



Cool Facts about Matsutake Mushrooms

The name 'Matsutake' derives from Japanese matsu(pine tree) and take(mushroom). This is because a closely related mushroom grows in Japan where it is loved. This is also why they are sometimes called Pine Mushrooms.

The type of Matsutake that grows in Washington is called 'Western Matsutake' because it only grows here in the Pacific Northwest and nowhere else in the World. It's scientific name is *Tricholoma murrillianum*.

Matsutake are good to eat and have a spicy aromatic smell. Not only do people like to eat them, but so do many wild animals such as squirrels, rabbits, and deer.

Matsutake team up with trees.

Trees make their food (sugars) from the sun - this process is called Photosynthesis. The trees share some of their food with Matsutake Mushrooms. The mushrooms in turn, help the trees get water and nutrients from the soil, which are essential for growing big and strong. This teamwork is called Mycorrhiza.

Matsutake's favorite trees to work with are Western Hemlock, which is the official Washington State Tree. They can also team up with Douglas fir, Noble fir, Shasta red fir, Sugar pine, Ponderosa pine, and Lodgepole pine.

In 2017, a group of students from The Evergreen State College in Olympia tried to get Matsutake named as the official Washington State Mushroom, but this bill failed to pass. Recently, there has been renewed interest in making this happen.

The origin of State Symbols dates to the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. A group of women made a proposal calling for each U.S. State to select a flower to represent their region. Washington then became the first state ever to name an official symbol: The Pacific Rhododendron. Today all U.S. states have official flowers, trees, birds, and fish. However, only eight states have an official mushroom.

You can learn more at StateMushroom.com

