them again and cook them. Then, yikes! The next morning I'd awaken in misery unable to figure out how I got in such bad poison ivy. Now I know it was mushroom poisoning! I won't touch any American Slippery Caps again. And hopefully I won't be saying Yikes! either.

Dave

