

# *Eryngii* and other Tough Stems



For some reason Western cultures have used “King” as a positive term, while deriding their typical slovenly, destructive and autocratic behavior. Some huckster decided to call *Pleurotus eryngii* “king oyster mushroom” and it seems to have stuck. In our view there is little to recommend them to consumers. At the same time, we do not see how they could be called slovenly or autocratic. They have almost no cap and are almost all stem. Like all oyster mushrooms, the stems are tough or at least “chewy.” We propose to call them **SENATOR MUSHROOMS**. If a cap covers the head (OK, mushrooms don’t have “heads”) then a small cap can only cover a small head. Senators are known for being or getting fat (even if only by “pork-barreling”). Because *eryngii* are tough, one who eats them regularly will soon develop the strong jaw that politicians are famous for. The small “head” and the fat stem reminds us of stereotypical Senators. We would love to hear comments on the this subject.

All oyster mushroom stems are chewy. As mentioned elsewhere, good growing practices will result in mushrooms with very little stem. Unfortunately, the consumer can buy only what is available. If you buy mushrooms with long stems, you can grind them in a blender/food processor and add the paste to sauces and soups, or you can cook them as suggested below for the **SENATOR MUSHROOM**.

A final comment on health. The stems do contain vitamins, minerals and protein. Possibly they contain more, good, dietary fiber than the caps. However, many people have or have a tendency for strained jaws. **SENATOR** mushrooms are a very poor choice for them.

## CAJUN SENATORS

¼ lb Senator mushrooms (stems)  
1- ½ Tbs. Olive oil  
about ½ Tsp Cajun spice (with lemon)

Slice the stems into 1/4–3/8 inch thick disks. Sprinkle Cajun spice on the disks. Any spice that goes on your cutting board can be wiped-up with the stem disks. If the spice label does not say that it has lemon, add some lemon juice. Heat the oil in a 12 inch skillet (cast iron is always best) until a drop of water sputters away quickly. Cover the bottom of the skillet with the seasoned stem disks. Cook with high heat until a dark brown ring is seen on the bottom of each, then turn with a wooden spatula and cook until the second side is browned. Serve immediately. This will only serve 1 to 2 people, but you can cut and apply spice to a second batch then cook it as soon as the first one is done. The large skillet is necessary to cook all quickly and evenly. RHK

This recipe was derived from “Paul’s Smoking Blackened Royal Trumpets” <[www.phillipsmushroomfarms.com/recipes/royalrec.html](http://www.phillipsmushroomfarms.com/recipes/royalrec.html)>. If you find that our recipe is not spicy enough for you, you might try the original version.

## LEMON SHERRY STEMS

¼ lb Senator mushrooms (stems)  
Juice of 1 large Lemon  
1- ½ Tbs. Olive oil  
¼ Cup Sherry  
Dash Black pepper – freshly ground

Slice the stems into 1/4–3/8 inch thick disks. Pour the lemon juice over them. They should absorb almost, but not quite all of the juice. Marinade them for at least one hour. They may be left to marinade for up to a full day in the refrigerator. Heat the oil in a 12 inch skillet until a drop of water sizzles in it. Keep the heat on high and add the slices of the Senators. When they begin to brown, turn them and when slightly brown on the second side, then drop them into the the hot sherry. The Sherry should be heated to just below a boil, or if you wish to eliminate the alcohol, boil it for a few minutes, just before adding the slices. Serves one or two, but for more servings, prepare and marinate more of the Senators, but cook them in batches so that all slices lay flat in the skillet. RHK