

Fungus



GARDEN EARTH
NATURALIST
ECO-SERVICE CARDS

FUNGUS

FAMILY: several

ORDER: Odonata

IDENTIFICATION CLUES



Fungi are a unique and very diverse group of organisms in a kingdom of their own (they are not plants!). They are often called the “hidden kingdom” because many are hidden underground or in the roots of plants or as parasites or saprophytes inside other organisms. They range in size from a single cell to huge, underground multicellular organisms. They are extremely important ecologically and economically.



Where to Look:

Fungi are found everywhere! They are deep in the soil, in the roots of plants, inside insects and animals. Their reproductive fruiting bodies are seen in lawns and attached to trees

Who Eats It?

Many different organisms eat fungi. Not only do they supply food for animals, they also help plants absorb nutrients from the soil in a symbiotic relationship between the fungus and the plant roots .



LIFE CYCLE

Fungi reproduce both sexually (with the sharing of DNA) and asexually (without the exchange of DNA). The mushrooms you see in your lawn after a rain are the fruiting bodies of an underground fungus. These fruiting bodies release spores which can develop into new fungi. This is just one example of how fungi reproduce.

What It Eats.

Fungi absorb nutrients from the organisms or organic matter on which they live. They use acids and enzymes to digest their food before they absorb it.



Did You Know

You probably eat or use fungi in some way every day. The yeast used to make bread is a fungus. We eat mushrooms on pizza. And many of our medicines come from fungi. Fungi are used to produce stain-removing enzymes contained in many cleaning products.

Role in the Ecosystem

Fungi play many diverse roles in the ecosystem but recycling is one of their most important roles.