



MUSHROOMS IN YOUR LAWN CAN BE A GOOD SIGN

Bright red toadstools, funky jelly fungus, and rounded puffball mushrooms in lawn grass may look alarming. However, lawn mushrooms can be a sign that you have healthy soil; they help lawns grow better by breaking down organic matter and making soil nutrients more available to plant roots.

Before we get into removal tips, here are a few reasons why lawn mushrooms may be worth keeping around.

What Causes Mushrooms in the Lawn?

- **Shady, moist areas:** Although some mushrooms tolerate sun, mushrooms are more likely to sprout in shady spots with lots of overhanging trees and brush.
- **Heavier rainfall than usual:** Mushrooms thrive in moist areas, and heavy rainfall, drainage issues, or overwatering can all cause a mushroom “bloom.”
- **Warm temperatures.** High humidity and warm temperatures between 65 and 75°F are ideal for most common mushrooms.
- **Nutrient-rich soil:** Soils rich in organic matter support plant life, but they also feed mushrooms. Many species of mushrooms are especially fond of woody materials and they may sprout on decaying sticks and stumps.
- **New soil or compost:** You likely already have mushroom spores on your property. However, spores can also be trucked in within new deliveries of soil or compost.

Benefits of Mushrooms in Lawns

Most mushrooms don't harm living plants and they can be fun to have around if you love that woodsy look. But beyond their aesthetic appeal, mushrooms also benefit lawns in a few key ways:

Waste Removal

Mushrooms are nature's decomposers that break down old plant material, dead insects, sticks and woody debris, decaying plant roots, and other organic matter. This keeps grass lawns tidy, but it also recycles nutrients back into the soil so that plants can absorb them.

Improving Soil Structure

By breaking down old plant matter, mushrooms naturally help to build soil fertility. But those thread-like mushroom filaments also bind soils together, which enhances soil structure, drainage, and moisture retention.

Boosting Plant Health

Because mushrooms make soil nutrients more available to plant roots, grass lawns often grow better with mushrooms around. On top of that, beneficial fungi can outcompete damaging fungi in the soil and make plants more disease-resistant.

Supporting Biodiversity

As decomposers, mushrooms are a valuable part of local ecosystems; they boost the growth of beneficial soil microbes, and some mushrooms are an important food source for insects, white-tailed deer, and small mammals.

Should I Get Rid of Mushrooms in My Lawn?

Many gardeners may not want to remove mushrooms, since they provide so many benefits to plants. Plus, once mushrooms appear in the lawn, removal can be tricky since mushrooms have a large network under the soil. They often go away on their own when the growing conditions change.

If you'd like to speed things along and make your lawn less hospitable to mushrooms:

- Try pruning away a few branches to increase sunlight and improve drainage issues to reduce soggy spots.
- Aerate your soil to eliminate compacted areas, reduce fertilizer and compost use, dethatch your grass, rake up lawn clippings, and remove decaying stumps and other woody bits.
- Handpicking mushrooms into trash bags can also be used if you have poisonous mushrooms like the destroying angel (*Amanita bisporigia*) or the false parasol (*Chlorophyllum molydbites*) growing in your lawn and pets or small children are afoot.

Mowing down mushrooms or using fungicidal products are not recommended as fungicides are typically ineffective against mushrooms and mowing disperses mushroom spores.

FAQ

- **Is it good or bad to have mushrooms in the lawn?**

Mushrooms in the lawn are typically a good thing — they signal that your lawn is healthy and your soil is rich in organic matter.

- **Why did mushrooms suddenly start growing in my lawn?**

A sudden appearance of mushrooms can occur after heavy rainfall or if lawns are overwatered. New deliveries of soil or compost can also harbor mushroom spores and lead to a sudden shroom bloom.

- **Are mushrooms in the lawn poisonous?**

Only about 1 to 2% of mushrooms are poisonous to humans, but mushroom identification can be difficult and there are some notoriously poisonous lawn mushrooms. To be safe, never eat mushrooms you find growing on your property unless they've been properly identified by a mushroom expert.

- **Is it safe to touch mushrooms in the lawn?**

While some mushrooms are poisonous if ingested, they are generally safe to touch. However, you may still want to wear gloves and avoid picking mushrooms if you have open cuts on your hands just to be cautious.