



## Mountain Loop Conservancy Fact Sheet:

### Chanterelle Mushroom *Cantharellus cibarius*

**Range:** Chanterelles range throughout North America, Europe, North Africa, the Himalayas, and Thailand. There is evidence that they may include several distinct species. Recent research has identified the chanterelles in North America's Pacific Northwest as *Cantharellus formosus* and *Cantharellus cascadenis*. In North America, this mushroom is present in July–September in the east, July–August in the northeast, September–November in the northwest, and November–February in California.

**Identification:** Chanterelles are golden yellow to orange in color. The cap is convex and sunken in the middle with a wavy margin. This mushroom does not have true gills. They have forked thick-edged ridges that go from the cap edge down the stalk. Spores are produced on these ridges and the spore print is a pale buff to pale yellow color. The cap is 3/8"–6" (1-15 cm) wide. The stalk is 1"–3" (2.5-7.5 cm) long and 1/4" – 1" (0.5 – 2.5 cm) thick. The stalk is sometimes thicker at the ends and is yellowish to whitish in color. Larger specimens can weigh as much as 2 pounds (0.9 kg) each.



Close-up of Chanterelle showing ridges on the underside

Similar species include false chanterelles (*Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*), various waxy caps (*Camarophyllus pratensis*, *Hygrocybe flavescens*, etc.) *Lactarius ainicola*, *Leucopaxillus albissimus*, the *Gymnopilus spectabilis* group, *Hypomyces lactifluorum*, and the jack-o-lantern mushrooms (*Omphalotus* species). Jack-o-lantern mushrooms are poisonous. Correct identification is essential before eating any mushroom species.

**Unique characteristics:** Some specimens are odorless but others have a distinctive apricot aroma.



#### **Edibility and Commercial value:**

Chanterelles are prized as an edible mushroom species. These mushrooms have a delicate peppery flavor. They are high in vitamin A. Dishes such as soups and simple sautés highlight their best qualities. This species can be refrigerated, pickled, canned, or frozen. Germany imports an estimated five million pounds annually of Pacific Northwest chanterelles preserved in a brine solution.

This mushroom is difficult to propagate commercially. Grocery stores, restaurants, and professional chefs rely on obtaining this choice mushroom from collectors. Professional chanterelle hunters keep the location of their harvesting areas secret so they will not be over-harvested.

**Habitat:** Chanterelles grow singly or in small groups under oaks and conifers. They grow in old growth or second growth forest areas with thick moss and leaf litter. In the Pacific Northwest, they are found under Douglas-fir, Sitka spruce, and near salal bushes. Their mycelial threads have been found intertwined with the roots of host species forming a symbiotic relationship. They reappear in the same places year after year if carefully harvested. If there is enough rainfall, they will grow successive crops in the same year. They have a long growing season.

**Interesting Fact:** Chanterelles are “golden” in their appearance, taste, and price. Some consider them the most popular and prized edible mushroom in the world.



Chanterelles growing in mossy area

### Sources:

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