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Book Review - Mushrooms of the Georgia Piedmont & Southern Appalachians

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Off the SHELF

Mushrooms of the Georgia Piedmont & Southern Appalachians by Mary L. Woehrel and William H. Light (University of Georgia Press, 2017: ISBN 9780820350035, \$59.95)

Mushrooms of the Georgia Piedmont & Southern Appalachians is an excellent all-around book on North Georgia mushrooms.

Written by Mary Woehrel, founder of the Mushroom Club of Georgia, and William Light, who holds a PhD in biology, the book covers mushroom species in the upper half of the state, from the foothills into the Appalachian Mountains of northwest Georgia. The authors write that this cannot be considered a comprehensive guide to the several thousand mushroom species in this area, but they have included most of the common species as well as a number of the less encountered ones.

The extensive introduction contains an overview of the history and classification of fungi and their reproduction. The discussion of their general role in different ecological systems is insightful and interesting. The book covers mushroom toxins and poisoning, a very important topic in mushroom collecting (as quoted in the book: "all mushrooms are edible, but some only once"), as well as their medicinal

properties. Identification methods taught include field, chemical, and microscopic techniques. The casual, conversational tone makes complex topics like nomenclature a pleasure to study.

The extensive field guide sections span over 500 pages and are separated by species. Each entry includes excellent full-color photographs, well-documented species information, field identification information, edibility, and comments on similar species and other points of interest. A glossary of mycological terms, an index of common names, and an index of scientific names are also included.

Overall, this is a thorough, well-organized book that would serve as an excellent textbook or general resource for the study of fungi in Georgia. It is very useful for identification for field practitioners as well, although note that it is quite a heavy book. An essential resource for Georgia mycologists and highly recommended for both public and academic libraries.

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