



Photo by Chris Hiscoke (UK)

Terrific Turkey Tails (*Trametes versicolor*)

Turkey Tails (*Trametes versicolor*) are proof that the best things in life truly are free. These ubiquitous mushrooms may have more uses and benefits than any other species. Turkey tails have a long history of medicinal use in China and Japan, where they're known as Yun Zhi and Kawaratake, respectively. Consider all the virtues extolled in various websites.

First from Mushroom-Collecting.com <http://mushroom-collecting.com/mushroomturkey.html>

- used by artists in various assemblages and even as jewelry. They also can be used to make blue and green dyes for wool and other fabrics.
- There has been quite a bit of research done on these for their medicinal value as adjunct [cancer treatment](#) including [colorectal cancer](#) and [leukemia](#).

From Wild Branch Mushrooms <http://wildbranchmushrooms.com/turkey-tail>

- Fights cancers and tumors by inhibiting the growth of cancer cells and by "stimulating a host mediated response."
- proposed as an inhibitor of HIV replication
- Turkey Tail is also regarded as curative to liver ailments (including hepatitis B and chronic active

hepatitis) and is used to treat general weakness of the immune system(Ying et al., 1987)

- Eminent herbalogist Christopher Hobbs likes to chew the fresh fruitbodies like gum when walking in the woods.

From the website Permaculture Reflections <http://permaculturetokyo.blogspot.com/2009/03/species-of-month-trametes-versicolor.html>

- Heat-killed mycelium of *T. versicolor* has been used to absorb up to 97% of mercury ions from water, suggesting its value to clean water systems.
- valuable in either breaking down or bioaccumulating some of the worst manmade pollutants in our environment

In addition to all these other uses Mike Krebil will explain how to make a delicious soup using *Trametes* in the Winter 2011 issue of *Symbiosis*.

As common and popular as they are, turkey tails are sometimes tricky to identify. Their own appearance can be quite variable as their name *versicolor* suggests. Plus many other species are very similar in appearance. Fortunately identification help is available. So the next time you're trying to troll through *Trametes* types, take the terrific template to test *Trametes*, Micheal Kuo's "Totally True Turkey Tail Test" From the Mushroom Expert.com: http://www.mushroomexpert.com/trametes_versicolor.html

An excellent diagram of the many uses of *Trametes* can be found at http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_uH8JDRwUtr0/ScJtCUFI5cI/AAAAAAAAAfA/qqfGGFxRJj0/s1600-h/Trametes+versicolor.jpg

One final thing that turkey tails are good for is that their beauty can still be admired on a winter walk through a seemingly barren wood, so let's get out and enjoy the abundance of the "best things in life."

Dave



Photo by Courtney Buck



Photo by Roger Heidt