**Introduction**

The Mushroom Observer is a repository that was started by Nathan Wilson in 2006. The purpose of this repository is to record observations about mushrooms, to help people identify mushrooms, and to provide scientific exploration of mushrooms. This repository is used worldwide and is available in many languages such as English, French, German, Greek, and more. The Mushroom Observer helps to bridge the gap between what is known and unknown about mushrooms. This repository provides a space for the amateur shroomer to the professional mycologist to learn, share, and record observations of mushrooms, fungi, and other similar plants. The Mushroom Observer’s owner states that he likes to think of this repository as a living field guide for mushrooms or a collaborative mushroom field journal.

**Why I Chose This Repository**

Mushroom Observer was chosen, because it corresponds with my data set from Kaggle entitled “Mushroom Classification Safe to Eat or Deadly Poison.” This data set not only benefits the scientific community, but it is a useful data set in distinguishing between edible and poisonous mushrooms for the average “shrooming” individual. The data set that I have would be beneficial because Mushroom Observer’s main purpose is to identify mushrooms and to record observations of mushrooms to a wide variety of individuals from the amateur to the professional.

**The Repository and Making Data Submissions**

The Mushroom Observer is an open repository that only requires a simple registration of username, full name, and email address. Once you are a registered member, you become part of the community. The next step is to create one observation. To create an observation the following information is needed about the mushroom you observed: when (date), where (location – city, state for United States). There is a locate button to bring the location up on the map. Now add the marker and drag it to specific latitude and longitude. There is also an interactive map with an optional GPS location. Next step is to identify the mushroom (common name and scientific name) if you do not know the name of the mushroom, you can leave it blank. Then you check a box to say how you recognized the mushroom – by sight, used references, microscopic features, chemical features. In addition you can add any notes such as distinctive texture, scent, bruising. Notes may also be formatted using the Textile Markup System. Ex. \_\_Amanita ocreata\_,\_A.ocreata\_-->***Amanita Ocreata.*** Last step is to upload the image. When uploading an image (jpeg), you are giving permission for anyone to use your pictures, it is considered public domain. If you did not take the image, but you have the explicit permission of the person to upload the image, then you must update the ‘Copyright Holder’ field to reflect the actual owner. This page also allows you to select the License you want to release the image under.

**Getting Help with an Unknown**

To get help with an unknown mushroom, the community will assist by proposing one or more names for it within 24 hours. Members may also post feedback via Comments, any comments you receive will be sent as an email to you. There is also an “Edit Observation” button located at the top of your observation page. Links may be added within a comment using standard HTML formatting.

**Special Features**

**Working on Projects**

There is a project page which allows a group of users to work together keeping their project out of the public eye until they are ready to publish it. This is open to any members. Often members use this function to work on creating new descriptions for a species. When a description is published it will become official only if there are no other descriptions.

**Creating Species Lists**

After completing registration and one observation, members can create species lists. To create a species list, fill in the various fields. This will allow members to see if there is a match in the database. If there is no matching name, then members can add unknown names to the database. These new names will be used to create new observations. Members can add anyone’s observations to their species list. Species list can be saved for later use and added to other species list.

**Indexes**

Under the Index heading, there are six types of indexes that can aid the member.

* Fungaria – list of Institutional Funaria with links to fungarium records
* Locations – maps with the observation locations
* Names – Scientific names with observations
* News – articles, ideas in development
* Projects – project titles with links
* Glossary – glossary of mycology terms can be created by anyone in the community. Some pictures have been added in collaboration with the Rhode Island School of Design. (Some future plans consist of adding links to terms, translations of terms and definitions, multiple images.)

**Downloadable Features**

There are several downloadable features that The Mushroom Observer offers for its members. In addition to creating and saving a Species List Report, a member may download their list. Another downloadable feature is that the member can print and download labels for observations. For example:

**MO #:** 417590  
**When:** 2020-07-15  
**Who:** I. G. Safonov  
**Where:** Washington Crossing State Park, Mercer Co., New Jersey, USA (40.3071°N 74.8627°W)  
**What:** ***Amanita*** sect. ***Amidella*** (E.-J. Gilbert) Konrad & Maubl.  
**Notes:** A single fruitbody growing on sloped land in deciduous woods (oaks and other hardwoods around, but no beech nearby). Found 15-20 yards away from sect. Amidella of obs 415288, but that one grew surrounded only by beech trees. Direct comparison between the two collection is impractical due to disparity in age and condition of basidiomata, but sequencing should provide an answer.  
Overall height = 9 cm  
Cap footprint = 4 cm; flesh above stipe = 0.5 cm thick  
Stipe = 8.5 cm long, 8 mm wide in apex, narrowing to 5 mm 2 cm below apex, gradually widening to 9 mm inside the volval sack  
Volva = 2 cm tall, thin, and soft  
Odor = none detected

Members may save a checklist of names as plain text, rich text, or spreadsheet. Members may also download their observations in different formats as CSV spreadsheet, The Adolf Special™

Darwin Core, Symbiota, and FunDiS. In addition to different formats members can also choose character encoding ASCII (no accents), WINDOWS-1252 (best for Excel), UTF-8 (most universal), and UTF-16 (best for Windows 7 and up).

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Mushroom Observer is an excellent repository that offers information for varying levels of mycology from the amateur to the professional. The Mushroom Observer continues to listen to the needs of their community members by allowing them to have a voice in discussions and suggestions to make the repository better, all the while fulfilling its mission and purpose to record observations about mushrooms, to help people identify mushrooms, and to provide scientific exploration of mushrooms.

**Reference**

Mushroom Observer. <https://mushroomobserver.org/>