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## SPOTLIGHT ON: *Skokomish Ridge Mushrooms*

*Prepared by Bob Ames, Executive  
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Growers' Cooperative,  
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Bob and Harriet Ames started growing WSDA certified organic specialty mushrooms in Hansville, WA in 1991. After 10 years, the farm was shut down and Bob returned to his profession as a soil microbiologist and worked until retirement in 2014. Upon returning to Washington, they decided to restart a mushroom growing business in 2016 and now sell mushrooms to both the Eastside and Westside Cooperative stores.

Skokomish Ridge Mushrooms is a cooperative consisting of grower and non-grower members. Individual growers purchase the mushroom production units from the cooperative which in turn, purchases and sells the mushrooms they produce. The mushroom species grown include shiitake, maitake, lion's mane and king trumpet. The mushrooms are grown on natural alder sawdust which includes the addition of certified organic nutrient additives. Although Skokomish Ridge Mushrooms is not currently certified organic, the production process follows organic guidelines and does not apply pesticides or chemicals.



Information on the culinary, nutritional and medicinal properties of cultivated specialty mushrooms has increased dramatically over the last couple of decades and many different species are now commonly found in most grocery stores. Internet searches using the common or scientific name of specialty mushrooms will reveal how vast this information has become. Below is a brief summary of each of the species grown by Skokomish Ridge Mushrooms. Detailed medicinal information on specialty mushrooms can be found in the International Journal of Medicinal Mushrooms published by Begell House, Inc. <http://www.begellhouse.com/journals/medicinal-mushrooms.html> or in

*Medicinal Mushrooms: An Exploration of Tradition, Healing, & Culture* (1995) by Christopher Hobbs, Published by Botanica Press, Santa Cruz, CA.

Shiitake (*Lentinula edodes*) is probably the most recognized specialty mushroom. It has a hearty flavor with a firm texture that holds up very well in almost any dish. Generally, the fibrous stems are cut off and discarded, using only the caps, but please don't throw them away. The stem pieces can be cut up, sautéed, and then blended to prepare a nutritious spread for crackers or used in soups, sauces or gravies.

***Skokomish Ridge Mushrooms  
continued on back***

### **Skokomish Ridge Mushrooms continued from front**

Another good use for caps and stems is to cut them into small pieces, dry them, and then grind them into a powder. The powder can be used in many ways but is especially good when used as a breading for seafood, meats or vegetables. The nutritional content of shiitake includes about 2 – 3% fiber and protein, vitamins B2, B3, B6, pantothenic acid, and D, in addition to good levels of several elements. Medicinal properties include anti-tumor, anti-inflammatory and immune system stimulation.

Maitake (*Grifola frondosa*) can appear very differently, depending on the grower's cultivation methods and environmental conditions. At Skokomish Ridge Mushrooms, maitake is produced in a dense, compact form that retains a firm texture, with a toasted almond-like flavor after cooking. The entire mushroom is edible which includes the base. Due to its dense texture, maitake is usually sliced thinly and sautéed prior eating or including in a recipe with other ingredients. The nutritional content of maitake includes about 28% fiber, 25% protein, vitamins B2, B3, pantothenic acid and is a very good source of potassium. Medicinally, maitake has been shown to modulate glucose levels, activate immune response and lower cholesterol.

Lion's mane (*Hericium erinaceus*) is a very mild mushroom with a seafood-like flavor and a texture similar to crab meat. It may break apart easily with stirring but does hold up well by itself or when combined with other ingredients. Lion's mane can be cut in ¼ inch thick slices parallel to the icicle-like growth on the surface, and sautéed until just turning golden brown around the edges. It is especially good when layered with other vegetables or seafood and covered with a lemon and herb sauce. Although the nutritional content of lion's mane is difficult to find, the medicinal value of this mushroom has received a lot of attention in recent years. It appears to provide benefits somewhat differently from other specialty mushroom species in that it has been shown to improve digestive function, improve cognitive function, and stimulate nerve regeneration. Research is especially active with the use of lion's mane as a possible aid in slowing the progression of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative diseases.

King trumpet (*Pleurotus eryngii*), also known as king oyster, is appearing more frequently in grocery stores. This dense mushroom can become quite large, up to a pound, but is usually harvested when it's about 4 – 6 inches long and weighing 3 – 6 ounces. The king trumpet cap and stem are edible with a very firm texture and mild flavor. This is a good mushroom for grilling or as an ingredient in many dishes. Not much information is available on the nutritional content or medicinal value of king trumpet, but it has been shown to boost the immune system and suppress fatty acid absorption. ■



## **RECIPE CORNER**

### **Baby Bok Choi & Shiitake Stir-fry**

*From mynewroots.com*

*Serves 2*

- knob of ghee or coconut oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 10.5oz. baby bok choy
- 5oz. fresh shiitake mushrooms
- 1 small chili, minced (optional)
- 1 Tbsp. tamari
- ½ Tbsp. maple syrup
- large handful Thai basil or regular basil
- cooked grain to serve
- sesame seeds to garnish

1. Brush dirt off mushrooms; slice if they are large. Rinse bok choy well, shake off excess water and slice into strips. Set aside.
2. In a large skillet over medium heat, melt a knob of ghee or coconut oil. Add minced garlic and chili; cook just until fragrant and beginning to brown, about 2 minutes. Add mushrooms, maple syrup and about half the tamari. Cook until the mushrooms have absorbed most of the liquid and are soft. Add the remaining tamari and the bok choy. Stir to coat, remove from heat and continue stirring until the greens have wilted, about 5 minutes. Now fold in the basil and let wilt.
3. Serve immediately over grain of your choice: brown rice, quinoa, millet etc. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and enjoy.