

dyer's polypore *Phaeolus schweinitzii*

Kingdom: Fungi

Division/Phylum: Basidiomycota

Class: Basidiomycetes

Order: Polyporales

Family: Polyporaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The body of a fungus (mycelium) is made up of strands called mycelia. The mycelium grows within the soil, a dead tree or other object and is rarely seen. The fruiting body that produces spores is generally present for only a short period of time but is the most familiar part of the fungus to people. The dyer's polypore has stalked brackets (caps) that tend to grow from conifer tree roots. The brackets are circular to lobed. Each may be as much as 10 inches wide. The cap color may be cream, light red-brown, yellow or yellow-green when young becoming dark red-brown to dark brown when older.

BEHAVIORS

The dyer's polypore may be found statewide in Illinois. It grows singly or in small groups near conifer trees. Unlike plants, fungi do not have roots, stems, leaves, flowers or seeds. They must absorb nutrients and water from the objects they grow in. Spores are produced in the fall. The spores provide a means of reproduction, dispersal and survival in poor conditions. Spore production occurs when conditions are favorable, generally with warm temperatures and ample moisture. A dye made from the cap and stalk may be used to color yarn.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

coniferous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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