



## **Alberta Mycological Society Statement about Mushroom Identification Apps**

The Alberta Mycological Society (AMS) does not support the use of mushroom identification apps that use artificial intelligence (Google Lens, Mushroom Identify, etc.). These apps are unable to determine key identification features such as spore print colour, habitat, colour changes, and odours, and thus, it is impossible for them to provide reliable identifications. They also do not serve as a good educational tool, as they falsely imply that correct identifications can be made without these key features, and they also tend to have databases that are very small compared to the potential mushroom species in a given area. While their identifications could potentially serve as a starting point, they should not be taken seriously in any way. Many poisonings have already occurred as a result of their wrong identifications: a 2021 article reported 732 poisonings in France due to these types of apps. Instead, the AMS supports the use of digital keys such as MycoKey, as well as apps such as Mushroom Observer, NatureLynx, and iNaturalist, as well as the AMS Facebook forum, that make use of experienced and knowledgeable subject matter experts.