

## Key to the Major Groups of Fungi

- 1a Fruitbody with thin flexible gills, **or** blunt gills with crossveins or vein-like ridges, **or** teeth (spines), **or** pores present on the **undersurface**.....2
- 1b Fruitbody lacking gills, blunt gills, vein-like ridges, or teeth on the undersurface.....7
- 2a Fruitbody with gills, blunt gills with crossveins, or vein-like ridges on the undersurface.....3
- 2b Fruitbody lacking gills, blunt gills with crossveins, or vein-like ridges.....5
- 3a Fruitbody with a cap and stalk, or funnel-like shape; undersurface with blunt gill-like to vein-like ridges that are often forked and crossveined, or nearly smooth; usually growing on the ground, but sometimes on wood.....**Chanterelles and Similar Fungi**
- 3b Fruitbody with normal, **or** split, **or** crimped gills.....4
- 4a Fruitbody small, stalkless; undersurface gill-like but longitudinally split or distinctly crimped, often forked and vein-like; growing on wood.....**Split Gill or Crimped Gill**
- 4b Fruitbody small to large, undersurface with thin knifeblade-like gills radiating from a stalk, or on stalkless species, from the point of attachment to the substrate; growing on the ground, wood, grass, dung, or a variety of other substrates.....**Gilled Mushrooms**
- 5a Fruitbody fleshy, corky or leathery fungi with downward-oriented teeth (spines); shape varies from cap and stalk to branched and icicle-like, fan-shaped or shelf-like; growing

on the ground, on wood, or on fallen pine cones.....**Tooth Fungi** Note: also check

**Polypores**, which include some species that become tooth-like on the undersurface as they age.

5b Fruitbody with pores on the undersurface.....6

6a Fruitbody fleshy, with cap and a typically central stalk; cap undersurface with a sponge-like layer of vertically arranged tubes, each terminating in a pore; sponge-like layer usually separates easily from the cap tissue; usually growing on the ground, but sometimes on wood.....**Boletes**

6b Fruitbody hard and woody, **or** fibrous-tough, **or** leathery, with pores and tubes on the undersurface; pores may be minute and require the use of a hand lens to see them; the pore layer typically does not easily separate from the cap tissue; shapes vary from cap and stalk to stalkless and shelf-like, or a rather complex cluster; usually growing on wood or attached to buried wood, but sometimes on the ground.....**Polypores**

7a Fruitbody erect, with a stalk or stalk-like base, sometimes fan-shaped or vase-shaped, or coral-like; interior tissue **never** powdery at maturity, and **not** hard and black.....8

7b Fruitbody not as described above.....13

8a Fruitbody erect and phallus-like with a stalk and head, **or** pear-shaped to nearly round and stalkless, **or** squid-like with arched, tapered arms; fertile surface usually coated

with a foul-smelling slimy layer; growing on the ground, in mulch, among woodchips or on decaying wood.....**Stinkhorns**

8b Fruitbody not as described above.....9

9a Fruitbody with a conic to bell-shaped cap with pits and ridges; **or** cap brain-like, saddle-shaped or irregularly lobed; stalk typically hollow or multichambered, indistinct to massive; growing on the ground or sometimes on decaying wood.....**Morels, False Morels and Similar Fungi**

9b Fruitbody not as described above.....10

10a Fruitbody leathery or fibrous-tough, fan-shaped to vase-shaped, often with a split or torn margin; typically some shade of brown or gray at maturity, with or without whitish tips or margins; fertile surface smooth, wrinkled or warty but lacking pores (use a hand lens); growing on the ground or enveloping roots, branches, seedlings or mosses.....**Fiber Fans**

10b Fruitbody not as described above.....11

11a Fruitbody erect, worm-like, typically unbranched, usually arranged in clusters or colonies, often fused at their bases, **or** erect, coral-like and repeatedly branched; growing on the ground or on wood, **or** a rounded, lettuce-like or cauliflower-like cluster of branches attached to a partially buried stalk-like base.....**Corals and Cauliflowers**

