

***Mushrooms of Ontario and Eastern Canada.* George Barron. 1999. Lone Pine Publishing, Edmonton, Canada. 336 pp. ISBN 1-55105-199-0.**

Naturalists wandering in Nova Scotia woodlands cannot fail to be impressed by the conspicuous and diverse moss and lichen flora, but sooner or later, especially in autumn, will be impressed by the amazing variety and colours of mushrooms in this habitat and want to find out more about them. George Barron, who came from Scotland and was appointed a professor in the botany department at the University of Guelph, wrote a book that provides the answers. It is very sad to report that George died recently, in October 2024, at the age of 96.

George's book is entitled "Mushrooms of Ontario and Eastern Canada" was published in 1999 after he retired from Guelph University and is still in press. To complete the book, he visited Nova Scotia and other parts of Eastern Canada collecting mushrooms, accompanied on several trips by David Richardson, a friend and colleague since 1969, and by Doug Strongman, who obtained his PhD under George's supervision. George was awarded the Lawson Medal by the Canadian Botanical Association and an Honorary Doctorate of Science by Saint Mary's University in Halifax, both in 2004. He gave an outstanding seminar to Saint Mary's University mycology students and took them on a field trip. The specimens and records George collected from Nova Scotia provided valuable data that aided in the completion of his book.

Every year, people come up to me to ask about mushrooms that they have stumbled across on excursions. They say: can I eat them, are they poisonous, and what are they called? My answer is 'Buy George Barron's book'! It describes 600 mushrooms, initially providing a picture key to the nine groups of mushrooms: the Slime Moulds, Sack Fungi, Puffballs, Jelly Fungi, Coral Fungi, Tooth Fungi, Bracket Fungi, Boletes and Gill Fungi. The last group are separated into subgroups based in spore colour and instructions are provided for making spore prints to find out the spore colour that may be pink, blackish, brown, or light coloured. Then the mushrooms in each group or subgroup are dealt with. There is a separately coloured tab at top of the page that distinguishes that group from its preceding or the following group. This is a really an original and helpful approach. Then, in each group, there is an outstanding picture of the mushroom and a description

which helps to confirm the suspected identification. There is also a chapter on Mushrooms as food, with advice about eating these fascinating lower plants that play such an important role as symbionts with the roots of trees in the forest and in other plants, and in some cases as parasites on the trees or crops. This outstanding book, beautifully illustrated, should be on every naturalist's bookshelf, a tribute to the knowledge and passing of a great mycologist.

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