

## Crooked Creek Environmental Learning Center

The Environmental Learning Center (ELC) at Crooked Creek Lake is a three-winged complex that is comprised of a dormitory, a leisure room and a conference room. The dormitory houses a maximum of 25 persons with showers and restrooms. The leisure room contains a variety of educational displays, comfortable furniture and a 360-degree fireplace. The conference room also serves as the dining hall with an attached, fully equipped kitchen.



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has leased the ELC to the Armstrong Educational Trust. They will use the facility to provide resource conservation education for the community of learners at large.

Crooked Creek's 400 acres of developed recreation areas are abundant with opportunities for natural study, wildlife observation, hiking, conservation activities, volunteer service, and recreation.

### **POISON-IVY**

"Leaflets of three, let it be!"

"Watch out for the poison-ivy" is a common warning given to people when they go into the bushes to retrieve a ball or go for a walk in the woods. But does everyone really know what to look for?

Poison-ivy (*Rhus radicans*), known to many as poison-oak, is a woody plant that grows as a vine with root sprouts, shrub, or leafy ground cover sending up short, erect shoots. The flowers are white



and the smooth fruit changes from a dark green to white in late summer. The greenish-red leaflets vary in shape but are always grouped in threes. A poisonous sap, which is present in all parts of the plant, contains an allergy causing substance which affects everyone differently depending on one's degree of sensitivity. No one is immune to the sap of poison-ivy, so for most people, it is poison to the touch, resulting in a rash which appears a day later. The sap is very sticky and can adhere to an article of clothing or a garden tool and still be poisonous several years later.



JEWELWEED

There is no sure cure for poison-ivy, but it has been said that the oil of the Jewelweed or "Touch-Me-Not" plant (*Impatiens pallida*), when rubbed on areas exposed to poison-ivy, will counteract the poison sap.

Jewelweed is a green plant with orange or yellow flowers. Both of these plants thrive in low-lying areas, be it sunny or shady, dry or wet.

Poison-ivy is native to America and is located all over the United States except for the extreme southwest. It may be considered a nuisance from our point of view but it does have beneficial effects in that its fruit serves as food for deer and over sixty species of birds including the Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, and Ruffed Grouse. Many of the seeds from the poison-ivy plant are passed

undamaged through the digestive systems of these birds. This aids and increases the distribution of poison-ivy.

The next time you are chasing that homerun ball or just wandering through the woods, be wary and remember; "leaflets of three, let it be!"

## Mushroom Facts



Many Cap Clitocybe

Your grandfather may have said, "mushrooms are edible and toadstools are poisonous." This was his method of telling which mushrooms were good to eat and which were not.

Your grandmother may have gathered and dried mushrooms in the coal stove for winter.



Bolete



Coral

There is a wealth of folklore associated with mushrooms,



Meadow  
Mushroom



Morel

especially old saying to determine which are edible. One saying is that if a silver spoon turns black when put into a pot of boiling water with a mushroom, the mushroom is poisonous. Another saying is that if the cap of a mushroom peels easily, the mushroom is edible. These sayings are "old wives tales", and should not be regarded as true.

Do not eat any mushrooms unless you are completely sure you know what you are collecting.

Fungi, unlike the more familiar green plants which produce chlorophyll in their leaves, rely on decaying wood, soil, manure, or other plants for their food. There are many groups of fungi, one of which is called mushrooms. Mushrooms can be found growing in woods, pastures, lawns, or just about anywhere. They can be found in many shapes and sizes.

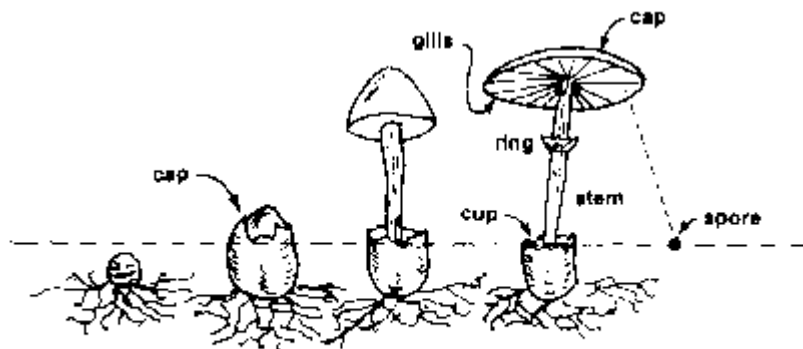
The names of mushrooms are as numerous as their shapes. Many people pick meadow mushrooms or pink bottoms in the Fall when they can be found literally covering the ground. Honey mushrooms or Papinka's are a favorite of Ukrainian people. Morels or sponge mushrooms, appearing in early Spring, are one of the most delicious. Sheephead, hen of the woods, or nusk mushrooms are prized by those crafty enough to find these unique mushrooms. They usually grow around oak tree stumps and



Oyster Mushroom

sometimes attain weights up to 15 pounds.

The growth form and parts of a mushroom are unique in nature. A



**GROWTH OF A MUSHROOM**

mushroom begins as a microscopic spore released from a mature fruiting mushroom. The spores are scattered by wind, rain, or birds and animals. If the spore lands in suitable soil where it finds the right kind and amount of decaying material, it forms a fine root-like

system which is the mushroom body. When sufficient moisture is available, the fruiting body will push its way above ground. This is the part of the mushroom we eat and may be called the fruit of the mushroom. This part, in turn, will form other spores.