

Mushy forecast for mushrooms

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A local mycologist, who prefers to go by his online name, Matsiman, specializes in the growth and lifecycle of wild mushrooms and predicts, with 95 percent certainty that 2017 has been and will be a bad year for hunters and buyers alike. Matsiman runs a website found at Matsiman.com and it features various educational materials, including a handful of scientific studies that he's been a part of, and also has resources to connect hunters with buyers.

Matsiman began studying mushrooms back in 1990 when he ran into a mushroom hunting enthusiast that showed him the ropes. "We hunted mushrooms and I quizzed him the whole time," Matsiman said, "The bottom line

was nobody knew anything so I started keeping numbers and just tried to figure out what was going on because I had to know." At the time, Matsiman noted that he could find very little reading on the subject of wild mushrooms but is happy to see that there's more knowledge in circulation today. However, the scientific community's knowledge is still far from complete and thus his work must go on.

Throughout Matsiman's lengthy career, he's found that the effect of temperature ranges is much more important than the more or less ubiquitous wetseason that good mushroom hunting areas experience. "I've tested this theory a hundred times in at least 10 different areas over the past 27 years and it's never failed," Matsiman said, further explaining that some of the locations he's

forecasting are in Canada.

Although his temperature theory still finds resistance among some hunters who tend to believe that rain has to fall at the correct time, Matsiman rebutted by providing a few counterpoints to this view. The first of which is that moisture has very little to do with predicting the growth of mycorrhizal mushrooms like the truffle, matsutake and chanterelle because, Matsiman holds, they get the majority of their moisture from the tree roots they are in a mutually beneficial relationship with. However, Matsiman admitted, saprotrophic mushrooms like the white button, morel and shitake do need ample moisture from rainfall. As such, moisture is a more important variable for them but it is not entirely conclusive in predicting whether or not they will grow in abundance. Since

rainfall is again ubiquitous in good mushroom hunting areas during the mushroom season, Matsiman holds that the most important variable for a good or bad season rests in the temperature range.

One study that was of particular importance and was conducted by the Diamond Lake Ranger District, Umpqua National Forest and Matsiman himself, concerned itself with determining the most sustainable method in which a hunter can harvest matsutakes. The study began in 1994 at 18 different locations and went on for 11 years. Although the raw data of the study can be found on his website, picking by hand, as opposed to deep and shallow raking where the mycelium is present, had no numerical effect on yearly mushroom production.

Since the study, Matsiman is happy to see the frequency of

raking on the decline, especially in the Cascades where he said areas looked like they'd been rototilled after harvest. The change in mushroom hunting tactics, at least in the Cascades and the Illinois Valley, could be in part attributed to an educational video that was put together after the study which showed hunters, before getting their permits, what to do and what not to do. "Most of it was due to lack of education," Matsiman concluded, "That's all it was."



Matustake mushrooms

Healthy U News: by Nicole Rensenbrink

I always knew exercise was good for me, but I didn't do it with any consistency until I was in my forties. Possibly maturity helped, or my kids didn't need me anymore, or I saw old age looming. More likely my success was due to stumbling on a formula for creating a sustainable habit.

In "The Power of Habit," Charles Duhigg notes that habits are made up of a few components. When one has a habit of constant phone checking, for example, the cue to engage in this habit could just be free time. Craving for constant phone checking could be a craving for distraction, for light social engagement, or for avoiding boredom.

Engaging in this habit, the phone checker gets a reward (perhaps a "Like" on a Facebook post).

In order for habits to become fully entrenched though, one must develop a craving for them. It's easy to see how this formula works on sugar and other addictions. A cue for sweets could be certain times, like a holiday or after school or after dinnertime. Sugar consumption produces an endorphin rush that's easy to crave.

Changing habits isn't as hard as sticking with habit change. Many of us try to change our poor eating habits for healthier ones. The cue for this could be finding our jeans are too

tight, or going over a mark on the scale we swore never to pass, or nudges from concerned doctors. We study meal plans online, choose one we think we can manage, and off we go! Our reward is that descending number on the scale and being able to squeeze into those pants. We could likely go on like our healthy habits indefinitely if it weren't for stress. New habits fall away in times of stress unless we establish firm cravings for them.

After I've shared morning coffee time with my husband, I know it's time (cue) to get ready for my run. Running (habit), almost everyday, keeps my endorphins up, gets me out in nature, keeps me strong and breathing

well, and keeps my body fit (rewards). I don't always want to do it, especially when I'm feeling sorry for myself, or if I'm stressed out, but my dogs absolutely love it. I give in to them, and providing them with such joy is the incentive (craving) that keeps me running. So my hint for today is this: before you again abandon changes that you've started, see if you can identify a craving to go with your new habit. It can sustain you through difficult times.

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