



Mushroom Spore Prints

Underneath a mushroom's cap (the part that looks like an umbrella) are the gills, which contain millions of spores. When the spores are released each one can grow into a new mushroom. You can make a spore print from mushrooms.

Materials: gloves, mushrooms, index card, black construction paper, glue, acrylic fixative (found in craft stores)

Note: You will need mushrooms. You can use store-bought ones, or go for a walk and find some wild ones. USE gloves to pick the mushrooms. DO NOT eat any wild mushrooms! Gently pop the stems out of the mushrooms.

Procedure:

1. Turn an index card over to the blank side (with no lines). Cover half of this side of the card with black paper. Glue it in place and trim off the extra paper.
2. Place the mushroom cap (gill side down) on the index card so half of it is on the black side, and half is on the white. Place a bowl over it and leave it overnight.
3. In the morning, remove the bowl and gently lift the mushroom cap. There should be a print of the mushroom spores on the paper—dark spores will show up on the white half and light spores will show up on the dark half.
4. To preserve your spore print, spray it with an acrylic fixative. This will make sure it doesn't smear. Put the finished prints in your Environmental Science Journal.

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Type of Mushroom _____ Location Found: _____

(glue mushroom spore print here)

Look in a field guide to find out what kinds of mushrooms live in your area. Make a list of these mushrooms. Are any of them poisonous to eat? Put an "X" next to the mushrooms that are poisonous.

Mushrooms in My Area

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

When you see any of these mushrooms in nature, put a check next to its name.

How do mushrooms help people? _____

Write three interesting facts about mushrooms. You may want to use a field guide to help you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

SCIENCE BUG CHALLENGE: Why is it important not or touch to eat wild mushrooms?