



Leccinum boreale
**Northern Roughstem or
Red Cap Mushroom**

Leccinum boreale

lèk-si-nùm bor-é-ál-é

The 'Red Cap' or 'Northern Roughstem'

This fungus is a common inhabitant of forests in Alberta. It is a delicious edible summer mushroom and has been picked in Alberta for generations.

While many mushrooms produce spores on blade-like gills, *Leccinum boreale* grows its spores in spongy pores below an orange to reddish cap. Its stem is whitish and covered with ornamentation, called scabers, that darken with age. The solid white flesh slowly turns pink, then grey, when cut.

Leccinum boreale grows almost exclusively under poplars but mostly beneath trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*). It has a mutually beneficial mycorrhizal relationship with these trees. Plants would have difficulty flourishing, or even surviving, without their fungal partners.

A Provincial Emblem for Alberta

Leccinum boreale is widely distributed across Alberta, edible, easily identified, and has a significant history of human use. The Edmonton Mycological Society linked with over 2,500 voters across the province during the "Pick a Wild Mushroom, Alberta!" campaign to propose that *Leccinum boreale* joins Alberta's provincial emblems.

www.wildmushrooms.ws

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Photo courtesy of Martin Osis.