

CANADIAN POSTAGE & POSTAL ITEMS WITH FUNGI

Brian S. Luther

Canada, the second largest country in the world and our neighbor to the north, has several different official postal items that illustrate fungi. These are listed and discussed here. All catalog numbers are from the Scott Postage Stamp Catalogues. M = mushrooms or fungi as the main illustration; MID = mushrooms or fungi in the design of the stamp, in the background, or in the border of official postal items; FDC = first day cover, which is an envelope with the stamps affixed and canceled on the first day of the stamp or stamps' issue; cachet = an envelope (cover) illustration; s/s = souvenir sheet; presentation pack = a special packet or folder with the stamps mounted on an attractive background of the same theme, often with additional information about the set. Usually these cost a little bit more than the stamp set itself and are collector's items.

Canadian Postal Items with Fungi

Cat. #	Date	Value	Type	Species or Description
1245	8/4/1989	38¢	M	<i>Boletus mirabilis</i>
1246	"	"	"	<i>Morchella esculenta</i>
1247	"	"	"	<i>Cantharellus cinnabarinus</i>
1248	"	"	"	<i>Clavulinopsis fusiformis</i>
The primary illustration on this presentation pack of four stamps is <i>Trametes versicolor</i> ; the FDCs show additional illustrations on the cachet as well as an <i>Amanita</i> on the cancel. (See text and photos for details about these and two separate informational books issued by Canada Post that show fungi.)				
1272 & 1273	5/3/1990	n/a	MID	Fungi only on back cover of booklet
2170	8/23/2006	51¢	MID/M	Canadian wine & cheese
2171 (set 2168–71)	"	"	"	"
2171a	"	n/a	"	Booklet
2461	4/21/2011	"	M & MID	s/s
2463	"	"	M	<i>Amanita muscaria</i>
2463a	"	"	M & MID	Booklet (see text for details)

Comments

Scott 1245–1248

Canada Scott 1245–1248 is the first set of stamps issued by a North American country that has mushrooms as the main illustration. (Mexico was the first country in North America to issue a stamp with a fungus, but it's not the main illustration; see Luther, 2013a.) This set came in full sheets of 50, with selvage, and all stamps are gummed. Note that the four stamps in the block are



Scott 1245-1248

not in catalog order left to right. That's because this sheet of stamps can be broken up into different blocks. Of the four species in this set, three are good edibles. Both *Boletus mirabilis* and morels are much sought after. *Cantharellus cinnabarinus* is very common in the eastern US, but mycophiles here don't get the pleasure of finding it. In the late 1970s I often found it in the southern Appalachians of both Tennessee and North Carolina in summer and fall.

It's delicious, and the striking color makes for a very colorful dish when prepared. *Clavulinopsis fusiformis* is edible, but mediocre because it lacks a good consistency and flavor.

In the presentation pack issued for this set, the four stamps are mounted in a clear sleeve, with the entire cover featuring *Trametes versicolor* on both the front and the back. Although this polypore is the main illustration on the presentation pack, it is not on any of the stamps in the set. When you open the presentation pack, titled "Mushrooms of Canada," a cute illustration of *Cantharellus cinnabarinus* pops up, like you'd find in a children's book. Two different FDCs were issued for this set as well. The first has all four stamps on a single envelope (cover); the cachet shows a morel and the bolete along with microstructures of each; the cancel shows a Death Cup *Amanita* with three maturing basidiocarps as seen in longitudinal section (egg button stage, half grown, and mature). The other FDCs show each of the four individual stamps on separate envelopes, with the same cachet and cancel just mentioned. Also, the back side of the FDC tells all about each of the four mushrooms in the set.



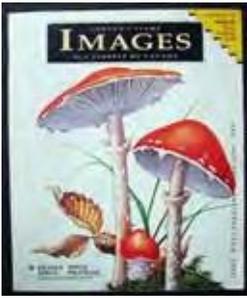
Cover of presentation pack for Scott 1245–48, with *Trametes versicolor*.



Inside of presentation pack for Scott 1245–48 with pop-up *Cantharellus cinnabarinus*.



FDC for Scott 1245–48 with morel and *Boletus* cachet and an *Amanita* cancel.



Front cover of Canada's Stamp Images No. 1 book, 1989 (see text).

(formerly *Stropharia squamosa* var. *thrausta*). The inside pages show an FDC with the four-value set above, as well as an article titled "Marvelous Mushrooms" with even more color illustrations and a tasty recipe to try. Also, the envelope that the Images book was sent in has the same mushroom on the cachet, so there are several mushroom-related items to collect. But there's still more.

