Fly Agaric *(Amanita muscaria).*

Despite its appearance as the iconic toadstool in many childrens' books this fungus is highly poisonous. With its red to orange domed cap, spotted with white scales – which wash off in the rain- this is one of the most recognisable and common ground fungi, fruiting from summer to late autumn in birch and pine woodland.

Fairy Ring Champignon *(Marasmius oreades)*

This pale tan fungus is common in parks across the country forming 'fairy circles' or arcs in short grass. The originally domed cap becomes flatter with age and is widespread between late spring to early autumn. Stems grow up to 9cm tall making the delicious caps easy to harvest with scissors. Known to dry out and then reflate after rain.

Wood Blewit *(Lepista nuda)*



With its smooth rounded cap, this fungus associates with most tree species, but also grows on open ground,

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indicating a once wooded spot. Fruiting from autumn to winter it is triggered by early frosts. It has a distinctive purple cap, up to 12cm across, supported by a long purple stem. They can be used for dying textiles and paper.

~~Warted Amanita *(Amanita strobiliformis)*~~

~~This rare fungus can reach massive proportions, with caps 25cm across not unknown. Occurring in long grass, usually on woodland edges, it fruits from summer to late autumn. The white slightly domed cap is covered in warty fragments and is supported by a long, 2cm wide stem. It is said to give off a smell of radishes when cut!~~

Porcelain Fungus (Oudemansiella mucida)

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blah blah blah

Clustered Bonnet *(Mycena inclinata)*

The distinctive stems are creamy with a woolly base, supporting a small 2-3cm cap. These bell-shaped caps become browner with age and are visible between summer and late autumn. They form clusters in the stumps of broadleaf trees, usually oak, and can give off a soapy odour. They were first described in 1838 by Swedish expert Elias Magnus Fries.

Honey Fungus *(Armillaria mellea)*

This edible fungus grows in clusters with stems joined together at the base. Its appearance can vary greatly with cap

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colours being anything from brown to yellow or olive, although they usually have a distinctive darker centre. Common in parkland they are the gardeners curse attacking the roots of plants, spreading underground even when fruiting bodies are absent.

Chicken of the Woods *(Laetiporus sulphureus)*

Don’t forget to look up. This distinctive bright yellow tiered fungus is one of the most striking bracket fungi. It is commonly found on broadleaf trees, such as oak, and fruits from late spring to autumn. Although edible when young, it is thought to induce an allergic reaction in 10% of the population causing stomach pains.

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Hoof fungus *(Fomes fomentarius)*

It is easy to see how these common fungi got their name. These broad shaped, woody fungi can be spotted all year round on the trunks of broadleaved trees and are often associated with a white powdery rot. Although inedible they do have other uses and were once widely used to start fires, hence its alternative name of Tinder fungus.

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Yellow Brain *(Tremella mesenterica)*

This common edible fungus can vary in colour from vibrant yellow to translucent white. Fruiting between late autumn

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and winter, it can be seen on fallen or dying branches, especially ash. The advent of ash-dieback disease has seen an increase in its numbers. Its scientific name tremella means trembling which refers to its wobbly jelly-like appearance.

Cramp balls (*Daldinia concentrica)*

The distinctive black fruiting bodies can be spotted all year round in clusters on standing or fallen broadleaf trees. Their name is derived from the ancient belief that when eaten they were a cure for cramp, but they are in fact inedible. They can be anything from 2cm to 10cm long and often merge to form longer assemblages.

Text © Ian Presnell

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