

Nat Theo Club

FIELD NOTES

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Fairy Ring Mushrooms & Fungus

Fairy ring mushrooms can be a variety of different mushroom species. The most common is called a Scotch bonnet, named after a hat worn by Scottish men. The mushroom is white or tan, with a long stem, and a disc on top that looks like a Scottish bonnet. These mushrooms grow in a circle, called a fairy ring. The mushroom is like a flower for a fungus. It produces the spores (like seeds) that spread the fungus to new places. They pop up in yards seemingly overnight and are easy to find after rainfall.



HAVE YOU BEEN SURPRISED BY NATURE?

In the spring and fall, right after it rains, I sometimes find fairy rings of mushrooms pop up in my neighborhood. Mushrooms that weren't there the day before suddenly grow in a circle in someone's yard. I think they're amazing! Fairy rings often grow where a tree used to be. The reason mushrooms form a ring is because tree roots grew in a circle around the tree trunk. The fungus follows the roots, breaking them down, and that's where the mushrooms pop up.

The mushrooms start small and then grow taller and wider. When they're ready, the hidden gills under the caps release tiny spores into the air to spread the fungus to more places.

One time, I even had a fairy ring in my own yard after I had a tree cut down. The tree stump was ground up, but many of the tree roots stayed underground. A fungus in the soil began to break down those old roots and turn them back into soil. After a spring rain, the fungus sent up a circle of mushrooms in my yard where my tree used to be.

I am often surprised by nature. Some days I see things I don't expect, and other days I can't find the things I do expect. Remember to be curious and to always expect a surprise in nature.

Just like surprising mushrooms that pop up overnight, God can surprise us in other ways. Philippians 1:6 says that "... he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Once you invite Jesus into your heart, He starts working to make you more like Him. He will remind you to be kind and loving. When you are angry, He will show you a healthy way to handle your anger. When you trust God and walk in His ways, you may be surprised that you can be kind even to those who aren't kind to you. By believing and trusting God, it becomes easier to look and love like Jesus. It might just surprise you!