



# Radical Mycology

A Treatise on Seeing  
and Working With Fungi

Peter McCoy

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Fungi are found throughout the world, often playing critical roles at the center of all ecological webs. As culturally important foods and medicines, they have been intimately tied to the development and spread of human societies. Even today, fungal cultivation offers numerous means to increase the health of humans and the environment. And yet, the fungal kingdom is the most understudied branch on the tree of life.

Thankfully, Peter McCoy has provided the means for dispelling this paradox in *Radical Mycology*, the most accessible book on the science of fungi ever published. In this comprehensive text, readers will find in-depth information on the uniqueness of fungal biology, compelling descriptions of their ecological importance, guides to accurately identifying mushrooms, skills for using lichens as indicators of environmental health, techniques for making potent fungal medicines, as well as how to grow fermenting fungi and cheaply cultivate mushrooms with recycled tools (and yet still achieve lab-quality results). McCoy also details what he calls “regenerative outdoor mushroom farming”—a practice largely influenced by the design system of permaculture—along with extensive information on *mycoremediation*, the application of fungi to mitigate pollution. Concluding the book are deeper insights into the cultural effects that fungi present, from a philosophical reflection of fungal growth in the design of human societies, to an exhaustive examination of the history of psychoactive mushrooms.

Throughout this journey, McCoy offers personal and thought-provoking insights into experiencing fungi, based on his 15 years of practice and study in the field. In the end, the reader is left with the means to integrate mycology into any aspect of their life, community, or environment.

With step-by-step protocols for beginner to advanced processes, hundreds of photographs and illustrations, over a dozen appendices, and 100 species profiles, *Radical Mycology* is an invaluable reference book for anyone interested in understanding the richness of the fungal kingdom. Heavily referenced and illustrated by the author, this unprecedented treatise will undoubtedly remain a classic for generations to come.

“ What an amazing compendium! *Radical Mycology* is filled with provocative ideas and practical information for DIY projects. This is a great resource for anyone fascinated by the ubiquitous world of fungi and wishing to broaden their understanding of this important realm. Be prepared to totally geek out on fungi.  
— **Sandor Katz**, author of *The Art of Fermentation* and *Wild Fermentation* ”

“ A must for believers and an end for non-believers... Medicine, gastronomy, geology, geography, theology, paleontology, anthropology, taxonomy and farming are only a few of the topics developed *mycologically* in this book. It is astounding to find such a rich and thorough compendium covering all these aspects, along with reachable methodologies to study mycology and enjoy Fungi in any manner...one of the most elaborate mycological reads I've ever come across.  
— **Giuliana Furci, Founder and Director** of The Fungi Foundation and author of *Fungi of Chile* ”

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## Introduction

Though the information in this book can be applied in a variety of ways, one of the most historically inaccessible skills presented is the means to cultivate fungi year-round on nearly any urban or agricultural waste. Fungal cultivation leads to improved management of finite resources, the production of whole foods and high quality natural medicines, greater support for local food movements and economies, job training and employment opportunities for low-income youth and urban residents, means to transform vacant tracts into productive spaces, and the ability to reduce the effects of pollution in contaminated sites. Cultivation also reinvigorates the historical connections to food that humans once commonly shared through foraging and tending crops. In effect, local mushroom cultivation systems reduce dependence on imports and the normally high cost of mushrooms, while also producing wealth, means for exchange, and the preservation of memory.

When Radical Mycologists work together to form groups, they can share these skills with various facets of their community and enhance the overall resilience of the local culture. Mycology is a uniting science, one that I am constantly surprised to find draws people from all backgrounds together. By working with strangers, neighbors, friends, and symbiotic organizations, Radical Mycologists can use their knowledge to not only increase food or reduce pollution, but they can build new intersections in their community—new mycelial webs—that string together once distanced people across a town, bioregion, or planet.

— From *Radical Mycology*



### About the Author

**Peter McCoy** is a co-founder of Radical Mycology, a grassroots organization that educates the world on the importance of the forgotten fungal kingdom. A mushroom cultivator and educator with over 15 years of experience, Peter has shared his unique approach to learning about fungi with mycological societies, community groups, and environmental conservation organizations across the Americas. Peter currently lives in his mycotopic hometown of Portland, OR, where his daily practice revolves around documenting and advancing the history of human-fungal relations.