

# Summer's Golden Prize

the orange chanterelle



## Edible Forest

By Marty Kovarik

The summer harvest season not only has berry pickers smiling, but amateur mycologists as well. While the vast majority of wild mushroom pickers in Michigan key in on spring morels, there are other common varieties that are available during the Summer. One of those, the common orange chanterelle is known for its gourmet quality. This apricot-colored, funnel-shaped jewel was dubbed *Cantharellus (cibarius)* for the Greek word meaning vase.

Like anything done outdoors, mushroom picking can be done safely and enjoyably with the right knowledge. Consult reputable field guides and learn to identify the various descriptive parts of a mushroom: the cap, gills, tube patterns, stem, veil

structures and spore prints. Only eat mushrooms that have been positively identified as an edible, and are in fresh healthy condition.

The orange chanterelle is yellow to orange-yellow and has a flat but slightly sunken in the center cap. The mushroom itself is vase shaped with ridges running from underneath the cap and down the stem. In Michigan

chanterelles can be found in a variety of conditions, including sandy and humus soils, and among oaks and conifers. Beware that you don't get the orange chanterelle confused with its look alike, the toxic Jack-O-Lantern mushroom (*Omphalotus olearius*).

Chefs world-wide rate the orange chanterelle even above the legendary morel. Its flesh is firm and has a buttery-fruity spiciness that is beyond description, although some describe it as apricot-like in flavor. The chanterelle shines through in any dish and pairs well with fish, poultry, red meat, eggs and even in a marinara sauce. It is also an excellent source of Vitamins A and D. The chanterelle has my vote as being the most flavorful mushroom. 🍄

## Chanterelle Cream Pasta Sauce

This pasta sauce is sinfully delicious and rich. The distinct flavor of chanterelles gives this sauce a buttery flavor, color and a delicate spiciness unlike any you've ever tasted in a pasta sauce.

- 2 TBL **butter**
- 3 cups **chanterelles**, thinly sliced
- 2 TBL **olive oil**
- 1 **shallot**, thinly sliced
- 2 cups **heavy cream**
- ¼ cup **Asiago or Romano cheese**, grated
- ½ tsp **salt**
- ¼ tsp **fresh ground pepper**

Heat butter over medium heat in a frying pan (not cast-iron), do not let butter brown, add chanterelles. Cook over medium high heat until the rendered mushroom water evaporates, saute chanterelles until tender, about five minutes. Remove and set aside. Add olive oil to the frying pan, heat over medium heat, saute shallot until transparent but not brown. Pour the cream in a medium saucepan, add chanterelles and shallots, bring to a boil and simmer for approximately 20 minutes until cream is reduced approximately by half. Add cheese, salt and pepper and stir until melted and heated thoroughly. Serve this over freshly cooked pasta.