- 11b Fruitbody not as described above.....12
- 12a Fruitbody erect, resembling tongues or clubs; with or without a clearly defined head; fertile surface **not** roughened like sandpaper; growing on the ground or on decaying wood.....**Earth Tongues and Earth Clubs**
- 12b Fruitbody cylindric to oval or club-shaped, or spindle-shaped and attached to buried or above-ground arthropods, or buried false truffles; fertile surface roughened like sandpaper, **or** fruitbody cylindric to club-shaped, whitish to yellowish or brownish orange; growing on the ground or on decaying wood; fertile surface roughened like sandpaper.....**Cordyceps and Similar Fungi**
- 13a Fruitbody small, cylindric to vase-shaped, containing numerous egg-like peridioles; growing on woodchips, mulch, branches, twigs, dung, and other organic debris.....**Bird's Nest Fungi**
- 13b Fruitbody not as described above.....14
- 14a Fruitbody resembling a small cup or saucer; flesh thin and brittle; with or without a stalk; growing on the ground, on wood, or dung.....**Cup Fungi**
- 14b Fruitbody not as described above.....15
- 15a Fruitbody distinctly gelatinous, usually rubbery but sometimes soft, with considerable variation in shape and color; growing on the ground or on wood.....**Jelly Fungi**

- 15b Fruitbody not as described above.....16
- 16a Fruitbody round, oval, pear-shaped to turban-shaped, irregularly rounded or star-shaped, with a powdery interior at maturity; usually stalkless but occasionally stalked; growing on the ground or decaying wood, or sometimes partially to completely buried.....**Puffballs, Earthballs, Earthstars and Similar Fungi**
- 16b Fruitbody not as described above.....17
- 17a Fruitbody a parasitic fungus that covers and usually disfigures gilled mushrooms, boletes, polypores, or sometimes other fungi; texture and appearance may be roughened like sandpaper, moldy, feathery, or powdery.....**Hypomyces, Mycogone, and Allies**
- 17b Fruitbody not as described above.....18
- 18a Fruitbody a parasitic fungus that attacks and alters various plant species, often forming galls, tumors, jelly-like horns, roughened coatings, hard and purplish to brownish black growths on the inflorescences of grasses, or powdery mildews; diseases that are commonly encountered include Black Knot of Cherry or Plum, Corn Smut, Ergot, Cedar-apple Rust, Blueberry Galls, and Azalea Apples.....**Plant Pathogens**
- 18b Fruitbody not as described above.....19
- 19a Fruitbody hard, black and carbonaceous; variously shaped, flat and spreading, erect and cylindrical to club-shaped, or antler-like; fertile surface roughened like sandpaper (use

a hand lens); growing on decaying wood, leaves, nuts, cones,  
or fruit.....**Carbon Fungi**

19b Fruitbody not as described above.....20

20a Fruitbody crust-like and spreading, **or** cushion-shaped, **or** parchment-like; fertile surface  
smooth, roughened, warty, wrinkled, cracked, toothed, or  
poroid.....**Crust, Cushion and Parchment Fungi**

20b Fruitbody not as described above.....**Miscellaneous**

## GLOSSARY

arthropod: a multi-legged invertebrate animal such as an insect or spider

carbonaceous: typically black and charcoal-like

conic: shaped more or less like an inverted cone

crossveined: having tiny veins that connect adjoining blunt gills

cylindric: rounded like a broom handle

fertile surface: spore-bearing layer

fruitbody: the entire fungus, sometimes called a mushroom

inflorescences: the flowering portions of a stem

invertebrate: lacking a backbone

longitudinally: along the long axis

margin: the outermost portion of a cap, gill edge, or other tissue

multichambered: divided into separate compartments

peridioles: tiny seed-like or egg-like structures containing spores

phallus-like: shaped somewhat like an erect penis

poroid: having pores on the fertile surface

substrate: organic matter that serves as a food source