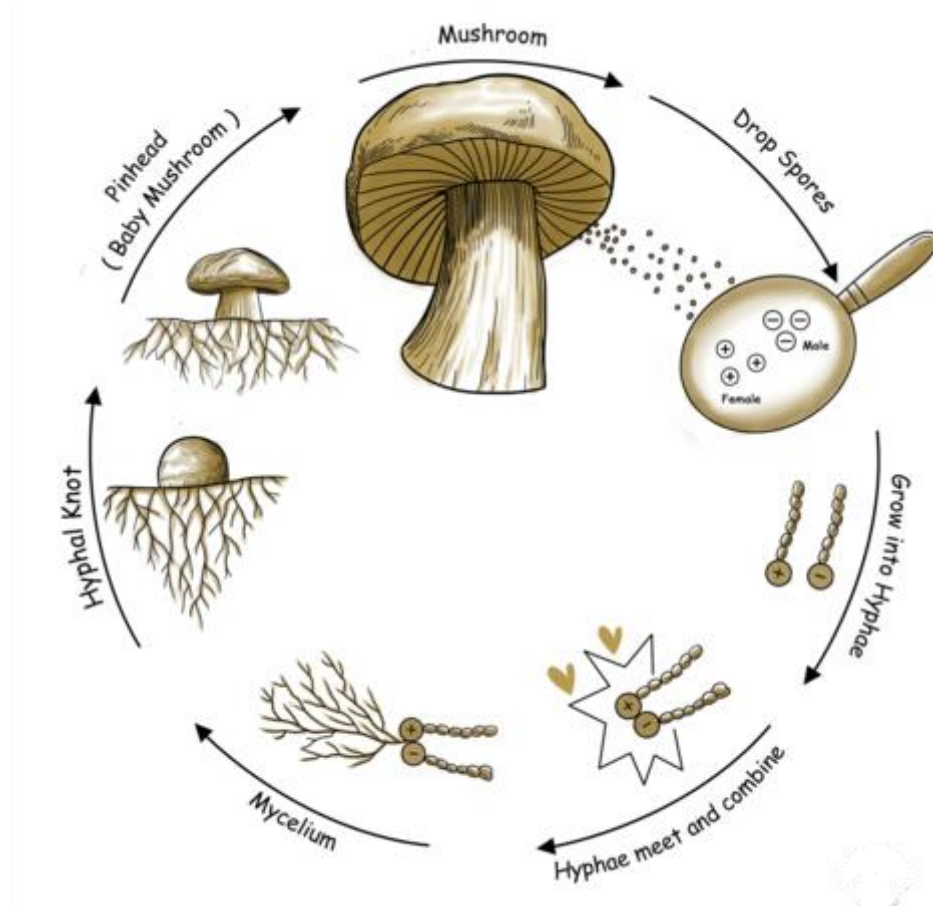


Life cycle of a mushroom



Mushrooms are fungi, so they have a unique life cycle, which is very different to plants.

Small mushrooms can grow in about 1 day while medium to larger sized mushrooms can grow in about 3-4 days.

In order for the mushroom to grow steadily, the environment needs to provide steady moisture so that the mushroom life cycle can run its course.

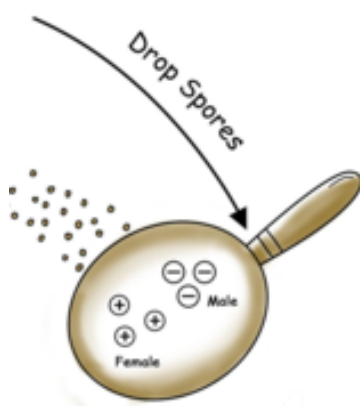
The mushroom life cycle is mesmerizing! It's exciting to see the mushroom grow to its full potential, as it doubles in size every day.

It is also exciting to understand the process of the mushroom life cycle that remains hidden under ground.



Life cycle of a mushroom

Stage 1. Dropping Spores



Mushrooms produce and release spores from the gills that are located underneath the mushroom cap.

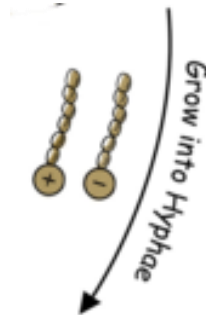
Spores are similar to seeds because the spores are produced as either male or female.

Each mushroom is capable of producing hundreds of thousands of spores that can travel on the breeze to find a new home.



Life cycle of a mushroom

Stage 2. Growing into Hyphae



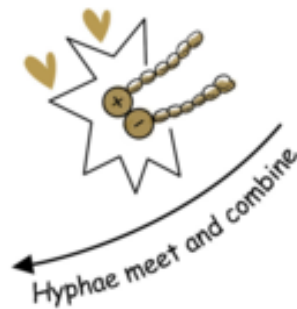
Hyphae are groups of the same spore.

When the hyphae of one spore meet the hyphae of another spore, they meet and combine, to begin the process of producing mycelium.



Life cycle of a mushroom

Stage 3. Hyphae Meet



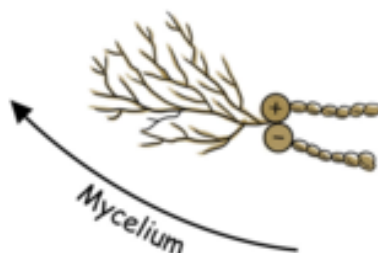
Think of each spore as a single cell.

Each of those cells is either male or female that group up with other spores to create male and female hyphae.



Life cycle of a mushroom

Stage 4. Mycelium



This is part of the mushroom life cycle which we can see take form.

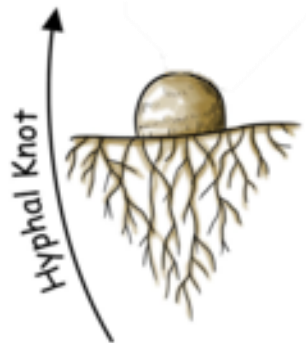
Mycelium is the root system of the mushroom. These tiny strands continue to grow and join others, creating a web-like system.

This system provides a stable and nutritious area for the fungi to start producing mushrooms.



Life cycle of a mushroom

Stage 5. Primordia- Pinheads (Baby Mushrooms)



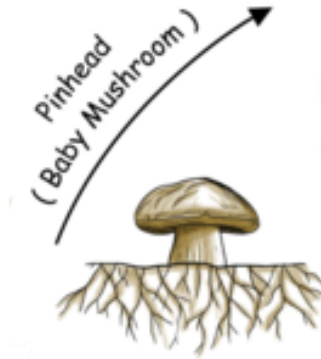
The hyphal knot is the first point at which the pinhead and body of the mushroom begin to sprout but not yet take form.

The transition from hyphal knots to the baby mushrooms, also called pinheads, is a process we can see.



Life cycle of a mushroom

Stage 6. Mushroom (fruit)



The pinheads (baby mushrooms) are easy to spot when you know what they look like.

Not all the pins from the mycelium colony will grow, most of them will stop growing.

The healthy pins will eventually sprout into full grown mushrooms.



Life cycle of a mushroom

Stage 7. Full Grown Mushroom



The mushroom is now full grown and ready to harvest. To continue the cycle and make more mushrooms, the veil of the mushroom will open, revealing the gills underneath. The gills release the spores, which fall to the ground or are carried in the wind to find a new home.

A new mushroom life cycle will begin.