

Rainbow Fungi Foray

Autumn is here and it can be cold outside, so put on your coat, hat, gloves and boots, and go for a walk in a local park or woodland, and let's see what you can find.

Some fungi can be tiny or very well camouflaged, so getting down on hands and knees under some trees can help. Fungi come in all shapes, sizes, smells and colours. Take an adult with you, and be sure to wash your hands if you are touching things, but don't eat anything that you find.

Can you find fungi with these colours on them? Try and find as many different colour fungi as possible. It may be the whole fungi, or just a little part of it, but you will be amazed as you start to look at all the colours that you have found. Take photos as you go, leaving the fungi where it is (insects and animals love to eat them) and do send us your favourite pictures - we'd love to see what you find.

Some fungi are found in grassland so it is also worth looking in old sheep grazed meadows for wax caps, clubs and coral fungi which can be very colourful.

Red

This is a fly agaric. It's a very poisonous mushroom so be careful!

It contains chemicals (Ibotenic acid) which both attracts and kills flies, hence the name. Traditionally, pieces of cap would be broken up and sprinkled in a causer of milk placed on a window sill to kill flies. It is normally found growing near birch trees.



Orange

This is a blackening waxcap. Waxcaps are found in old grasslands which haven't had lots of fertiliser added or grassy areas in woodland. Waxcaps come in many different colours from pale orange, yellow, red, pink and even green!

This one begins to blacken (look at the bottom of the stem) after handling. Lots of fungi change colour if bruised or cut.



Yellow

This is one of the coral fungi. It grows among grass and moss only reaching a few cm in height so is very easily overlooked. Similar looking fungi can be found in white, cream, green and even bright pink!

This fungi has no gills, instead the spores are released from the branched tips.



Brown

This is a clustered brittle stem. They grow in clumps on old tree stumps and rotten wood below the soil. The spores are also brown and form a covering over nearby plants. There are many different shades of brown fungi which can be very well hidden among the leaves in autumn.

Many fungi help to rot down (decompose) leaves and wood, putting the nutrients back into the soil.



Green

This is the parrot waxcap. The parrot waxcap is a fairly common waxcap. It normally has some yellow and pink too, but always has at least some green on it.

Green is not a common colour in fungi so you're either very observant or very lucky if you find a green fungi! Happy hunting!



Violet

This is the amethyst deceiver. It is quite a common fungi found in different woodland habitats. It's called the amethyst "deceiver" because as it gets older it fades and loses its bright purple colour, deceiving you into thinking it must be a different fungi!



Black

This is a stink horn, and you will smell it before you see it! It smells like something dead and rotting! The smell attracts flies which climb over the black cap, picking up spores and transferring them to other stinkhorns visited.

It's quite common in mixed woodland but a less common smaller species is found under beech trees.

