

TREE DOCTOR TIPS

Hen of the Woods

(Grifola frondosa)

DESCRIPTION:

The hen of the woods mushroom, or maitake mushroom, is a fungus that is commonly found at the base of oaks and other hardwoods. It is large, dark gray-brown in color and grows in clusters of fan-shaped, wavy caps. This mushroom gets its name from resembling a hen sitting on her nest. It also is known by the name ram's head or sheep's head because it resembles ram and sheep fur.

HOSTS:

Hen of the woods is commonly found in northeastern states at the base of oak trees. Elm, maple, beech, chestnut and sycamore trees are other common hosts.

BIOLOGY AND SYMPTOMS:

This mushroom can have a large fruiting body and can weigh anywhere from 5 to 50 pounds. It is typically found in late summer to early fall. It is a weak parasite and could be a sign of an unhealthy tree.

MANAGEMENT:

Hen of the woods may be a sign of internal decay. Even though this is a weak parasite, continue to monitor tree health and implement proper cultural practices. Fungicides have not proven effective on these mushrooms. Preventing infection by proper mulching and watering practices is always recommended. Consult with your local arborist to see if this mushroom is a symptom of a more serious problem in your trees.



A



B

FIGURE A. HEN OF THE WOODS GROWING AT THE BASE OF A LARGE OAK TREE

FIGURE B. CLOSE-UP, *Grifola frondosa*

*The scientists at **The Davey Institute** laboratory and research facility support our arborists and technicians in diagnosing and prescribing based on the latest arboricultural science. For specific treatment and application details, your arborist may consult **The Davey Institute's Plant Health Care Book**.*

