

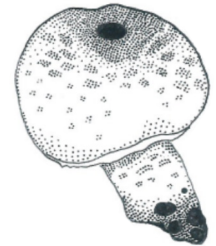
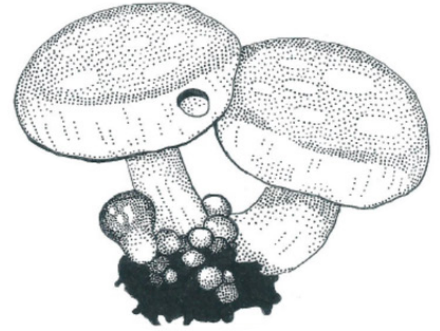
FUN WITH FUNGI: A MUSHROOM STUDY GUIDE



Fungi are the longest living organisms on earth

There are an estimated 5 million species of fungi

Many mushroom species are important decomposers and help make compost and soil



MUSHROOM WALK ACTIVITY

The fall is a great time to go on a nature walk with a grown up. Bring this notebook (and a surface for writing on), drawing materials, and walking shoes to go for a walk and draw or write about the mushrooms you find. What color are they? Where are they growing? How do you think they are growing?



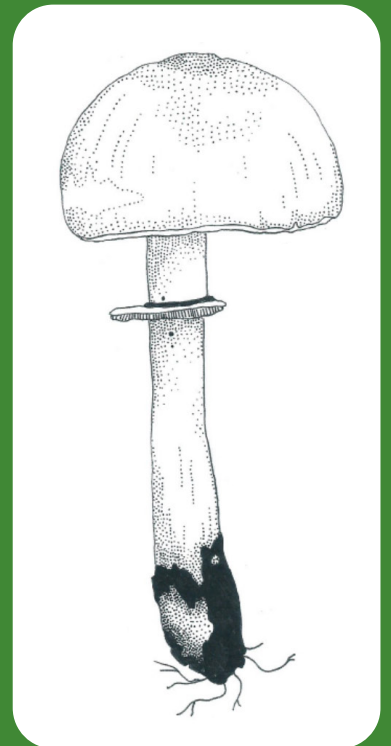
Post about your adventures and tag us at @gpconservatory or use the hashtag "#gpcathome"! This work is supported by a grant from PNC Foundation for education with young children. We are grateful for their support of our programs at the Conservatory.

We know a lot about our tree, flower, berry, leaf, and evergreen friends! When we see them, we quickly know who they are. However, there is a certain living organism that we sometimes see and think, "how strange," and maybe stay clear from it. This special organism is called a fungi. We also call them mushrooms!

They seem to love to pop out of different and funny places outside that you never expected. You can find them on the ground, on trees, growing from a dead pile of leaves, and so on. When you buy them at the store, they usually have some dirt on them.

There are so many different looking kinds of mushrooms. There are big ones, little bitty ones, some with different colors, different varieties of shapes, and some you can even eat. They have been living on Earth for so long! A billion years! That's a very, very long time.

There is so much we can learn about fungi and the discoveries you could make are endless. Seeing them on nature walks is truly a gift from nature. Use these activities to learn about mushrooms like a scientist and grow a deeper appreciation for this intriguing organism.



MUSHROOM SPORE PRINT ART ACTIVITY

MATERIALS:

Fresh mushroom with covered gills (a portabella works very well)
Knife
Paper
Water
Hairspray

Turn a mushroom into art! Here's how. Have a grown-up cut off the stem and the underside of the mushroom, exposing the gills underneath the cap. Place the mushroom gills-side down on a piece of paper. Add a few drops of water to the cap. Cover with a cup and leave overnight, undisturbed. The next day, lift up your cup and the mushroom – there should be a beautiful spore print left on the paper. To preserve it, spray it with hairspray.