

### Local Morel Hunters Seek Their Treasure

(MSC News)--Hunting season, morel mushroom style, is underway across the region, and, to hear the hunters tell it, the conditions are making the finds fruitful.

Just ask Effingham resident Kimberly Gore-Thomas. "The ground temperature, the moisture, the trees. Everything has to be perfect, so this is a very good year."

Thomas, over the past several days, has been wasting no daylight in searching for the seasonal delicacy in both Kansas and Missouri. "I don't think it takes any type of skill. You have to have an eye for them. I've taken lots of people that can only find a couple, and I've taken people that can find a couple pounds in an hour," Gore-Thomas tells MSC News. "I've been mushroom hunting ever since I was a little girl, so you just know what you're looking for. I grew up next to the hills of Missouri. That was my playground, so that's what I've always done every year, is go out there and it was always a challenge just to go find them."

Despite the seasonal "ooohs" and "awws" that can be heard in kitchens after the morels are battered, and cooked, Thomas says she has no desire to dine on what she finds. "You dip them in milk and egg and flour and fry them up, but I don't eat them. I just love finding them."

Morel mushrooms feed off dead and decaying matter, meaning river bottom woodlands near dead cottonwood or box elder trees can be a good bet for those on the hunt.

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