



# FUNGI IN THE WOODS

The role played by fungi in the woodland habitat



BRITISH MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY FUNGAL EDUCATION & OUTREACH

PRIMARY RESOURCE

## National Curriculum areas covered:

**Year 1:** Seasonal Changes; **Year 2:** Living things and their habitats.

The learning objective of this activity is to understand the role that fungi play in the woodland habitat. Children will learn that fungi can be:

- Friendly. They recycle dead woodland waste, putting valuable nutrients back into the soil for other plants and animals to grow.
- Helpful. To trees and other plants by capturing water and nutrients for plant growth.
- Harmful. Some fungi can cause disease.

This activity could form part of an art and craft session using different materials such as felt, card, paints etc. to create a colourful woodland scene with different fungus fruit bodies. Collect fallen leaves and bark from different trees to use on the collage or make your own leaves using craft materials. Make spore prints and add them to the collage. Include drawings of trees, leaves, insects and other wildlife found in the woodland habitat.

## FRIENDLY FUNGI? - HELPFUL FUNGI? - HARMFUL FUNGI?



Oyster mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*)



The Fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*)



The Honey fungus (*Armillaria mellea*)



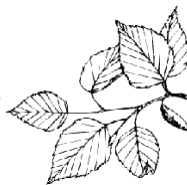
# FUNGI IN THE WOODS

**FRIENDLY FUNGI** who help to recycle dead plants, trees and animals and recycle nutrients back into the soil. You find the fruit bodies of these fungi in the leaf litter of the woodland or growing on dead tree branches on the woodland floor.

Some of the more common trees found in the British woodland and the fungi that associate with them



OAK



BIRCH



BEECH



PINE

**HELPFUL FUNGI** who live around tree and other plant roots and help them to grow by capturing water and nutrients in their vast network of filaments called mycelium and supplying these to the tree or plant. In return the plants and trees give the fungi sugars from photosynthesis. The fungi are called 'mycorrhizas' meaning 'fungus root'. Look out for certain tree types, particularly in the autumn, and you may see the fruit bodies of these fungi growing close by. Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria* is a mycorrhizal fungus)

Hoof Fungus,  
Chicken of the  
woods, Beefsteak  
fungus .

Birch polypore.

Artists  
Bracket,  
Oyster  
mushroom.

False morel,  
Yellow Stags  
Horn

Death Cap,  
The Sickener .

Death cap, Fly  
Agaric, Wood  
Hedgehog,  
Woolly Milkcap .

Chanterelle

Fly Agaric,  
Death cap,  
The Sickener

Oak Bracket,  
Hen of the  
woods,  
Beefsteak  
fungus

Sometimes  
Birch polypore

Beech  
Polypore,  
sometimes  
Artists Bracket

Wood  
Cauliflower

**These fungi have a broad host range and can associate with lots of different trees:**

- **Friendly Fungi:** Such as Oyster mushroom, Sulphur tuft, Candle snuff, Dead Mans Fingers and Turkey Tail can break down dead wood, plant leaves and other dead organic matter and return Carbon, Nitrogen and other nutrients to the soil.
- **Helpful Fungi:** Such as Chanterelle, Giant puff ball, Shaggy ink cap and Morel can help lots of different trees to capture water and nutrients from the soil to help them to grow.

**Harmful Fungi:** Such as Honey Fungus can attack lots of different plant hosts.

**HARMFUL FUNGI** who can infect and kill trees and plants. As long as only a few trees are destroyed in the woodland – this is not such a bad thing because dead tree trunks are food for **FRIENDLY FUNGI**, insects and other micro-organisms who act as recyclers of nutrients.





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Here are some images of fungi found in the woodland habitat.



Dead Man's Fingers



Beefsteak Fungus



Turkey Tail



Giant Puffball



Hoof Fungus



Birch Polypore



Bleeding Oak Bracket



Hen of the Woods



Shaggy Inkcap



Yellow Stagshorn



Sulphur Tuft



Cauliflower fungus