



Morels

Morchella spp.

Morels are an edible mushroom found in NJ. There are three types that can be found here, the black, yellow and half-free morels. If you do go morel hunting, make sure that you are allowed to harvest them on the property you are on. State parks, forests and wildlife management areas are places where you cannot pick plants. Do not eat anything unless you are positive of the species ID. Best rule to follow "If you aren't sure, don't eat it." Morels appear late-March through early June across the country.



Black Morels— honeycomb-like cap, with black ridges and yellowish hollows. The bottom of the cap is fused to the stalk. The cap is elongated and conical. The stalk is whitish and textured.

Yellow Morels— honeycomb-like cap, with yellow to yellowish brown ridges and pits. Cap is attached to the stalk at the base and is more oval in shape. Stalk is whitish and textured.



Half-free Morels— honeycomb-like cap with brownish-black ridges and yellowish pits. Unlike the black and yellow morels, the top half of the cap is attached to the stalk and the bottom half hangs free. The stalk is white to yellowish-white with numerous tiny bumps and slight vertical ribbing.



All of NJ's morels have hollow stems and caps. There are false-morels, which are poisonous to eat. The false morels have a dense stem.

Ask A Naturalist

Fun facts about morels:

- Depending on where in the country you are, morels can have fun nicknames—look some up!
- They are among the most expensive mushrooms in the world.
- They are healthy for you! One cup of morels has almost half of your daily dose of iron and 1/3 your daily dose of Vitamin D. Plus, they are low in calories.
- They grow better in areas immediately following a forest fire.
- Morels must be cooked before you can eat them.