

RUCH, Ore. - Larry Belau's humongous morel mushroom has tongues wagging in the Jackson County hamlet of Ruch.

Standing 12 inches tall, measuring 14 inches around and weighing nearly a pound, it sits in the ice cream case at Aunty Pasta's restaurant.

Mushroom hunters and ordinary folks have been coming in for a look.

Belau found it last weekend.

Catherine Johnson owns the restaurant. She says some people take pictures of it and others just "oogle it."

Wildflowers were on Belau's mind when he headed into the woods. The 56-year-old said finding the mushroom was a fluke.

Mushroom experts like Gordon Larum say morels of that scale are rare, but not unheard of.

Larum says they would probably be more common if people didn't harvest them so ferociously.

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