

FAIRY RING

A BIZARRE FUNGI PHENOMENON

What is Fairy Ring?

Story A:

The name fairy ring is the result of an old folk-tale. People once thought that mushrooms growing in a circle followed the path created by fairies dancing in a ring.

Story B:

A conflicting story from European folklore suggests that fairy rings are the gateway to elfin kingdoms, or places where elves gather and dance. According to folklore, a fairy ring pops up when a fairy, pixie or elf appears. It will disappear without a trace in less than five days, but if an observer waits for the elf to return to the ring, he or she may be able to capture it.

Scientifically Speaking...

Fairy rings are also commonly known as fairy circle, elf circle, elf ring or pixie ring. Fairy rings can grow to over 33 ft in diameter. The body of this fungus, its mycelium, is underground. It grows outward in a circle. As it grows, the mycelium uses up all of the nutrients in the soil, starving the grass. This is the reason a fairy ring has dead grass over the growing edge of the mycelium. Umbrella-shaped mushrooms spring up from just behind the outer edge of the mycelium creating the fairy ring.

In most cases, fairy rings are a minor nuisance. If left alone, they will eventually grow out and die off. If you wish to remove them, a simple rake is most often the weapon of choice. If handling the mushrooms, wear gloves and/or wash your hands when done.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

For more treatment options, please visit The Arizona Cooperative Extension website at: extension.arizona.edu.



A fairy ring in a suburban lawn



"Plucked from the Fairy Circle"

A man saves his friend from the grip of a fairy ring



Clitocybe nebularis in part of ring

For additional tips and articles, please visit our learning center at dlcresources.com.

