

Fungarium!

Clubs, Conks, Collections & More from Iowa's Booming Mushroom Community

From Fairfield's Toadstool Club of the 1920s to today's Prairie States Mushroom Club, Iowa's fungal fascination has never been bigger. ***Fungarium!*** is intended as a sampler of this immense meeting ground where history, science, art and nature intersect, a reflection of the Wood Wide Web that connects trees and underground fungal networks.

This exhibit features over three dozen specimens, most collected in Jefferson, Washington and Van Buren counties. Each was then freeze-dried to best preserve color, shape and overall appearance. Artist's Conks, mushroom-dyed wool, spore prints, calendars, photos and kids' coloring pages have all been shared by or are on loan from their owners/creators. Posters were generously offered for our use by the North American Mycological Association (NAMA).

Fungarium! opened at Fairfield's Carnegie Historical Museum in September 2024 through March 2025, when it became a traveling exhibit at Swiss Valley Nature Center from April thru June. It is currently at Jackson County's Hurstville Interpretive Center through October. ***Fungarium!*** has been featured in The Fairfield Ledger and The Telegraph Herald and was selected as one of The Carnegie Museum's top new exhibits in 2024. ***Fungarium!*** is offered free of charge as a community service by Prairie States Mushroom Club (PSMC), a 501(c)(3) organization.

Notes:

- PSMC will work with County Naturalists to adapt to their space
- Kickoff usually includes a presentation followed by a local PSMC-led foray (in season).

- New species are added regularly.

References:

- Jake Schmidt, Director, Carnegie Historical Museum
- Addy Schober, Naturalist, Dubuque County Conservation
- Julia Rodewald, Naturalist, Jackson County Conservation

Art McBreen joined Prairie States Mushroom Club in 2021 and is currently a Board Member and Treasurer. The idea for ***Fungarium!*** came from an article he wrote about Fairfield's Toadstool Club of the 1920s.

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