Fungi Checklist

Can you spot these interesting fungi in your local area?

Fungi are beautifully weird. Did you know that they are genetically closer to humans and other animals than to plants? Please make sure that you don't touch any fungi and enjoy them from a distance.

Vermillion Grisette
Amanita xanthocephala
Credit: Bill Betts

Archer's Cortinar
Cortinarius archeri
Credit: Bill Betts

Earth Tongue
Geoglossum cookeanum
Credit: Mark Brundrett

Australian Honey Fungus
Armillaria luteobubalina
Credit: Bill Betts

Ghost Fungus
Omphalotus nidiformis
Credit: Mark Brundrett

Scarlet Bracket Fungus
Pycnoporous coccineus
Credit: Bill Betts

Dog Poo Fungus
Pisolithus albus

Onion Earthball
Scleroderma cepa
Credit: Mark Brundrett

Red Fingers
Colus pusillus
Credit: Bill Betts

Pale Cauliflower Coral
Ramaria capitata
Credit: Bill Betts

Split-gill Fungus
Schizophyllum commune
Credit: Bill Betts

Black Cup Fungus
Plectania sp.
Credit: Bill Betts

Local fungi

Unlike plants, fungi don't produce their own food. They can live on dead or living matter or form symbiotic relationships with plants called mycorrhizae. These mutually beneficial relationships are essential for some plants to survive, like many of our local orchids.

The fruiting body, which may be a mushroom, bracket, earthball, cup or club, is the visible part of the fungus. However, most of the fungus is a microscopic mycelium which is the root-like structure embedded in the soil. The mycelium is a long lasting vegetative body, responsible for nutrient absorption and growth, while the fruiting body is essentially a reproductive structure that produces spores.

The City of Joondalup and its surrounds is blessed with a multitude of colourful and unique fungi that are endemic to the region, meaning they only naturally occur here.

Tips for finding fungi

Watch for these target locations:

Bushlands are great places to start your search – look for dead branches, fallen trees and leaf litter

Rotting logs often provide great habitat for fungi

At the base of living trees – fungi can form symbiotic relationships with roots

Moist areas – fungi like water. Look for lakes, swamps and other wet areas

Grasslands/meadows – some fungi prefer grassy areas

Look closely – Some fungi are tiny while others blend in with their environment

Use your nose – Some species can emit a distinct odour

Bring a guide – The field book referenced below provides great information on local fungal species

Do not touch – Many species are poisonous and it is also prohibited by WA state law to remove fungi from public land without a licence.

Did you know?

There are likely over 10 x more fungi species in the world than plant species.[1] No one really knows how many fungi species exist within the Perth region, though it is believed that there are at least several thousand – many of which have not yet been identified or named.

When to find fungi in Joondalup

February to April – There can be brief bursts of fungal growth during late summer to early autumn. Many fruiting bodies pop up rapidly after rain and disappear just as fast.

May to July – Most fruiting bodies appear after the onset of heavy autumn and winter rains, but it can still be challenging to find them in the landscape. Keep your eyes peeled!

How to help protect fungi

Participate in citizen science - Joining projects like FungiMap contributes to research and helps to better understand populations and distributions. You can also log your fungi sightings via the iNaturalist website or app.

Get involved with local conservation groups - The City has lots of Friends Groups that you could join such as the Friends of Warwick Bushland which has conducted fungal surveys since the year 2000, with over 120 species recorded. The Western Australian Naturalists' Club also has a Fungi Study Group that organises events during winter.

Practice good hygiene in natural areas - Clean your boots before entering and leaving walking trails and bushlands to avoid the spread of invasive fungi and pathogens.

Cultivate fungi habitat - Plant and maintain native vegetation in your garden and limit the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Also, leave fallen plant matter on the ground to provide nutrients and habitat for fungi.

References

[1]Bougher, N. L. (2009). **Fungi of Perth region and beyond.** *Western Australian Naturalists' Club (Inc.), Perth.*