



## *Forest Floor Terrarium Background Information*



# *Fungi*

### *What is it?*

Fungi are organisms that are neither plants nor animals. They usually feed on dead and decaying matter to get their energy.

### *How does it relate to this activity?*

Moist nutrient-rich soil provides the right conditions for fungi to grow. Fungal spores sprout root hairs called *mycellium* that spread into the soil and forest floor. These root hairs give off enzymes that break down food before it enters the fungi. Then the fungi takes in the food energy through the mycellium, much like you would drink milk through a straw.

### *Did you know?*

When you find a mushroom, you've actually found the reproductive part of a fungi. The main body of the fungi is in the soil. So picking a mushroom is like picking an apple off of a tree. It doesn't kill the fungi, and it may actually help spread spores to grow new fungi.