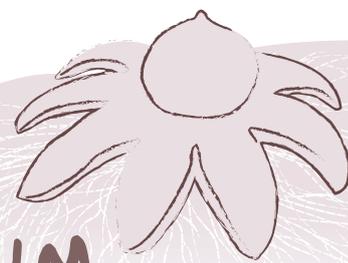


DABAS KONCERTZĀLE 2020.

ZEMESZVAIGZNE

GEASTRUM



Each and every thing is fungi

Inita Daniele, mycologist

Usually, when searching for mushrooms, we wait for a warm rain to go to the light pine forest on a dewy autumn morning. The heat and dry weather of the summer or the cold and snow of winter make you think – there are no mushrooms! Are you sure? Yes, the visible part of the mushroom – we will not find fruitbodies always and everywhere. However, the fungi are there! The fine, invisible mycelium threads are everywhere and not only in the forest!

With invisible ties – fungal threads – oak trees can be connected with the colourful lurid bolete, summer bolete, and deadly poisonous green deathcap.

A bright sulphur shelf finds its home on an oak trunk, but the debris that drops from the tree to the forest floor is broken down by the oak curtain crust, small polypores and other mushroom species...

Under the trees, as a colourful quilt, the soil is covered with a dead ground cover – fallen leaves, needles, small twigs and cones. All this must be decomposed by fungi. Fungal threads weave through the entire layer of litter, but can also thrive in each individual cone, leaf, needle and nut. Fungal mycelium is also active with the soil. Not directly related to trees or other plants, fungus break down soil humus, thus making nutrients available to plants.

Fungi also do not ignore the end products of animals' digestive processes – excrement. The fungi that grow on manure are called saprotrophs. Their

spores, together with grass, enter the digestive system of animals, successfully enduring the elevated temperature and acidity of gastric juices. Even more, these spores cannot germinate if they have not gone this route!

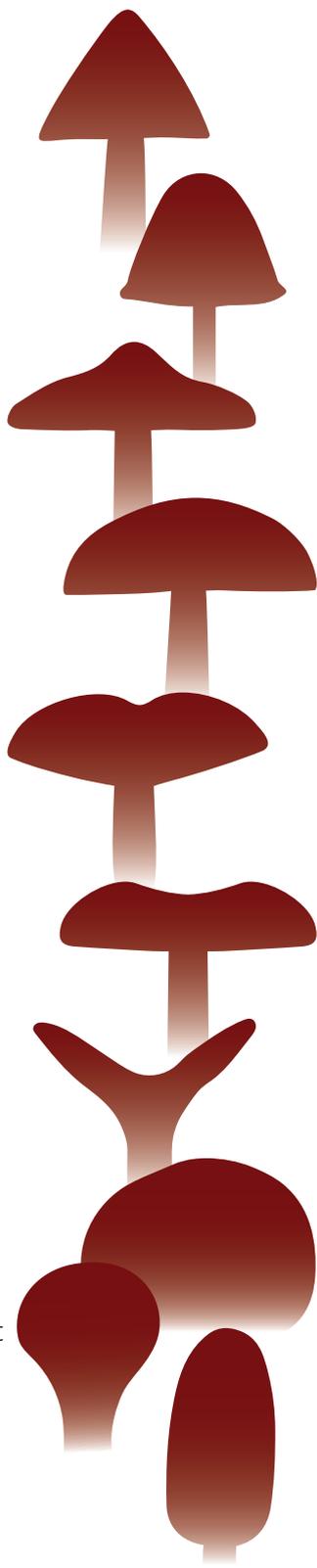
Small animals – insects are not protected from an even more direct exposure to fungi. The orange caterpillar fungus parasites upon insect larvae hidden in the soil.

Burnt out areas are free to be overrun in a hurry by fungi. Mushrooms – carbotrophs quickly overtake places where bonfires have previously stood – some species in the first year, others – later. Among them are many cup fungi and mushrooms which grow in early spring.

Most fungi can only be seen under a microscope. With the naked eye we see mouldy bread, a grey, fluffy layer in a jar of jam, spots on the leaves of plants, but only under a microscope can we see that these are fungi. We eat yeast when consuming bread buns, wine or beer, without even realizing that fungi were involved.

Even with macroscopic fungi, everything is not as simple as it seems at first. When speaking of mushrooms, we usually refer only to fruitbodies – the part of the fungi which is visible and which has a short and temporary existence. The mushroom itself – the delicate web is usually hidden from our eyes.

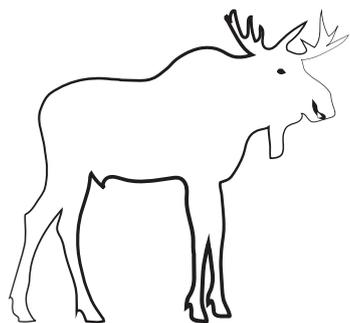
Even the visible part – the fruitbody has a huge variety. It's not just the usual shape with a hat and stalk. Fruitbodies can be branched like corals, flat like bark, arranged one on top of another like roof tiles, concave like dwarf bowls, shapeless as a clotted mass, almost round or pear-shaped. And also like stars!



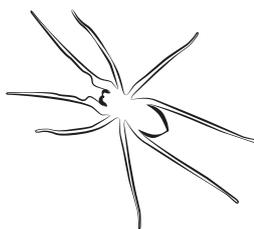
Drawing: Andris Soms

Who eats mushrooms?

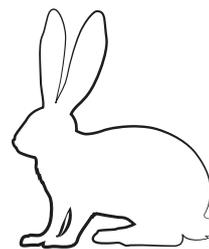
Draw an arrow on the animal you think is eating the mushrooms.



