



PEPÁKEN HÁUTW Native Plants & Garden Education Program

ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School, Brentwood Bay BC

Learning about Mushrooms (K-6)

with Danielle Stevenson

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Warm up Questions:

What is the coolest mushroom you have seen? Where was it growing?

Do you like eating mushrooms? What is your favorite?

How do mushrooms grow? What do they eat?

Do you see mushrooms growing all year round?

Are mushrooms plants? Or animals? Or something else?

Lesson Plans:

There is an amazing free online resource called “**THE FUNGUS FILES: An Educator’s Guide to Fungi K-6**” an accessible model of interdisciplinary ecological education. The Fungus Files is packed with dynamic and diverse activities designed to be easily adaptable to students of all ages, learning styles and ability levels. [Download the entire e-book here](#) or browse the individual chapters to find the activity that suits your immediate needs.

Recommended chapters

Introduction:

- [Fungi: The Hidden Kingdom:](http://www.namyco.org/images/fungus_files/0.1%20Fungi%20The%20Hidden%20Kingdom.pdf)
http://www.namyco.org/images/fungus_files/0.1%20Fungi%20The%20Hidden%20Kingdom.pdf

- [It's a Fungal Jungle](http://www.namyco.org/images/fungus_files/0.2%20It%27s%20a%20Fungal%20Jungle.pdf) — An observation puzzle introduces fungi as an intricate part of the living ecosystem and helps students identify fungi beyond mushrooms:
http://www.namyco.org/images/fungus_files/0.2%20It%27s%20a%20Fungal%20Jungle.pdf

Biology and Classification:

- [Anatomical Anagrams](http://www.namyco.org/images/fungus_files/1.3%20Anatomical%20Anagrams.pdf) — Unscrambling the anagrams draws students into labeling the main anatomical features of mushrooms and moulds:
http://www.namyco.org/images/fungus_files/1.3%20Anatomical%20Anagrams.pdf

Fungus Among Us:

- [Fungal Folklore and Beyond](http://www.namyco.org/images/fungus_files/4.1%20Fungal%20Folklore%20and%20Beyond.pdf) — Teacher read and student-led activities stimulate creative interest in fungi through student-specific exploratory activities:
http://www.namyco.org/images/fungus_files/4.1%20Fungal%20Folklore%20and%20Beyond.pdf

Fun with Mushrooms – Activities

Here are some great mushroom activities that will not only get the kids involved with mushrooms, but will create an interest that just might spread to their dinner plate.

Mushroom Spore Prints

Fun, easy and educational, this activity shows the kids how, like other fruits and vegetables, mushrooms have “seeds” too. See what kind of spore prints your kids can make.

Supplies:

- Large Portabella mushroom with dark visible gills
- White sheet of paper
- Large Glass Bowl

Instructions:

When you are ready to start cut the mushroom stem off just below the cap, so that it sits flat. Place the mushroom cap side up (gill side down) on a white sheet of paper and cover the cap

with a glass bowl. Leave it covered, undisturbed for 24 hours, which could be hard, the kids are really going to want to take a peek. Carefully remove the bowl and remove the mushroom cap from the paper. Voila, your first mushroom spore print. Let the kids colour them, frame them or just post them on the fridge.

Mushroom Art

This activity works best with the agaricus mushrooms; white, crimini, and portabella, the bigger the better. This one could get messy with the little ones. Use a tempera paint for easy clean-up.

- Slice a mushroom into halves from the cap down through the stem.
- Use the halves to dip into tempera paint and make mushroom prints.
- Let them dry, then hang them on the fridge or frame them.

Mushroom Surgery

Get the kids doctor kit out, it's time to play mushroom surgery. This activity is suitable for all the varieties of mushroom, and dressing up as a doctor makes it that much more fun. Ask the kids if they can identify the following parts on the mushrooms:

- Cap
- Stem
- Veil
- Gills

Using the different varieties will mix things up a bit. Keep them whole or cut them up. Bring in a microscope or magnifying glass for a real close look. Ask the kids to describe what they see. You could even use these mushrooms later in a mushroom medley sauté, provided they are not too handled.

Now, take a step back and admire all the hard work you have done. With all these great activities you might be one step closer to actually getting the kids to eat mushrooms.