In addition, a 42 page book was issued by Canada Post titled *Souvenir Collection of the Postage Stamps of Canada 1989* with all the stamps in it and a lot more text and illustrations relating to the issues from that year. Page 18, titled "Mushrooms: Fascinating Fungi," has photographs of some of the fungi that are on the set of stamps. Unfortunately the photograph of the bolete shows two basidiocarps of *Suillus luteus* (Slippery Jacks), not *Boletus mirabilis*—oops! It's clear that they failed to consult with a mycologist on the ID here.



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Page 18 from *Souvenir Collection of the Postage Stamps of Canada 1989* book.

So, all told, eight different species of fungi are illustrated on the official Canadian postal items related to Scott 1245–1248: *Cantharellus cinnabarinus*, *Morchella esculenta*, *Clavulinopsis fusiformis*, *Boletus mirabilis*, *Trametes versicolor*, *Amanita* sp., *Leratiomyces squamosus* var. *thraustus*, and *Suillus luteus*. Regrettably, the familiar morel name *M. esculenta* has been replaced as a result of DNA studies. Instead, we have several new species. Refer to my review of the new book *Ascomycete Fungi of North America* by Beug et al. (Luther 2014) where these are discussed.

Scott 1272 & 1273

The next item from Canada Post showing fungi is a booklet titled "Moving the Mail. The Story of Canada's Postal System." Only the back cover of the booklet shows fungi, a small picture of the "Souvenir Collection of the Postage Stamps of Canada 1989" (mentioned in the previous paragraphs). The left-hand page shows the four-value mushroom section, with separate mushroom illustrations and text; the right-hand page shows the four value set by itself, as well as the same set shown separately below. Because this single booklet contains two different stamps, the Scott Catalogue has given it two numbers (see table) although the stamps themselves do not show any fungi.



Back of booklet for Scott 1272 & 1273 (see text).

Scott 2170 & 2171

The third postal item with fungi is the right front outside cover of Canada booklet 2171a, which shows a round of cheese covered with mold, on which is a smaller wedge of yellow cheddar. The mold growth is obvious and is most likely *Penicillium roqueforti* or *Penicillium camemberti*, the two common species growing on and flavoring cheeses. The variety of cheese is not specifically mentioned, however, so we don't know for sure. The two stamps (2170 & 2171) are photographs designed and shaped to appear like cheese labels. All these stamps are die cut and self-stick.

Scott 2170 & 2171 showing moldy cheeses (see text).



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Scott 2461–2463

The next set of postal items, 2461–2463, contains many details that need to be described and explained. Canada 2463a is a booklet that commemorates the International Year of Forests for 2011. This booklet contains eight stamps. The outside front cover of the booklet itself shows a giant Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) with white silhouettes of animals but no fungi. The back cover, however, has color pictures (a preview) of both the souvenir sheet and the FDC, each with mushrooms. The set itself features a tree and mushrooms as the main illustrations. These are what Canada Post calls Permanent Stamps, with no value shown. They are equivalent to our US Postal Service Forever Stamps. The stamps in the booklet are die cut and self-stick.

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Inside of booklet Scott 2463a with eight stamps.

Scott 2463a, booklet cover.

Back of booklet Scott 2463a showing the s/s and FDC.

Scott 2461 is the souvenir sheet (s/s); it shows a continuous scene of the two stamps together. The Douglas Fir stamp (2462) towers above; below it is the *Amanita muscaria* stamp (2463). The actual *Amanita* stamp shows three basidiocarps; two more mushrooms of the same species are shown next to these in the overall illustration but



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Canadian Mushroom Stamps, cont. from page 5

outside of the stamp itself. Thus a total of five mushrooms are shown. Curiously, the stamps on this s/s are all perforated, with gum (unlike the booklet, which has self-stick stamps). The set of just the two stamps by themselves (2462 & 2463) does not show the additional two mushrooms, nor does the FDC, which has a panorama of trees all across the front of the cover. Only the souvenir sheet (2461) and the back of the booklet show all five mushrooms at the same time. This set is especially pertinent to us in western North America because in many of our conifer forests Douglas Fir is the predominant tree or a major component in the forest tree associations.

For mycophilatelic reports on other countries or territories in North America to date, refer to Luther, 2013a–d, and 2014b–c.

Souvenir sheet Scott 2461 (see text for details).



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