

In *Chattanooga Free Press* October 29, 2009

Dear Sir:

I was recently alerted to a Letter written by a reader of your newspaper. He was describing wild mushrooms on his lawn and that no one knows why they sometimes occur in "Fairy Rings."

The fairy ring phenomenon has actually been well understood--at least to science--for hundreds of years. However it does clearly point out just how poorly educated the public is about fungi. I blame our schools; most groups of living organisms get good coverage during one's school years but not so with fungi--despite the fact that many fungi are integral to our day to day lives and in fact crucial to our very existence.

As Publisher of a mycology journal (with academic and amateur readership), I'm currently attending the Seattle Mushroom Fair and am impressed at the knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, wild mushrooms and other fungi out here. The populace of the Pacific NW has a well known attachment to wild fungi and wild mushrooms contribute quite a bit to the local economy.

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