

Fungi — what they do for us

Fungi and bacteria are essential to ecosystem health. Saprobe fungi break down fallen trees and leaf litter returning nutrients to the soil. Nitrogen-fixing bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi help plants get nutrients from the soil. Imagine a world with no fungi and bacteria – nothing would ever rot down - the roads would be bumpy with dead possums - the garden full of vegetable scraps - the lawn covered in grass clippings, we couldn't make compost, and anything that died would still be lying around – even the dinosaurs!

About 6,500 species of fungi have been found in New Zealand. It is estimated there are at least another 15,000 species awaiting discovery.

Fungi to look out for



Can you identify these fungi?



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