

Why fungi are important

Fungi are not an animal nor a plant, but a completely separate species that decomposes old matter, and turns them into places where new life can grow. Most people villainize mushrooms as fungi because they are associated with death and decay, but without death, there can be no new life, and vice versa. They are a constant cycle, and mushrooms are simply the intermediary, doing their job of continuing the cycle of life. In addition to breaking down old matter, they help living matter symbiotically. Before I continue, we need to define “mushroom”: “a fungal growth that typically takes the form of a domed cap on a stalk, with gills on the underside of the cap”, Mushrooms are not the main part of the organism. Mycelium are small fibers in an interconnected web that transport nutrients through tubes only 5-8 nanometers wide; Imagine mycelium as the apple tree, and the mushrooms as the apple.

Mycelium will connect its fibers to the tips of tree roots and communicate what it can provide the tree, and what the tree can do in return. It then fully attaches itself to the tree, and extends the tree's roots, in exchange for a cut of the nutrients. The mycelium will also connect to multiple trees, and open a communication line between them so *they* can trade. Some mycelium such as those are symbiotic, but there are also parasitic fungus like lion's mane, that attach to the side of trees and leech off them. When you hear this, your mind jumps to them being evil again, but from a different perspective, they are controlling invasive species and keeping the balance of the ecosystem in check.