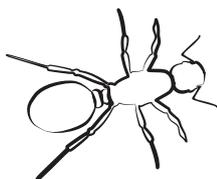
MOOSE



SPIDER



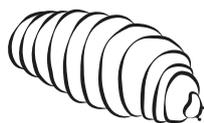
HARE



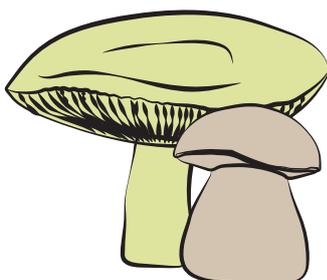
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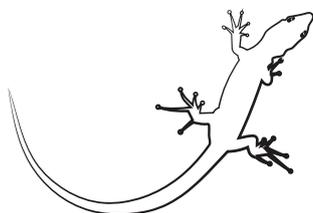
SQUIRREL



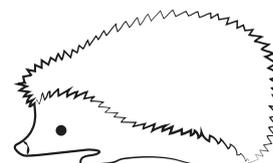
FUNGUS
GNAT LARVAE



FROG



LIZARD



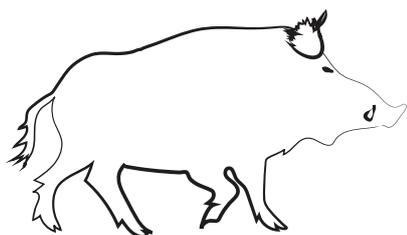
HEDGEHOG



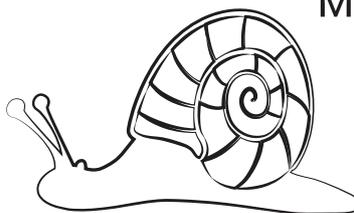
SLUG



MOUSE



WILD BOAR

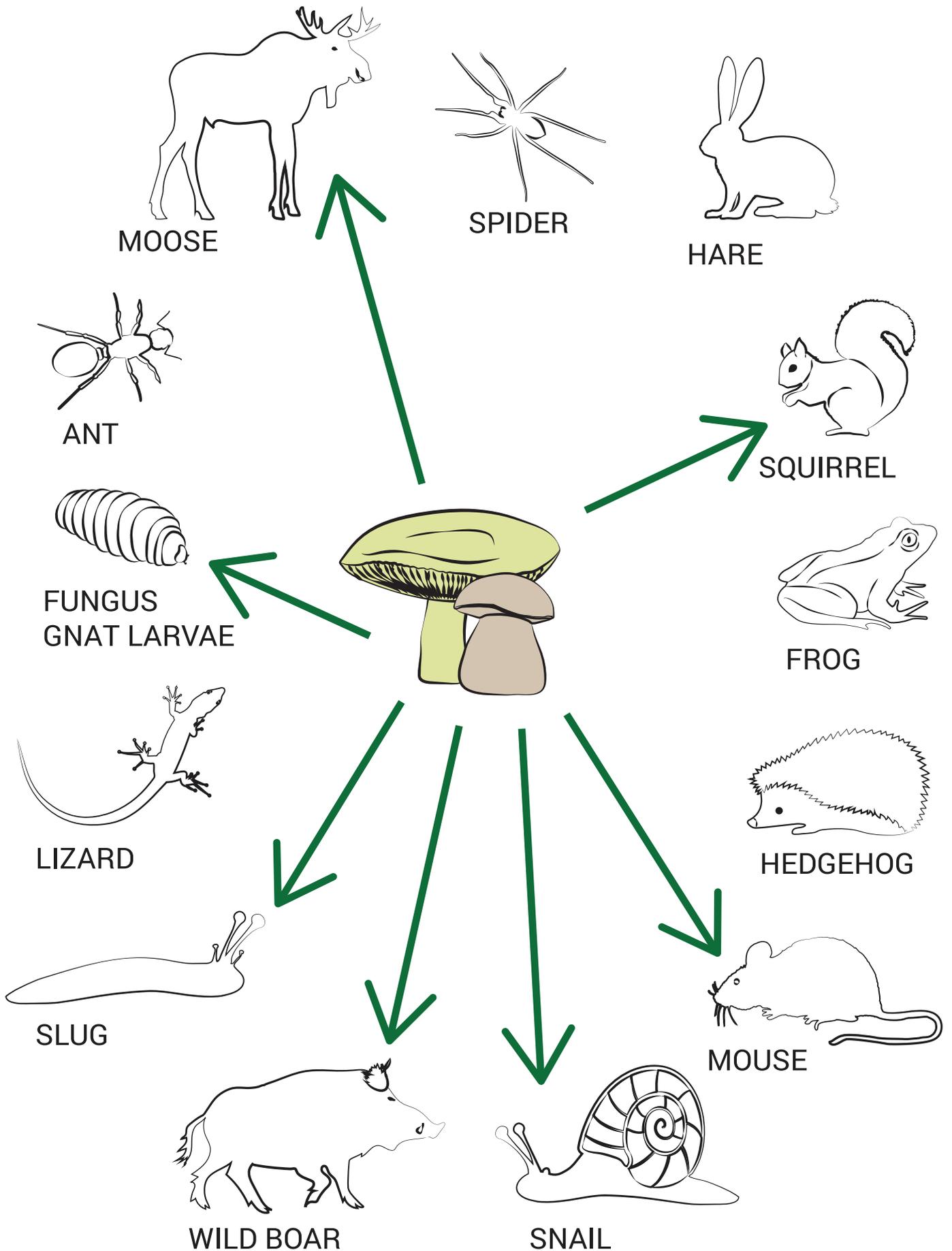


SNAIL

Drawings: Andris Soms, Daiga Segliņa, Zane Rubene



ANSWER



Drawings: Andris Soms, Daiga Segliņa, Zane Rubene

