

NEWS

Magic Mushroom Season

Kent Aitken
Reporter



Photo: Wikipedia

Magic mushrooms, zoomers, 'shrooms, boomers, mush... Whatever you want to call them, its fall and that means it's magic mushroom season.

Magic mushrooms are among the more common illegal drugs floating around. What do they do? If you ask students, like the anonymous ones I asked, "Your mind gets excited, and exaggerates the things that your senses would normally take in. The feelings you encounter aren't different then

sober feelings, but the raw sensory inputs are different."

Another one explained how "it fights my ability to distinguish between what's real and what's not. I compare it to sitting in bed and thinking you hear something in the dark, but instead of just hearing it, all my senses start telling me it's there."

According to Wikipedia, on the other hand, they induce a number of different effects but generally spike

peoples' auditory and visual responses, cause euphoria or distress, create a sense of connection to people and stimuli around the user, and in large enough doses can create hallucinations not completely unlike LSD.

Chemically, shrooms' active ingredients are psilocybin, psilocin, or muscimol. These hallucinogenic/psychedelic compounds play with receptors in people's brains that affect mood and sensory perceptions, occasionally unpredictably. Liberty Caps, the name of the magic mushrooms found around Prince Edward Island, contain psilocybin, which is less unstable than the versions containing muscimol. Muscimol is toxic in large doses.

While it's possible, and not uncommon on P.E.I., mushroom picking is a dangerous sport. Not only is the possession of magic mushrooms illegal, it is estimated that there are 140,000 species of fungus that fall under the category of mushrooms, many of which are poisonous. It's not hard to mistake other varieties for Liberty Caps. As well, if the police find people picking, carrying a mushroom guide and calling yourself a collector probably won't work when

you've got a Sobeys bag full of the recreational drug variety.

Although psilocybin has never been known to cause overdose deaths, magic mushrooms in large doses, uncomfortable places or insecure mindsets can cause "bad trips" – paranoia, distress, discomfort, and from testimony from unnamed sources, essentially the worst couple hours of your life. Mushrooms are a 4-8 hour commitment once consumed. These days though, crawling around the grass with flashlights, are a lot of people willing to take those risks.

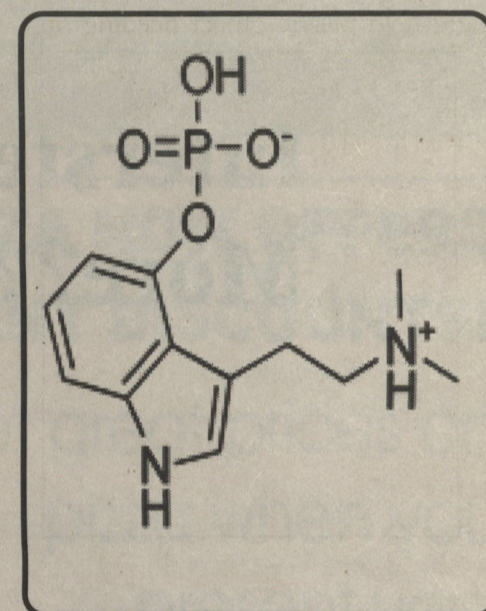


Photo: Wikipedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Psilocybin.png>

The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking...er...Thrift Store Shopping

Sebastien Baglole
Reporter

Value Village has become a well-known store in the last few years. It provides a service essential to students who don't have a lot of money.

"The reason why we have it is a need. Many, many students shop here. Nobody can afford to buy new for everything." Value Village manager Brenda Brown said, reiterating why the store has become such a success across the island.

Hundreds of students swarm to the warehouse-sized building over weeks, browsing through racks and over shelves, across which are strewn some items that Al has grown out of but Biff can still wear, some lingering Halloween garb, even a range of

silverware, cups, accessories, bags – how fantastic to have such a wide smattering of everything that people consume under a single roof. Value Village is to used clothing as pharmaceuticals are to Walgreens; you can find a variety of products for different occasions, and they might benefit you, or they might not.

You may find large amounts of hardly-worn articles bearing an Old Navy tag, and some of the other things have familiar tags from big retailers, which usually get snatched up soon after being put on the racks. Some subtle differences you might find with the versions you get at a Frenchy's, a Froggy's or a Repeats, is that they are available only in very select sizes, have

small scuffs or are noticeably used, and sometimes come with an indistinguishable scent usually designated to old hockey arenas or third-story apartments.

A pair of shoes catches your eye and you pick them up. They have no significant wear-and-tear to speak of, they're neat or otherwise fashionable; the price tag is reasonable.

But not enviable by any means. That price may be equal to the same shoe at Payless Shoe Source when they're having a sale, and a few nice shirts in Repeats could be rivaled by Island Beach Company, when fall clothing is in demand, and you need to bundle up.

Brown says this isn't the case.

"We have clothes for less than half price than what you would get at a place like Island Beach Company," insists the manager, who has had a few employees that were also UPEI students.

"Especially on PEI, we don't have the big brand names. A lot of clothing items we get in are brand new and in excellent condition."

And for some students, it's a boon to have a place like this when finances are troublesome. "Every little bit that they can save will be useful to them."

As long as they last, Froggy's, Repeats and Value Village will always be essential for rummaging around before Halloween. Brown concurs. "We take great pride in our Halloween section every year. We're pretty busy!"