



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/mushrooms-in-turfgrass>

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What is growing in my lawn?

K-State horticulture expert shares tips for removing mushrooms from the lawn

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Certain parts of Kansas have received enough moisture this spring to cause mushroom growth in home lawns and gardens. Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini said most are relatively harmless to other plant life.

“Some of these mushrooms are associated with arc-like or circular patterns in turfgrass called fairy rings. The ring pattern is caused by the outward growth of fungal mycelium,” Domenghini said. “The mycelium forms a dense, mat-like structure in the soil that decomposes organic matter.”

Domenghini said this decomposition releases nitrate into the soil, which in turn stimulates the growth of the grass at the outer portion of the ring. This results in a dark green appearance of the grass at the margin of the ring.

“Unfortunately, the thick fungal mat formed by the fungus interferes with water infiltration. The fungus also may release certain byproducts that are toxic to the turf,” Domenghini said. “This may lead to dieback of the turf close to the ring.”

Domenghini said fairy rings are difficult to control.

“You can sometimes eliminate the ring by digging to a depth of 6-12 inches and 12 inches wide on both sides of the ring, refilling the hole with non-infested soil,” Domenghini said.

Commercial growers can use fungicides to control fairy rings but these products are not available to homeowners.

“Some mushrooms in lawns are not associated with fairy rings. These may be mycorrhizal (symbiotic association with tree roots) or saprophytic (live on dead organic matter such as wood or other material) in the soil,” Domenghini said.

Domenghini recommended not killing these mushrooms because they can be beneficial.

“A fungicide spray to the mushroom itself does little good. Remember the mushroom is simply the fruiting structure of the organism,” she said. “Most of the fungus is below ground and inaccessible to the chemical.”

If mushrooms are a nuisance, Domenghini encourages picking them and disposing of them as soon as they appear. If there are too many for that to be practical, mow them off.

“Mushrooms tend to go away as soil dries. Patience may be the best control,” she said.

Domenghini warns that some of the mushrooms in the lawn are edible, but others are poisonous. Never eat mushrooms unless you are sure of their identity.

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly [Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens. The newsletter is available to view online or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can subscribe to the newsletter, as well as submit their garden and yard-related questions, by sending email to Domenghini at Cdom@ksu.edu, or contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story

K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/horticulture-resource-center/horticulture-newsletter/>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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