

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R11498 CW-D

H.C.R. 61
By: Leman (Campbell)
Administration
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Among the fascinating array of flora in the Lone Star State, one of the most unique species, both in appearance and life cycle, is the Texas star mushroom.

This extremely rare mushroom, known scientifically as *Chorioactis geaster*, was first collected in Austin in 1893 and is nearly exclusive to Texas, with Japan being the only other place in the world with a notable population. Highly selective about where it chooses to grow, the mushroom's Texas range is limited to the central and northern parts of the state and includes Fayette, Guadalupe, Hays, Travis, Collin, Dallas, Denton, Tarrant, and Hunt Counties.

The Texas star appears in winter, most commonly on the exposed roots and decaying stumps of cedar elm trees. It emerges as a dark brown capsule about four inches in length, which inspired its nickname, the devil's cigar.

After rains, the mushroom explodes open with an audible hiss, seemingly puffing smoke as it fills the air with a cloud of spores that waft away to help ensure a future generation for the species. In addition to its other memorable traits, the mushroom, once opened, has a starlike shape that makes it seem custom designed for the Lone Star landscape.

A poignant reminder of the natural diversity that surrounds us, the Texas star mushroom is as uncommon and striking as the state that serves as its home, and it is indeed deserving of special recognition.

RESOLVED

That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate the Texas star mushroom as the official State Mushroom of Texas.