

I start with the lyrics to a well-known nursery rhyme, “Rain, rain go away; come again another day.”

Consider this scenario. Following a prolonged rainy spell, the sun finally comes out. As one strolls through the yard, one notices them appearing randomly. They were not there before. One then questions what are they and from where they came?



They are mushrooms, and they seem to be everywhere. Perhaps, one might now be thinking, “Why are they here? Are they dangerous? How does one get rid of them?”

If this scenario seems more like reality, I say avoid the frustration. There is an explanation. Allow me to share a few

interesting facts about these strange-looking organisms.

First, mushrooms have become visible because of a number of situations occurring simultaneously. We can blame their appearance on the cloudy weather, continuous rains and the organic matter within the soil. When the right combination of these situations come together, mushrooms begin to mushroom!

Mushrooms are fungi. The mushrooms we are currently seeing are the reproductive stage of fungi. Their purpose is to produce microscopic, seed-like structures called spores. Once developed, the wind spreads the spores —thus perpetuating the fungi’s life cycles. Interestingly, as soon as the sun comes out and things begin to dry out, mushrooms will disappear almost as quickly as they appeared.

Seeing mushrooms is a clue that a larger fungus lives buried beneath the lawn, and it is beneficial to our ecosystem. Fungi feed on the organic matter within the soil breaking it down into nutrients, which are ultimately utilized by turfgrass and other plant life growing in the landscape. “From where does this organic material originate?” one might ask. A likely response to that question might involve an area in the lawn where a tree once existed. Although the tree is gone, its dead organic roots remain buried beneath the ground, encouraging fungi to feed and ultimately give rise to mushroom growth.

Although mushrooms are beneficial to the lawn, many homeowners want to know what they can do to rid their lawn of them. Since mushrooms like moisture and shade, one could trim back branches on trees or shrubs where mushrooms are appearing. Allowing for additional sunshine keeps mushrooms at bay. If after a prolonged rain, one’s lawn has standing water or remains damp for long periods, the soil may be compacted. Aerating the lawn would increase drainage. If one has excess thatch in one’s lawn (over half an inch), dethatching might be in order to reduce the excess organic material. Even if one avoids the suggestions I have listed, remember once the sun returns and things dry out, the mushrooms will likely disappear on their own.

Lastly, one might ask about the dangers of mushrooms. After researching the topic, I discovered that well over one-hundred species of mushrooms could cause a negative reaction if ingested. With such statistics, it becomes a definite challenge for one to know if a mushroom is safe or poisonous to eat. For that reason, I suggest destroying and removing any mushrooms from one’s yard, especially if one has small children or pets.

During rainy weather, mushrooms in the lawn can become a landscaping concern. For many people, and particularly for those who pride themselves on having a pristine-looking lawn, discovering mushrooms can be frustrating. To that, I say relax. Rather than dwelling on the lyrics of the well-known nursery rhyme, “Rain, rain go away; come again another day,” I suggest one start singing the song, *Tomorrow*. After all, the sun will come out tomorrow. Bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow there will be sun, and we now know that when sunshine appears, mushrooms disappear!