

You Can Help Look After the Wildlife

Enjoy the fungi where they are growing. Please leave them where you find them so that others can enjoy their beauty and variety.

Fungi collection is forbidden because:

- ◆ Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common are not 'ordinary' countryside, or parks. Although they are public open spaces, they are also wildlife preserves.
- ◆ One of the things that makes them special are the many different fungi found on the sites.
- ◆ If the fruiting body of a fungus is picked or damaged, it cannot produce spores and the life cycle is broken.
- ◆ Picking may damage the whole fungus, threatening the long-term health and survival of some species.
- ◆ Some of the fungi found on these sites are very rare. Picking could place these under even greater threat of extinction.
- ◆ Each species of fungus supports other plants and animals. Collection will affect these too.



Volvariella bombycina,
by Alan Prince

Want to know more?

Our website has more information about the sites, copies of the management plans, details of volunteer tasks and events, trails and up-to-date news. You can also contact the Rangers at the Burnham Beeches Office (weekdays) on 01753 647358.

Finished with this fact sheet?

Please pass it on or put it back in the information point so someone else can use it.



Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

FUNGI

Fungi play a vital role at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common. They break down dead and decaying material and should not be disturbed.

It is against the law to pick mushrooms, toadstools or other fungi at Burnham Beeches or Stoke Common.

What are Fungi?

Toadstools and mushrooms are the fruiting bodies of fungi. These produce spores, much as a plant's flowers produce seeds.

Underneath lies a network of fine filaments (hyphae) that runs through dead or decaying wood and leaf litter. Although hyphae look like roots, they are actually the main part of the fungus.

Toadstools and mushrooms tend to form in mild, damp conditions and are most abundant in autumn.



Laccyaria pyrotricha,
by Derek Schafer



Meripilus sp.

Burnham Beeches is a National Nature Reserve, Site of Special Scientific Interest and European Special Area of Conservation; Stoke Common is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. They are owned and managed by the City of London.

Fungi are an essential part of the ecosystem.

Fungi are nature's recyclers. They help dead leaves and wood to decompose: the hyphae break down organic material and absorb the resulting nutrients as food.



Amanita muscaria

Many invertebrates feed on fungi or lay their eggs in the fruiting bodies. Some of these are either extremely rare or need particular species of fungi to survive.



Macrolepiota procera



Hypholoma fasciculare

Almost all plants also have fungi associated with them which help the plant extract essential nutrients from the soil.



Clavulinopsis sp.

Fungi are also a food source in the autumn and winter, when food is scarce, for small mammals such as mice.

Unusual Fungi

Burnham Beeches is one of the most important beech woodlands in Europe for fungi.

One of the reasons Burnham Beeches is classified as a National Nature Reserve is because of the rare and threatened species of fungi found here.

Stoke Common is also home to several rare species of fungi.



Laccaria amethystea



Piptoporus quercinus

Legal Protection

- ◆ It is against the site bye-laws to remove anything from Burnham Beeches or Stoke Common.
- ◆ It is an offence under the Theft Act 1968 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to uproot or take any wild plant without authorisation from the site owner.
- ◆ Permission to collect fungi at Burnham Beeches is also required from English Nature, because Burnham Beeches is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a European Special Area of Conservation.

