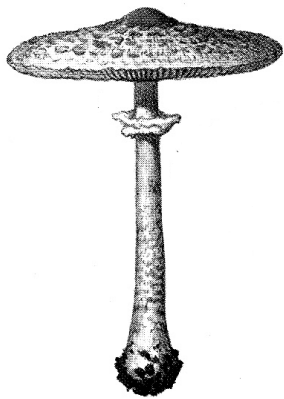


Please don't kick toadstools!

This year should be a bumper one for fungi, with a dry, warm summer followed by a wet autumn.

If you have a rather old and tatty lawn, keep a close eye out for waxcaps – these flourish in undernourished grassland and places such as lawns and churchyards are key sites for them. Waxcaps are small toadstools which have a waxy or greasy feel, and they can be very brightly coloured, shining out from the amongst the grass. Many are yellow but they can also be white, orange, red, green or multicoloured and the stems and gills are usually the same colour as the cap. Many of them turn black when bruised or old. Pembrokeshire is a very good location for waxcaps - we have a good selections of varieties here.



One other rather obvious fungus which can be seen at the moment is the Parasol Mushroom. This is a very handsome beast, growing to a height of 10 inches or more, with a flat scaly cap of about 6 inches. They can be seen along the clifftops and at the Deer Park poking their heads above the grass and heather.

Parasol Mushrooms make very good eating, and I have no argument with somebody who wishes to pick them for the pot. But why do people kick and destroy this lovely mushroom, and other similar large toadstools, when they are growing near to the path? Is it just because they are soft and easily damaged? Is it because people have a natural antipathy to fungi, as with snakes and spiders?

Surely you would never damage wild flowers growing near the path? So, please leave them for other people to enjoy!

And indeed many people do enjoy the fantastic forms and variety of fungi – recently a Facebook site called “Finding fungi in Pembrokeshire” has been set up and within a couple of weeks 37 people have joined!