

Studland dune fungi ID guide

Use this guide to help you identify some of the species of fungi that can be found in Studland's dunes



Waxcap

Hyrocybe coccineocrenata

Location: Found in low-lying dune slacks, among the Sphagnum moss, where it is very wet. It is one of the first fungi to emerge and can be seen during the Summer months.

Special features: The mushrooms are a waxy texture with greasy and shiny caps. The edges of the caps are also distinctly wavy.



Dune cup

Peiziza ammophila

Location: A strictly coastal fungus, which grows alone or in clusters. The fungus is found in patches of bare sand near marram grass from June to November.

Special features: As this fungus matures, it emerges out of the sand and splits to form a star shape. The spores are produced in the centre of the fungus, as wind-blown sand settles on the fungus, the disturbance triggers the release of spores which are then carried in the wind.

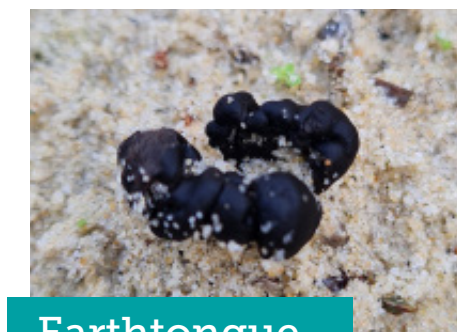


Dune brittlestem

Psathyrella ammophila

Location: This is an abundant species that you will find in the marram grass very close to the beach. Look under the marram or the sandy patches in between, from May to November.

Special features: The fungus feeds on the decaying roots of the marram grass and the cap and stem can be easily crumbled. You can distinguish this from the similar *Mycena* species as underneath the cap it is dark in colour and it grows much closer to the sea.



Earthtongue

Geoglossum arenarium

Location: Found primarily on edges of paths or bare patches of sand in the dune heath, from October to December. The outer edges of the Heather trail can bring about many specimens.

Special features: Studland Bay is the only site in England where you can find it! It is a very small, jet-black mushroom that grows only about 8cm high. It can be found in clusters or individually.



Sand stinkhorn

Phallus hadriani

Location: Found primarily on the younger dunes, growing in sandy patches between the marram grass from September to December. A pinkish flush on the mushroom distinguishes it from the common stinkhorn.

Special features: You'll smell it before you see it! As the mushroom grows it produces a very strong odour, which intensifies as it decomposes. The odour attracts flies to land on the mushroom cap, in doing so spores are transferred to the fly and dispersed long distances.

Image: SRFCAPhoto



Sand mushroom

Agaricus devonierisis

Location: This strictly coastal fungus is found on the lower slopes of dunes, close to the wet areas known as dune slacks. The fungus grows on bare patches of sand in these spots, from late Summer to Autumn.

Special features: The cap will start to convex, then flatten and become concave as it becomes older. The gills begin light, sometimes with a pinkish tint, before darkening with age.



Moor club

Clavaria argillacea

Location: Best place to find this species is at Shell Bay. During the Autumn, spot the mushroom growing in patches of bare sand close to the marram grass and heather. A particularly good spot is on the dune edge of the dried-up river that flows from the dunes to the sea in the Winter.

Special features: A very distinctive fungus, coloration can vary from pale to bright yellow. Grows to 5cm tall and can be found in multiple clusters.



Mycena chlorantha

Mycena chlorantha

Location: An abundant species at Studland, found in the dune heath and where the marram grass and heather habitat meet. This species tends to grow more inland than the similar brittle stem species.

Special features: The mushroom is light in colour, being very pale underneath the cap. It has a variety of sizes and can grow in clusters of individually.



Fly agaric

Amanita muscaria

Location: Found in a diverse range of habitats including woodlands, parks and heaths, from August to November.

Special features: Highly poisonous... It can grow up to 30cm tall and has a savoury smell, but not for eating! The fungus forms a symbiotic relationship with trees such as birch and pine, where the fungus gives the trees nutrients from the soil and the trees supply the fungus with sugars from photosynthesis.



Pink moss-pin

Roseodiscus formosus

Location: Found from January to March. Lives and parasitises on dying clumps of the moss *Ceratodon purpureus* in very open, early successional acid environments.

Special features: Shell Bay is the only place it has ever been recorded in the whole of the UK!

Image: Bryan Edwards