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Photographing and Observations for Identifying Mushrooms and Conks

Taking the good photographs can greatly improve the chance of obtaining a more accurate evaluation or identification of the fungus growing on or around a tree. Some fungi are so common that a single good photograph is adequate for identification, while others require several and specific pictures of certain features. Some fungi cannot be identified from pictures and require fresh samples in good condition for microscopic evaluation.

The following are desired photographs requested for use of our diagnostic service. Examples are provided as a guide. If the fungus has gills under the cap (# 3 below) and is growing on the ground or lower trunk of the tree, the color of the spore print will be needed for identification (See #4).

1. General Habit: What the specimen looks like from several feet away. If the fruiting is higher in the tree use the zoom on your camera. Examples below.



2. Close up of top of the mushroom or conk.



3. Close-up of underside of mushroom or conk (you will be taking pictures of the teeth, gills, pores or a smooth surface)



4. Make a spore print of gilled mushrooms (such as the right photo in #3 above). Spore prints are easy to make and are usually needed to identify mushrooms growing on the ground around or on trunk of the tree. Make the print by simply placing the cap of the mushroom on a piece of white and dark paper. Covering with a bowl can speed the dropping of the spores. Take a photo of the spore print or record its color.

