

What are fungi?

Fungi are incredibly diverse and complex organisms that digest their food outside of their “body” in order to ingest nutrients. They are most noticeable when they produce their reproductive structures, known as mushrooms.

Where to look:

Fungi can be found almost everywhere, but often go unnoticed. Forested areas, parks, or gardens provide great habitat for fungi. Check fallen logs or branches, mulch or woodchips, mossy areas, and along streams or creeks.

Types of common spring mushrooms:

Jelly Fungi



Crust Fungi



Cup Fungi



Shelf Fungi



Features to capture in photographs



What to document

Because of the diversity of forms mushrooms take on and the physical similarities that different species can have with each other, carefully documenting as many details as possible helps get the best possible identification.

In spring, the most common types of fungi readily found are jelly, crust, cup, shelf, and cap and stem fungi. Photographs of any mushroom will be most useful if the mushroom fills the frame and is in focus.

For cap and stem mushrooms and shelf mushrooms, capturing photos of both the upper and lower surface is very helpful. The lower surface is also called the fertile surface and is where microscopic spores develop and are released. The photos to the left show important features to highlight in your own observations.

Other characteristics to note include:

- What the mushroom was growing on (soil, wood, etc.)
- What tree species are present in the area
- Any noticeable odors the mushroom has
- The color of the mushroom's spores “en masse”, usually determined through a spore print (most useful for mushrooms that have gills)

Other Common Spring Mushrooms: *Cerioporus squamosus* (Dryad's saddle), *Stereum ostrea* (false turkey tail), *Coprinellus micaceus* (mica cap), *Trametes cinnabarina* (Northern cinnabar polypore), *Scizophyllum commune* (splitgill mushroom), *Morchella americana* (yellow morel), *Galerina marginata* (funeral bell)