



I have had a passion for observing and exploring nature since my childhood. Like most children in Latvia, I often went mushroom picking with my parents and grandparents.

Later I studied and obtained a Master's degree in Biology. At the moment I am a mycologist working at the Natural History Museum of Latvia in Riga, and I am practicing several areas connected to mushrooms and mycology. In 2020 I together with my colleague published a book about fungi of Latvia describing around 700 species.

As the head of the Mycological Society of Latvia and a mushroom enthusiast I wish more and more people in my country paid attention to mushrooms as not only something delicious to eat, but also would know about their role in nature, their beauty and applications, like creating mushroom paper, obtaining pigments and using them in different ways. So I have been trying for several years to do my best to develop public interest in this topic by organizing classes, writing articles and organizing mushroom exhibitions in different regions of Latvia with my colleagues.

We also lead mushroom picking and learning forays for both local people and foreigners. Even my dog is a mushroom hunter—I trained him to search for truffles and last summer we found the first summer truffle grown in a truffle orchard in Latvia.

One of my hobbies for the last seven years has been dyeing yarn with mushrooms. It combines two Latvian traditions since mushroom picking is very popular here, and dyeing of yarns with plants is also kept alive and widely practiced in our country. My collection has almost 1000 yarn samples with notes of which mushrooms and mordants were used etc. I also knit socks, mittens and other items (with patterns similar to those of traditional Latvian patterns) using mushroom-dyed yarns.

I am eager to share my knowledge and regularly offer classes in person and online. For example, I created a Facebook group for local people who are interested in dyeing with mushrooms and several ladies regularly contribute with stories of their experience. In contrast to other, larger international platforms, here participants are able to communicate in their native language and know each other personally, creating a vibrant place to learn and explore.

I look forward to attending the Symposium. Learning tips and tricks of dyeing and the use of mushroom dyed fiber in crafts from the best people in this field is something one could not get any other way. It will also be a great opportunity to make friends with like-minded people, develop connections and expand my mushroom-themed collection :) as well as gain inspiration for my future adventures in nature and workshops.

Facebook group in Latvian <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1215487362208904>

Mushroom dyed yarns - part of Annual Mushroom exhibition in the Latvian Natural History Museum, Riga - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1215487362208904/permalink/1217145025376471/>

Pictures from the yarn dyeing classes: <http://www.manabebrene.lv/lv/dziju-un-audumu-krasosana-ar-meza-veltem-1632135780/>

And another last year: <https://www.sateka.lv/2020/10/14/apgust-dziju-un-audumu-krasosanu-ar-meza-veltem/> Article in journal: <http://www.videsvestis.lv/senes-krasota-dzija/>

TV interview <https://skaties.lv/zinas/latvija/viedokli/senes-var-ne-tikai-est-bet-ar-tam-krasot-ari-dziju/>