

## Harcourt Arboretum

6 October 2024

The FSO's event to celebrate UK Fungus Day takes place every year at the Harcourt Arboretum. Though participant numbers were down slightly compared to other years (probably due to the cold and threat of rain), the enthusiasm of the 80+ crowd was undimmed. Committee members had collected a variety of specimens for the table from their own gardens and local



woodlands. They were happy to speak to the onlookers who had lots of questions.



At 1:30, our President Richard Fortey spoke about fungi in his inimitable way, making what could potentially be a dry subject fascinating and humorous for those present.

He talked about how important it is to properly identify fungi, demonstrating how the

Yellow Stainer (*Agaricus xanthodermus*) turns yellow when bruised, indicating that it is not something for the pot!

On the right (photo: DK) he is talking about the different types of parasol fungi such as these Shaggy Parasol (*Chlorophyllum rhacodes*) mushrooms (below), found all over the Arboretum.





The crowd seemed especially fascinated by the Dead Man's Fingers (*Xylaria polymorpha*) which looked suitably macabre.



After Richard's talk, FSO Committee members took small groups around the Arboretum to find fungi *in situ* and weren't disappointed. Unlike last year when very little was around, they found corals, inkcaps, agarics and even bird's nest fungi. Left, Julia is talking about the beautiful Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) toadstool that was found. Below she is discussing gills. (photos: DK)



Below is a beautiful cluster of Upright Corals (*Ramaria stricta*); these were found all over the Arboretum in the woodchips under trees. (photo: DK)



The brightly coloured Orange Peel (*Aleuria aurantia*) fungus. (photo: DK)



False Chanterelles (*Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*) were found in abundance. (photo below right: DK)



Striated Bird's Nest Fungus (*Cyathus striatus*) is very tiny and quite common, though not easy to find due to its minute size. The 'eggs' are attached to the base of the nest by fine threads that break when raindrops knock the eggs up and out. Thus the spores are dispersed.



A collection of Collared Earthstars (*Geastrum triplex*) was another delight, found just near the entrance to the car park.



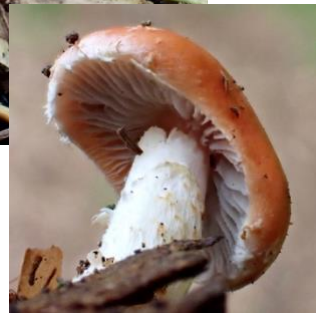


Participants learned that mushrooms can be identified in a variety of ways, including by smell. Many sampled the delicious aroma of this Aniseed Funnel (*Clitocybe odora*). The lovely pale blue-green cap colour turns to grey as the mushroom matures.

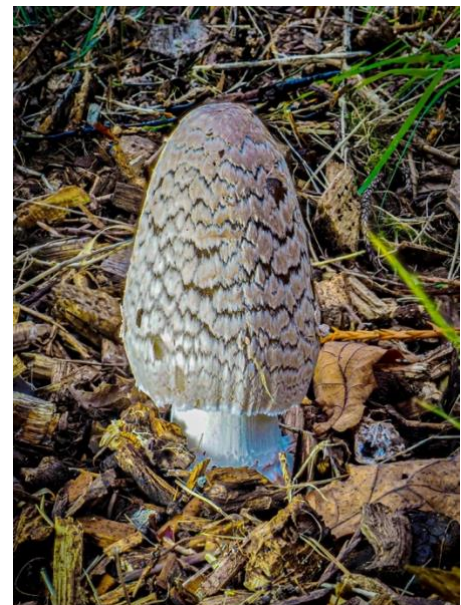


Scaly Earthballs (*Scleroderma verrucosum*) looking like baked potatoes.

Redlead Roundheads (*Leratiomyces ceres*) have a bright red to orange cap and dark purple-brown spore print. They are usually found growing gregariously on wood chips.



Magpie Inkcaps (*Coprinopsis picacea*) always delight those who find them, especially when they are dripping some juicy black ink. (photo right: DK)



All in all, we had another successful event to educate and enlighten the general public while celebrating UK Fungus Day. Perhaps we even encouraged future mycologists to pick up a hand lens. (photo: DK)



Text by Linda Seward

Photos by Linda Seward except where indicated as DK: thank you to Denis Kennedy