

The Life Cycle Of Mushrooms



How do mushrooms grow then?

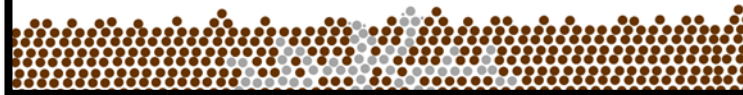
Mushrooms release spores that
settle on soil



Mushroom Spores are teeny tiny 'microscopic' bits that float in the air and can be carried a very long way

These are like microscopic seeds

These spores produce mycelium
which grows throughout the year,
creating a cobweb like structure





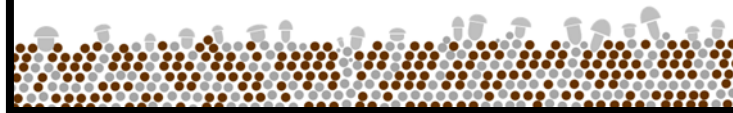
Mycelium is a threadlike cobweb of fungus

These settle and grow into soil

It grows in all directions randomly collecting nutrients from the soil.

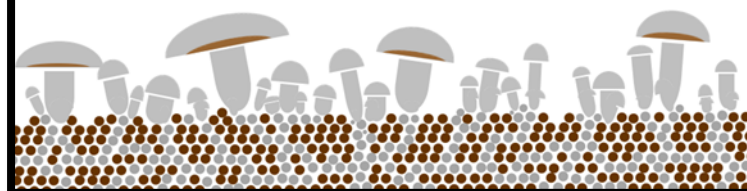


When it gets cool in Autumn the mycelium is shocked into reproducing

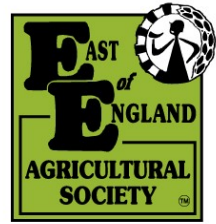


The mycelium panics as it knows that when winter comes it will die away in the cold so produces pins, little mushrooms.

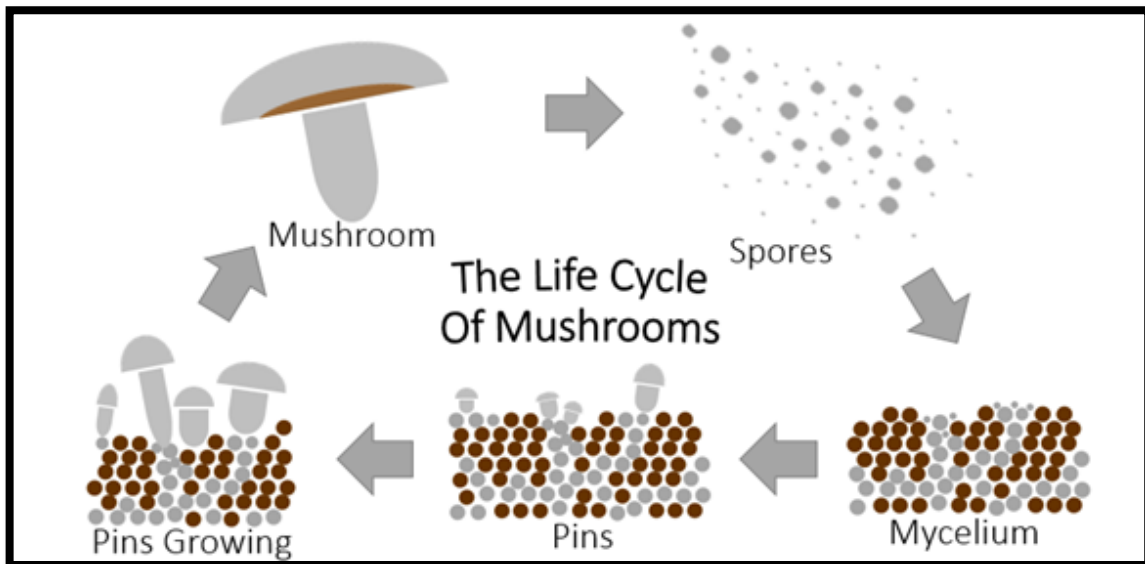
Once a mushroom has grown to full size, it opens revealing gills



These mushrooms will continue to grow and open revealing pins. Mushrooms then drop spores ready to start the process again



These spores will eventually release more spores, beginning the cycle again



How do mushrooms grow in the wild?

Mushrooms are the reproductive organs (fruiting bodies) of a variety of species of fungi. The main part of the organism is known as the mycelium, which is a mass of white tendrils that grows in a substrate. Fungi are nature's recycling plants - they break down complex chemicals, such as the long polysaccharides found in leaves and other plant debris, into simpler ones which are nutrients for new plants and animals. Fungi can also be parasitic, living on a plant or animal for sustenance.



When conditions are right, usually after it rains, the fungus will begin to produce a mushroom so that it can reproduce.

Mushrooms come in many shapes and sizes, but the main feature is that they produce and protect spores, which are the fungus's reproductive cells. Fungi have many different kinds of spores, but most are released into the air, where they float until they land on new soil. Some spores are asexual and produce another fungus immediately, others are sexual (haploid) and produce a body which makes gametes and must find another fungus's spore. Regardless, once a fungus has reproduced it forms a new mycelium underground.

I hope this helps explain the oft-misunderstood mushroom a little better!

Don't eat wild mushrooms

Factory growing is safe for consumption

