

# Wild Families



Let's find out about FUNGI!

## Fungus finders

VNPA ACTIVITY SHEET

***Fungi can come in all shapes and sizes...***

***Can you spot 10 different fungi in this picture?***

- ☐ **EMPEROR CORTINAR.** A purple fungus with a stalk and a cap.
- ☐ **SPLENDID RED SKINHEAD.** A red fungus with a stalk and a cap.
- ☐ **PIXIE'S PARASOL.** Tiny blue fungus with a stalk and a cap.
- ☐ **CROWNED CORAL FUNGUS.** A cream coloured fungus that looks like coral growing from a log.
- ☐ **COLLARED EARTHSTAR.** A cream coloured fungus that looks almost like a flower, with a ball at the centre surrounded by star-shaped rays.
- ☐ **SNOW FUNGUS.** A white fungus that looks like jelly growing on a log.
- ☐ **WHITE PUNK.** A cream coloured fungus that looks like a shelf growing out of a tree.
- ☐ **ANEMONE STINKHORN.** A red fungus that looks a bit like an alien with a round centre and tentacles sticking out.
- ☐ **FOREST BROWN CUP.** Fungi shaped like little brown cups growing from a log.
- ☐ **TEA-TREE FINGERS.** A brown fungus that looks like fingers growing from a branch.



Jess Racklyeft

ILLUSTRATION: JESS RACKLYEFT

### ***What can your family do to help fungi?***

Become a citizen science family! When you find a fungus, take a photo and log your sighting on the iNaturalist app or website.

This will help scientists and land managers learn more about different types of fungi and where they live. iNaturalist can also help you identify your fungus.



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# Fun fungus facts

LET'S DIVE INTO THE FASCINATING WORLD OF FUNGI WITH SOME FUN FUNGUS FACTS.



**1** Fungi are unique. They are neither plants nor animals, instead they have their own kingdom. 🏰



**2** Fungi are an important part of life on our planet 🌍. They are nature's recyclers, decomposing organic matter like sticks, leaves and dead animals into soil. Some types of fungi can be an important source of food for some animals.



**4** Some fungi live on and eat other living things like plants and animals. Dark Vegetable Caterpillar fungi infect the caterpillars of Ghost Moths and eat them from the inside out – 🤮 whoah! These are called parasitic fungi.



**3** Some fungi 'eat' poo 🐘. Small Dung Buttons only grow on the poo of herbivores, like wallabies.



**5** Some fungi, like the Emperor Cortinar, work together with plants. The underground part of the fungus (the mycelium) can attach to the roots of trees. The tree provides energy to the fungus and the fungus helps the tree absorb water and nutrients 🌳. It's a win-win!



**6** Some fungi are bioluminescent 💡 – that means they glow in the dark!

IMAGES: REINER RICHTER

**Q.** What do you call a fungus that makes music?

**A.** A decomposer!



## Figuring out your fungi

When you find fungi, take some time to admire and get to know them. If you take a little hand mirror you can see underneath fungus without pulling it out.

- 👁️ What shape is it?
- 🎨 What colour is it?
- ✋ What texture is it?
- 🗿 What is it growing on?

- 👁️ Look at your fungus from all different angles, including looking at the underside. What do you see?

- 💡 Is it growing in the light or dark?
- ✍ Draw your fungus.
- 📋 Use four words to describe your fungus.

## Fungus finding tips

Fungi can live in all sorts of places, from beaches to the tops of mountains. Damp forests and rainforests are particularly good places to find fungi.

The best time of year to find fungi in Victoria is March to July as the weather gets wetter and cooler. Fungi can be found at any time of the year though, so always keep your eyes peeled.

Here's our fungus finding tips:

- 👁️ Take your time to look closely all around the forest.
- 🔍 Fungi can be very small, so make sure you closely inspect rotting logs, sticks, leaves and tree trunks.
- 🌿 Look in shady areas and where the ground is damp.
- 🍃 Look amongst the leaf litter on the ground.
- 🌲 Look around the base of trees.

## Staying safe with fungi

Some fungi are extremely poisonous. Don't eat fungi you find in the forest.

Don't ever put fungi you find in your mouth or nose.

Wash your hands after touching fungi.

Always supervise young children and babies when checking out fungi.



Download all Wild Families activity sheets  
[vnpa.org.au/wild-families](http://vnpa.org.au/wild-families) →



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