

Press Advisory: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BFF (BEST FUNGUS FRIENDS):

CORDOVA TEAMS WITH GIRDWOOD TO CELEBRATE FUNGUS, FOREST & SEA VIRTUALLY

CORDOVA, ALASKA. August 24, 2020 - This may be a year of unprecedented changes and challenges, but that won't keep the Cordova Chamber of Commerce and the Turnagain Arm Mycological Society from finding the FUN in Fungus and bringing it to you to enjoy too! This year, [Cordova Fungus Festival](#) and [Girdwood Fungus Fair](#) are joining forces to offer a safe, educational, and inspiring event to enjoy from wherever you are! Throughout this four-day virtual festival, all are invited to join in online to learn more about local mushrooms, participate in art and handcraft workshops, and celebrate the Fish-Fungus-Forest connection.

While the fishing fleet is out gathering nets full of Copper River & Prince William Sound salmon, its land-based foragers are hunting wild berries, yellow-footed chanterelles, and king boletes. Those swift salmon that make it past keen fishermen will head upstream, spawn, and leave abundant nutrients on the creek shores. These nutrients are then picked up and transported by fungi to nourish the entire forest. Every fall, the communities of Cordova and Girdwood welcome fungus-pluckers, lichen-lovers, and friends of the forest & sea to annual Fungus Festivals. In the 14th year of both festivals, the teams have decided to blend the two events into one collaborative effort called the "**Gird-dova Virtual Fungus Fest**". The event will take place **Sept. 4 thru Sept. 7, 2020** and will be hosted primarily online with a variety of activities that explore the northernmost coastal temperate rainforest fungal diversity and uses of fungi for art and food.

Cordova Chamber of Commerce executive director, Cathy Renfeldt, is excited to team up with friends from the other side of the Sound. "This is now the fourth virtual festival I've gotten to help plan this year, and one great benefit I've found is the richness that comes from collaboration."

Several virtual forays will debut throughout the festival weekend highlighting the different fungi of the region in Girdwood, Cooper Landing, Anchorage, Cordova, and via sailboat in Prince William Sound. This year's keynote address will be delivered virtually by associate professor of biology for UofA-SE, Kitty LaBounty and PWS Zone Ecologist, Kate Mohatt. Virtual classes include a mushroom handcraft class by The Net Loft, bear's bread (artist's fungus) painting class by Copper River Canvas, and tutorials on marinating, processing, and preserving your fungal finds with Nikki Newcome. Kids can look forward to a virtual foray led by myco-kid Gabriel Wingard. COVID-safe in-person events in Cordova include a Write & Hike at Haystack Trail and two kids' events that families can visit on their own schedule: a 'Shroomy Scavenger Hunt at Crater Lake Trail and a Storybook Forest at Mavis Island trail.

Gird-dova Fungus Fest is a partnership between the Cordova Chamber of Commerce, the Chugach National Forest - Cordova and Glacier Ranger Districts, the Turnagain Arm Mycological Society, Girdwood Parks and Recreation, Girdwood, Inc., BLM Campbell Creek Science Center, Prince William Sound Science Center, The Net Loft, and others. Together partners work to promote conservation education and increase environmental literacy by inviting locals and visitors to explore and appreciate the natural world around them.

Fiber & Art workshops may require a materials fee and pre-registration. To register and see a full schedule of Gird-dova Fungus Fest activities, visit cordovafungusfest.com/virtual-festival, facebook.com/cordovafungusfest, and facebook.com/grdfungusfair. Press passes and high-resolution images available upon request by contacting Cordova Chamber of Commerce.

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